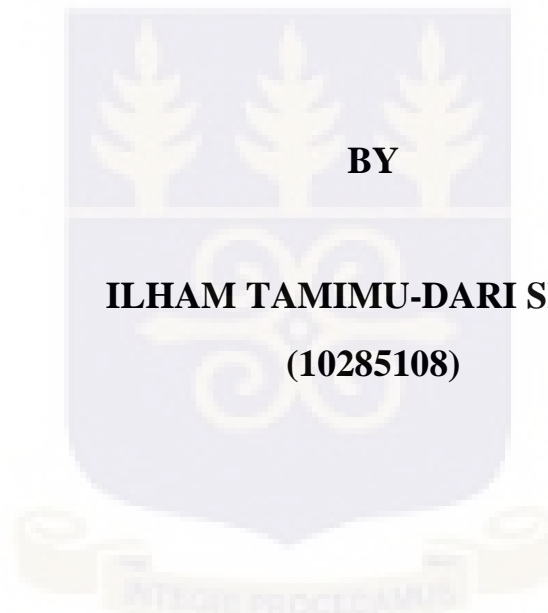


**REGIONAL INSTITUTE FOR POPULATION STUDIES (RIPS)  
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**ETHNICITY AND DIVORCE IN GHANA**



**BY**

**ILHAM TAMIMU-DARI SEIDU**

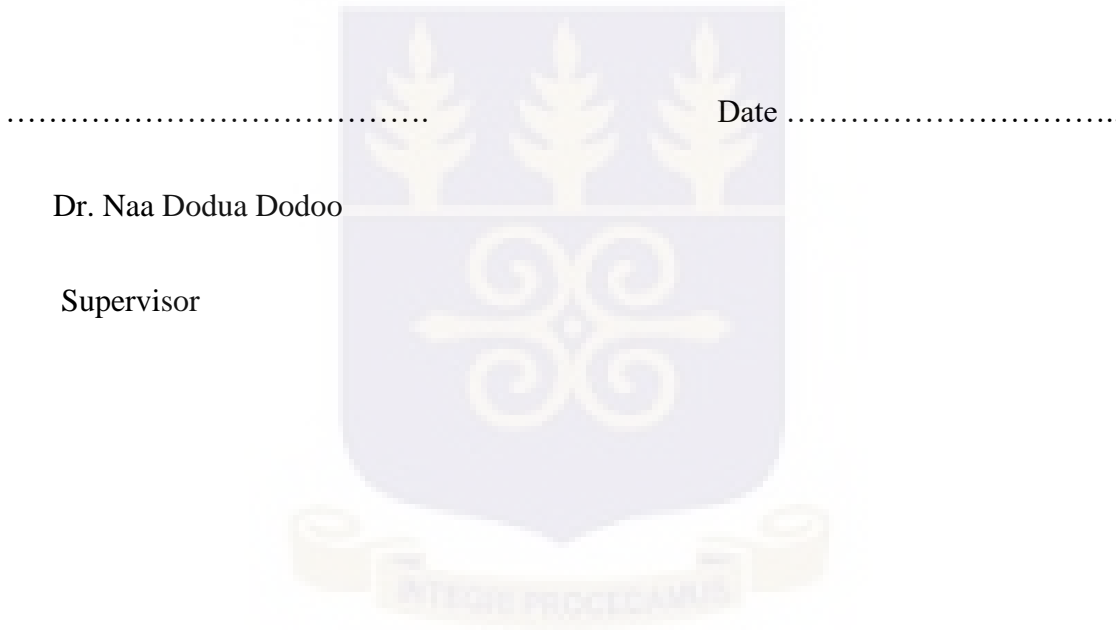
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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,  
LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE  
AWARD OF M.A. POPULATION STUDIES DEGREE**

**JULY, 2018**

**ACCEPTANCE**

Accepted by the College of Humanities, University of Ghana, Legon, in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of M.A. Population Studies.



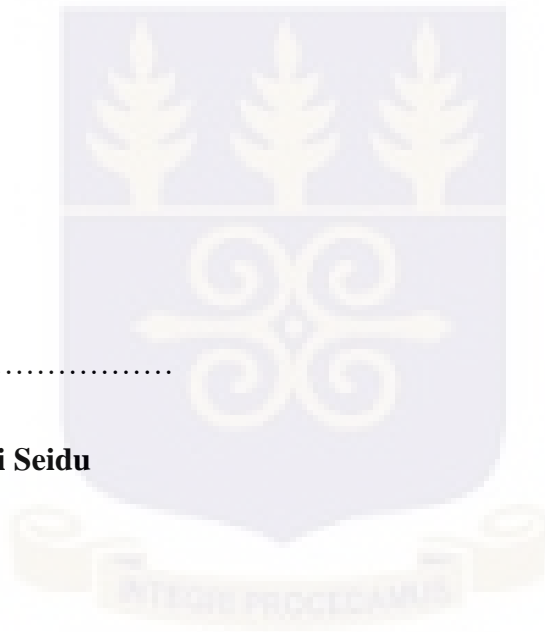
## DECLARATION

I, Ilham Tamimu- Dari Seidu, hereby declare that except for references made to other people's work, which have been duly acknowledged, this work is a result of my own research undertaken under supervision and that it has neither in part nor in whole been presented for another degree elsewhere.

.....

**Ilham Tamimu-Dari Seidu**

(Student)



Date .....

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation first to the Almighty Allah for His mercies and blessings and gift of life. Secondly, this work is dedicated to my loving husband, Abdul Wakil Abubakar, and my daughter, Ayaan Katara Abdul Wakil, for their love, patience and support through my studies. Again, I dedicate this work to my mum, Hajia Ayishetu Abdulai, for all her support and prayers through my life and for believing in my dreams and cheering for me. Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my late father, Alhaji Tamimu-Dari Seidu.



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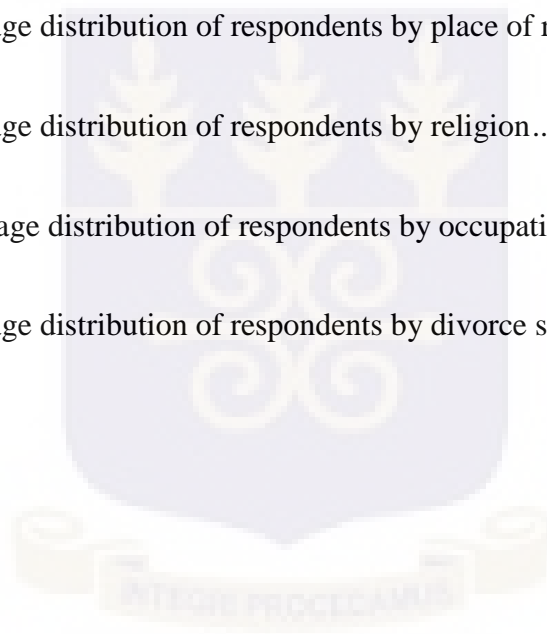
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## ABSTRACT

In recent years, divorce rates have been on the rise over the world and sub-Saharan Africa has not been left out. One of the factors that have been agreed by researchers to be a cause of divorce is ethnicity. In the African society, each ethnic group has its own social structure and organization. This structure and organization of ethnic groups can predict the potential of divorcing and rates of divorce in the society.

Using the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (2014), a sample of 6049 women and 2494 men are analyzed to determine whether there is a significant relationship between one's ethnic group and their divorce status. Again, factors accounting for divorce amongst men determined in this study.

From the binary logistic analysis, it was noticed that for both respondents, Ga-Dangbes, a patrilineal ethnic group in Ghana, are more likely to divorce than Akans, a matrilineal ethnic group, although literature suggest otherwise. Again, factors like place of residence and ex/current husband's educational level significantly predicted divorce for women only and number of marriage significantly predicted divorce for men only. Thus, factors that determine divorce differ for both men and women.

From the results of this work, it is recommended that gender-specific research on ethnicity and divorce should be conducted to further bring out the differences gender has on divorce.

Key words: ethnicity, divorce, marital instability



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The family institution has been changing over the years. Single parent families are becoming more and more common. Again same sex union and families is now legal and accepted in most Western countries. In Europe for example, fewer and fewer marriages are occurring, while more and more divorces are occurring (Eurostat, 2013). One of the fundamental ways through which families are formed is through marriage. “Marriage is an act, ceremony or process by which the legal relationship of husband and wife is constituted. The legality of the union may be established by civil, religious or other means as recognized by the laws of each country” (UN Demographic Yearbook, 2016, p. 18). Hence, this is a process that binds a man and woman together as husband and wife and in recent time two men and women together as husbands and wives as pertains in some countries. Marriage practices differ from country to country. In Ghana, there are three main types of marriages: the ordinance; the Mohammadan and the customary marriage. A fourth type which is called the presumed marriage has also been identified. This is when the law acknowledges two people who have lived together as husband and wife even though the necessary marriage rites have not been performed (Barker-Vormawor, 2015). Just as the family institution is dynamic, so is one’s marital status. One of the statuses one can move to from being married is being divorced.

According to the United Nations Demographic Yearbook, “Divorce is a final legal dissolution of a marriage, that is, that separation of husband and wife which confers on the parties the right to remarriage under civil, religious and/or other provisions, according to the laws of each country”(UN Demographic Yearbook, 2016, p. 18). There has been a rise in divorce worldwide. Generally, urbanization and industrialization have been the main reason for divorce worldwide. Thus, as

societies develop or industrialize, issues like autonomy and individualism set in. These factors mostly do lead to divorce (Takyi and Obeng, 2007; Takyi, 2001). In the United States of America for example, divorce rates spiked in the 1960's and 1970's after the elimination of the fault – based divorce in many states and has still been high as compared to married rates (Stevenson and Wolfers, 2007). Again while marriage rates reduced from 7.8 per 1000 persons in 1965 to 4.1 per 1000 persons in 2013 amongst the European Union States (EU), divorce rates increased from 0.9 per 1000 persons to 1.9 per 1000 persons within the same period (Eurostat, 2013). Sub-Saharan Africa has not been an exception in this situation. In 2016, divorces granted by the courts in South Africa increased by 0.3% from 2015 (STATS SA, 2016). Again 4 in every 10 marriages in South Africa that ended up in divorce in 2016, ended before their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary (STATS SA, 2016). In the Ghana Demographic and Health Surveys (GDHS), the percentage who got divorced or separated from their partners increased from 7.1% in 2008 to 7.8% in 2014 for women and 4.3% to 4.6% for men within the same period. According to Gage and Njogu (1994), as of 1994, the number of women between the ages of 40 to 49 whose first marriages ended up in a dissolution at the end of their reproductive years was high, with that of Ghana being twice as high as that for women in Kenya (64% and 24% respectively).

The effect of divorce is not only felt by the spouses involved. Children if any, and the extended family are affected too, in the case of sub-Saharan Africa. Spouses and children alike go through a lot of emotional stress when divorce occurs. Women who are shouldered with the responsibility of fending for their children, after a divorce suffer from a low standard of living (Amato, 2010). Again spouses who lose custody of children, usually men, tend to lose out on bonding and having a healthy relationship with their children. Felix et al. (2012), in their research on the effect of divorce on men found out that divorced men have a higher probability of suffering from alcohol abuse, chronic diseases and emotional stress than men who are not divorced. Children are also not left behind when

there is a divorce. Clark and Hamplova (2013), in their research on eleven sub Saharan African countries showed that children of divorced mothers were more likely to die than children of never – married and widowed mothers although children from these single parents were all at a disadvantage. Again in Burkina Faso, a sub – Saharan African country, children of divorced people were less likely to enroll in school and most likely to die before turning five years (Thiombiano, LeGrande and Kobiane, 2013).

One of the factors that influences divorce is ethnicity. Scholars are in disagreement on the definition of ethnicity. However, one of the most popular definitions of ethnicity was given by DeVos (1995). To him ethnicity is the “subjective symbolic or emblematic use of any aspect of culture [by a group], in order to differentiate themselves from other groups” (DeVos, 1995, p.16). Thus, some of the factors that will distinguish a group of people from another could be common language or a common ancestry. Ethnicity does not only affect divorce, it also affects one’s age at first marriage and whether one will end up in a polygamous or monogamous relationship (Arnaldo, 2004). The sub-Saharan African region is made up of different ethnic groups and Ghana is no exception. Tribes in Ghana have been put into eight major ethnic groups; the Akan, Mole – Dagbani, Ewe, Ga – Dangbe, Gurma, Gurusi, Guan and the Mande (GDHS). A ninth comprising of all the minor and foreign ethnic groups has been identified by the Ghana Statistical Service (GDHS). Ghana and a few countries in sub-Saharan Africa are made up of the two kinship system; the matrilineal and patrilineal (Arnaldo, 2004; Takyi, 2001; Takyi and Dodoo, 2005; Takyi and Gyimah, 2007). However, majority of the ethnic groups in Africa are patrilineal with a few matrilineal groups in western Africa and eastern Africa (Takyi and Gyimah, 2007; Arnaldo, 2004). Although ethnic groups in sub-Saharan Africa fall under one or the other of the kinship groups, they are still different from each other. Social organization and structure of most ethnic groups are different, influencing decisions within them differently; one of

such decisions being divorce. Thus, this study seeks to explore how belonging to the different ethnic groups in Ghana influences divorce.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

There is a large body of literature on the transformation the family institution has been undergoing over the years within the Sub-Saharan region (Bledsoe, 1990; Boateng, 1995; Caldwell, 1982; Lesthaeghe, 1989; Lloyd and Gage – Brandon, 1993; Mikell, 1992, 1997). These works have ranged from fertility to gender related issues (Caldwell, 1982; Dodoo, 1993; Gyimah, 2005; Takyi & Dodoo, 2005). However there has not been enough study in the region on marital instability and dissolution. Even though the issue of marital instability and divorce have been mostly ignored in this region, work that has been done in this area has suggested that unions are increasingly becoming unstable (Takyi & Gyimah, 2007). Most of this work has been undertaken by anthropological ethnographers, and very little of it has been carried out by demographers (Bleek, 1987; Fortes, 1953, 1970; Goody and Tambiah, 1973; Kaler, 2001; Mair and Harries, 1953; Mitchell, 1971; Schneider, 1964). This has mainly been due to the lack of good quality data in this region (Takyi & Gyimah, 2007; Clark & Brauner-Otto, 2015). The lack of proper Civil Registration Systems in most sub-Saharan countries make it difficult to collect data. Another reason for the lack of research in this area of the family institution is the difficulty in the definition of union formation and dissolution (Clark & Brauner-Otto, 2015).

Most studies that have focused on divorce have looked mainly at how modernization and socio-economic factors have influenced divorce in sub-Saharan Africa. Hence, there has been limited works on how the traditional African institution and lineage ties have affected the rate of divorce (Takyi, 2001; Takyi & Gyimah, 2007; Arnaldo, 2004; Reiners, 2003). Ghana has not been an

exception to this phenomena. However there have been very few studies on the association between ethnicity and divorce. Thus, although there is literature on African lineages and their effect on divorce, the variations in the cultural practices of ethnic groups have not been taken into consideration. Takyi and Gyimah (2007), argued that one of the reasons why divorce rates are high in matrilineal societies and not patrilineal is as a result of how cheap bride wealth is within matrilineal societies as compared to patrilineal societies. Yet, not all patrilineal societies pay high bride wealth. For example, Mahama (2004), wrote that marriage is one of the least costly ceremonies in the Dagbon society although it is highly valued in that society. He further argued that although a standard bride wealth in Dagbon is a calabash full of kola nuts (usually 100 kola nuts), respect given by a man to the elderly and little social services done by the man was mostly enough to earn such a man a wife (Mahama, 2004). Yet, divorce is low in this community. However, the Talensis, a member of the Gurusi ethnic group take cattle as bride wealth and divorce rates are still low in those communities. Thus, these are two patrilineal ethnic groups located around the same geographical area with different marriage ceremonies but divorce rates are low in both communities. Hence, it is imperative to study individual ethnic groups and what it is about their social organization or culture is influencing divorce. Again most work has focused on women without looking at how divorce affects men too (Takyi, 2001; Takyi & Gyimah, 2007; Arnaldo, 2004). Researchers have focused only on why a woman belonging to any of the lineage systems will get divorced and not why men will get divorced or will grant their wives divorce. This means that most of the effects in relation to divorce have been looked at in relation to women and children (Clark and Hamplová, 2013; Thiombiano, LeGrand and Kobiane, 2013). However, there has been research in other parts of the world indicating the effect divorce has on men too (Felix et al., 2012)

Ghana and by extension sub-Saharan Africa is a heterogeneous society and therefore each ethnic group has their distinct social organizations that influence their decisions. This study seeks to explore how one's ethnic affiliation is associated with their divorce status.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION**

- What is the association between ethnicity and divorce in Ghana?
- What are the factors that affect divorce amongst men and women in Ghana?

### **1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

This study is important because it seeks to add more knowledge to the divorce discourse. Each ethnic group is different. Values, norms and practices differ. Therefore there is the need for more research into the various ethnic groups and the association between one's ethnicity and divorce status. This will help expand the discourse especially on patrilineal societies as a lot of ethnic groups, spanning from the north to the south of Ghana, have always been lumped together without accounting for the variations in the different ethnic groups but placing emphasis on the bride wealth (high in patrilineal societies as compared to matrilineal societies).

Again, because most studies have focused on women, to the exclusion of men, factors influencing divorce amongst men have been neglected. This has been so because it is presumed that women and to some extent children suffer the most when there is a divorce. Therefore, this study will also help expand the studies on divorce amongst men in Ghana and its effect on them.

Finally, further studies in on ethnicity and divorce is imperative specific social interventions can be put in place for men, women and especially children affected by the negative effect of divorce. As it

has been agreed by researchers that divorce leads to low standard of living of women and in some cases the mortality of under five children, a study in this area will help identify groups greatly affected by divorce especially in rural and urban poor areas in order to give the necessary interventions to the affected so as to mitigate the effect of divorce on them.

## **1.5 OBJECTIVES**

The general objective of this study is to examine how one's ethnicity affects their divorce decisions, and explore factors affecting divorce in men and women

### **1.5.1 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

Specifically, this study will

- investigate the association between ethnicity and divorce for men and women
- examine the factors that are associated with divorce amongst men and women
- make recommendations that will expand research on ethnicity and divorce

## **1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

This study has been organized into six chapters;

Chapter One gives an introduction with an overview of the study, a statement of the problem, rationale for the study, the research question and the objectives of the study.

Chapter Two, titled literature review, reviews work done in relation to this study, theories the work is based on, the conceptual framework of this work and the hypothesis derived from the objectives.

Chapter Three contains the processes through which the work is carried out, thus, the methodology.

Chapter Four describes the socio – demographic characteristics of respondents in relation to the variables of interest.

Chapter Five, titled ethnicity and divorce, explains the associations between the explanatory variable (ethnicity) and the outcome variable (divorce) and each control variable with the outcome variable. Logistic regression analyses are carried out and the results are also discussed in this chapter.

In Chapter Six, the study is summarized and concluded. Recommendations are made based on the findings.

Works of scholars referred to are duly acknowledged in the reference section.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, work by researchers in relation to divorce will be reviewed. This is to help understand the findings of researchers; whether they agree with each other or diverge on particular variables.

Extensive work has been carried out on the family institution. These include work on family formation and processes, transformation of the family and roles, role of gender in the family institution and the role of culture on family formation and dissolution. Although there is quite a number of work on marital instability and dissolution in the world, most of these have been in western countries. Nonetheless, there is an appreciable amount of work that has been done in sub-Saharan Africa. Consequently, majority of the studies to be reviewed will be derived from western countries. However, results from these studies have been confirmed in work done in the sub-Saharan region. Hence, very imperative that they are also reviewed.

From these studies some factors have been noted to contribute to marital instability and dissolution. Some of these include ethnicity, age at first marriage, children ever born, remarriage, geographical location or place of residence, religion, educational level, occupational status, wealth index and partner's characteristics. Most of these factors have been researched and discussed by researchers in this region as some of the main factors contributing to marital instability and divorce. Thus, in this section, literature on these factors will be looked at and discussed.

## 2.1 ETHNICITY

Western works in relation to ethnicity and divorce have always equated ethnicity with race. In these studies, blacks are more likely to divorce than Hispanics and Caucasians in America (Arango – Lasprilla et al. 2009; Schwartz and Scott, 2012; Kitson and Morgan 1990; Lopez, Melendez and Rice 2000; Amato 2010; Bramlett and Mosher 2002). Other studies on inter and intra-ethnic marriages revealed that interethnic marriages are more likely to end up in divorce than intra ethnic marriages (Schwertfeger 1982; Ho and Johnson 1990; Shibazaki and Brennan 1998). In sub-Saharan Africa ethnicity is different. Arnaldo (2004), in his research of five ethnic groups in Mozambique, noticed that all the ethnic groups that were matrilineal in nature had both high currently divorced and ever divorced women. Reiners (2003), reached a similar conclusion with his work on ethnicity and divorce in rural Malawi. He realized that ethnic groups in the north predominantly patrilineal had lower divorce rates as compared to the southern tribes which are mainly matrilineal in nature. The reason was that, the patrilineal ethnic groups practiced patrilocal type of residency which strengthens marital bond whilst the matrilineal ethnic groups practiced matrilocal residence which weakens marital bond and allegiance. The same results were arrived at by Takyi and Gyimah, (2007) in their study of Akan women and non-Akan women in Ghana. Reasons given for the high rates of divorce amongst Akan women was the matrilineal system practiced by them. Thus, women paid allegiance to their families than their matrimonial home and the inexpensiveness of their bride wealth as compared to the other ethnic groups in Ghana (Takyi and Gyimah, 2007; Abu, 1983; Dodoo, 1998; Oppong, 1983a; 1983b). Another reason given by Abu (1983), was that marital bond was weakened in this society as spouses continue to live separately with wives still living in their family home. In recent times, the first and second reason seem to contribute to divorce more than the latter within the Akan society. A research done in rural Nepal also revealed the influence of ethnicity on divorce (Jennings, 2014). The

probability that someone one from a particular ethnic group will divorce depends on the value placed on marriage within the ethnic group (Jennings, 2014). This can also be seen amongst the Dagombas (Mahama, 2004). Even though divorce is abhorred within the society, both men and women can request for divorce. However, the reasons for seeking for divorce differ for men and women (Mahama, 2004). For all the reasons given above about divorce in Ghana, it is worth noting that such reasons become strong when the marriage is contracted is a customary marriage. Crawford (1971) in describing the process of divorce amongst most ethnic groups in Ghana noted that husbands had to pay a sendoff money to their wives in case of a divorce and the wives are supposed to return the bride wealth. However, in the case of Ga-Dangbes, the husband can choose to waive the collection of the bride wealth so as to avoid paying the sendoff money (Crawford, 1971). The issue of ethnicity and divorce in the sub – Saharan African region has always been discussed in relation to women (Takyi, 2001; Takyi and Gyimah, 2007 Arnaldo, 2004; Reiners, 2003). There have been limited to non-existent studies on ethnicity and divorce in men especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Hence, literature on ethnicity and divorce in relation to men have been difficult to come by.

## **2.2 AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE**

There have been numerous studies on the relationship between age at first marriage and divorce. Earlier works by researchers show that people who marry early are more likely to divorce than those who delay marriage a little longer (Becker, 1974; Oppenheimer, 1988). This Oppenheimer (1988) noted as the maturity effect. Thus, people who delay marriage tend to be mature and are less likely to make mistakes regarding themselves and their partners. This view has been validated by work done in sub – Saharan Africa (Oppong, 1980; Arnaldo, 2004; Tilson and Larson, 2000). Arnaldo (2004) in his work showed a relationship between ethnicity and age at first marriage. Thus, one's ethnicity

determines the age at which they marry and the age at which one first marries can determine the probability of divorce. Amongst the five ethnic groups he studied, women in matrilineal ethnic groups tend to marry earlier than patrilineal ethnic groups (Arnaldo, 2004). Another reason or evidence was given by Oppong (1980). People who marry young (mostly in their teens) have the tendency to divorce than people who marry later (mostly in their early to mid-twenties) because of their inexperience in caring for both children and their home as their training on marital issues are inadequate. Traditional African marriages are generally early (with the exception of Southern Africa) (Garenne, 2004; Hertrich, 2017). Although median ages at first marriages are rising, it is still low as compared to the rest of the world (Garenne, 2004; Hertrich, 2017). On the other hand women who delay marriage for a very long time too are more likely to divorce than women who delayed for by fewer years (Becker, 1974; Oppenheimer, 1988; Lehrer and Chen, 2013). Thus, late entry into the market force increases the divorce risk of a woman as she may feel her biological clock may be ticking and hence will settle for a less desirable match (Becker, 1974; Oppenheimer, 1989; Lehrer, 2008; Lehrer and Chen, 2013). Research shows that women tend to marry younger than men (Goldscheider and Waite, 1993; Johnson and Dye, 2005; Uecker and Stokes, 2008). In 2005, the median age at first marriage for males and females from 1960 in the United States of America had increased by 4 for males and 5 years for the females to 26.7 and 25.1, respectively (Johnson and Dye, 2005). Uecker and Stokes (2008), found out that whilst 25% of women got married before they turned 23 as of 2007, only 16% of men got married before they turned 23 within the same timeframe.

### **2.3 RESPONDENTS WITH OR WITHOUT CHILDREN**

In most traditional African societies, bride wealth is paid by the husband to the wife or her family to signify the sale of the womb of wife to her husband (Horne et al., 2013; Bawah et al. 1999). Thus, it

is the duty of the wife to bear children for her husband making childbearing an integral part of the union between a man and his wife. In African societies, children are highly valued and couples are expected to have children right after marriage. This ensures the continuity and existence of lineages (Whiteley, 1964). Children are seen as labour in most traditional societies (Caldwell, 1982). Caldwell (1982), again points out how having many children increases the status and respect given to men in African societies. This is because a man with many children is viewed as strong and responsible. As a result, couples with no children are more likely to divorce than couples with at least a child (White, 1990; Waite and Lillard, 1991; Anderson, 1997; Brachen et al., 1993; Takyi, 2001; Reiners, 2003; Lyngstad, 2004). In a research done in Ethiopia, Tilson and Larsen (2000) found out that one of the explanation given by men for divorcing their wives was bareness. Mahama (2004) in his book revealed that one of the grounds on which a Dagomba can seek for divorce is the impotence of her husband.

Again, the age of a child has also been agreed by researchers to determine the stability of marriages. Couples with young children are more likely to stay together albeit decision to divorce as they feel divorcing will have a negative impact on the children (Cherlin, 1977; Levinger; 1976).

## **2.4 NUMBER OF MARRIAGES**

The number of marriages one has been in can affect the stability of his or her marriage. Researchers agree that the effect of divorce is felt and carried mostly onto new marriages (Forste and Heaton, 2004; Lorenz et al., 2006; Kimiko, 2010). However they differ on how the effect carried onto the next marriage affects the stability of that marriage. Some researchers are of the view that people who have remarried are more likely to have less stable marriages than people who have married once. Work done by White and Booth (1991), revealed that divorce rates was high amongst people who had been

marriage at least twice in their first four years than people in their first marriage. Amato (2000), argued that people who are divorced may carry some behaviors from their former marriage into the new the new marriage which increases the probability of divorce. On the other hand, Lehrer (2003), argues otherwise. To him, divorcees learn from their failed marriage and therefore do not repeat the mistakes of that marriage in their new marriage. This to him, makes such marriages more stable than first time marriages.

## **2.5 PLACE OF RESIDENCE**

Place of residence is also one of the factors that can determine divorce. People in urban areas are more likely to divorce than their rural counterparts (Locoh and Thiriati, 1995; Adegoke, 2010). Some of the characteristics of urbanization include individualism, increase in female labour force and female autonomy and the transformation of the family structure (Takyi, 2001, Takyi and Broughton, 2006; Oya and Sender, 2009). Thus, families become estranged from their extended family especially in sub-Saharan Africa as extended families mostly in rural areas are unable to instill family values in members in urban areas (Chae, 2013). Again, extended families are unable to intervene when there is a conflict between couples. These factors have been noted to increase divorce rate in urban areas (Takyi, 2001; Oppong, 1980; Moore, 1994).

## **2.6 RELIGION**

One's religious affiliation can also affect their divorce decisions. This is because a person's religious affiliation shapes their views towards marital formation and dissolution (Lehrer, 2004). Hence, researchers have concluded that people with no religious affiliation are more likely to divorce than

people belonging to one religious faith or another (Lehrer, 2004). Again, people in an interreligious marriage are more likely to divorce than people in an intra religious marriage (Lehrer, 2004). Also, a number of studies have revealed that Muslims are less likely to divorce than Christians although Islam permits divorce and the latter does not except in the case of adultery (Tilson and Larsen, 2000; Insuigo-Abanihe; 1998). However, the effect of religion on divorce is not always the same. Although Muslims are less likely to divorce, Arnaldo (2004) in his research realized that although the Macuas, an ethnic group in Mozambique, who were predominantly Muslims had higher rates of divorce than the other ethnic groups. This was mainly because of the great effect ethnicity plays in that society than religion. Also, Brandson (1990) noted that divorce rates among Muslims were higher as compared to Christians in Nigeria.

## **2.7 EDUCATIONAL LEVEL**

Researchers are of conflicting views on how one's level of education can influence divorce. While some researchers are of the view that women which higher educational level have higher rates of divorce (Bumpass et al. 1991; de Rose 1992), others have argued otherwise (White, 1990). White (1990), argued that higher educational attainment enabled women to get employment which in the long run earns them some income. This income is used to support the family hence creates stability in the marriage. Results on the relationship between women and marital stability in African societies have not always been clear. Insuigo-Abanihe (1998), in his research noticed a positive relationship between female education and their divorce status. On the other hand, the relationship between female education and divorce is not linear in some countries. Tilson and Larsen (2000), observed that divorce was lowest amongst women with no education and the highest education. The same conclusion was reached by Takyi (2001).

## 2.8 OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

There have been numerous studies that have sought to determine the relationship between one's occupational status and divorce. Becker, Landes and Michael (1977), argue the major gain in marriage is when couples are mutually dependent on each other in playing their different roles. Thus, men act as bread winners and women as home makers. Hence, when the role of women start overlapping with that of the men, marriage stability starts to depreciate. This hypothesis was supported by Killewald (2016). The risk of divorce was high when the husband did not have a full time job or no job at all. However, there was no relationship between a wife's lack of employment and the risk of divorce (Killewald 2016). Reasons given in the past for women not leaving their husbands was because of their lack of social and economic independence (Scanzoni 1979; Phillips 1991). Consequently, women in recent times have a higher risk of divorce as a result of their active participation in the work force marriage (Greenstein, 1990; Oppenheimer, 1997). This is because women who are employed are seen to be more financially independent and therefore can easily opt for a divorce. This result is consistent with the work of de Rose (1992), in Italy and Killewald (2016). Results from de Rose's (1992) study showed that divorce rates were high amongst women with full-time jobs than with women with part-time and no jobs. Again, the risk of divorce is found to be high in marriages where husbands are unemployed and in marriages where both couples are unemployed (Jalovaara, 2003; Killewald, 2016). However, Jalovaara (2003) noticed that the risk of divorce was only high amongst women who were employed and yet in unhappy marriages. Again, marriages where wives earned more than husbands were likely to end up in divorce than vice-versa. This was because higher income for wives relative to the husband's income increases insecurity in the husband which ends up destabilizing the union.

## **2.9 WEALTH INDEX**

The wealth status of an individual has been noted by researchers to be a determinant of divorce. Killewald (2016), argues that couples with limited financial resources are likely to divorce as it puts undue stress on the family. However, other scholars argue that wealthy spouses are more likely to divorce than less wealthy spouse (Rootalu, 2010; Kurderk 1993). This is because financially independent spouses are able to support themselves in case there is a divorce. This argument is supported by scholars who say, women who are not financially independent have a lower risk of divorce especially when their main support is from their husband (Scanzoni 1979; Phillips 1991).

## **2.10 CURRENT/EX-PARTNER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL**

Although several studies have drawn the link between one's educational level and their divorce status (Bumpass et al., 1991; de Rose 1992; Isuigo-Abanihe 1998; White, 1990; Tilson and Larson 2000), there have been limited studies that have explored the educational level of one's partner and their divorce status (Ono 1998; Killewald 2016; Glinck and Clark 1958). Jalovaara (2003) argued that people whose partners had low education were likely to divorce. Another study by Glinck and Carter (1958), show that rates of divorce increase when a husband furthers his education.

## **2.11 THEORETICAL MODEL**

This study is based on two theories; the cultural/norm hypothesis and the rational choice theory.

### **2.11.1 CULTURAL/NORM HYPOTHESIS**

This hypothesis attaches importance to the role of culture or ethnicity in explaining the differences in marriage patterns amongst ethnic groups (Addai, 1999; Addai and Trovato, 1999; Arnaldo, 2004). Group norms, values, traditions and beliefs are assumed to be important factors that will determine the age at first marriage, the probability of entering a polygamous marriage and of marital dissolution (Arnaldo, 2004). Hence, the social organization of the different ethnic groups in Ghana drives their divorce decisions. The waiving of the repayment of the bride wealth in order not to compensate the wife by the husband makes it easy for Ga-Dangbes to easily divorce. Again, matrilineal inheritance practiced by the Akans makes it easy for a wife to leave her husband as the children of that relationship are hers and her family's. These practices shape the attitude of people within an ethnic group towards their divorce decisions.

### **2.11.2 THE RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY**

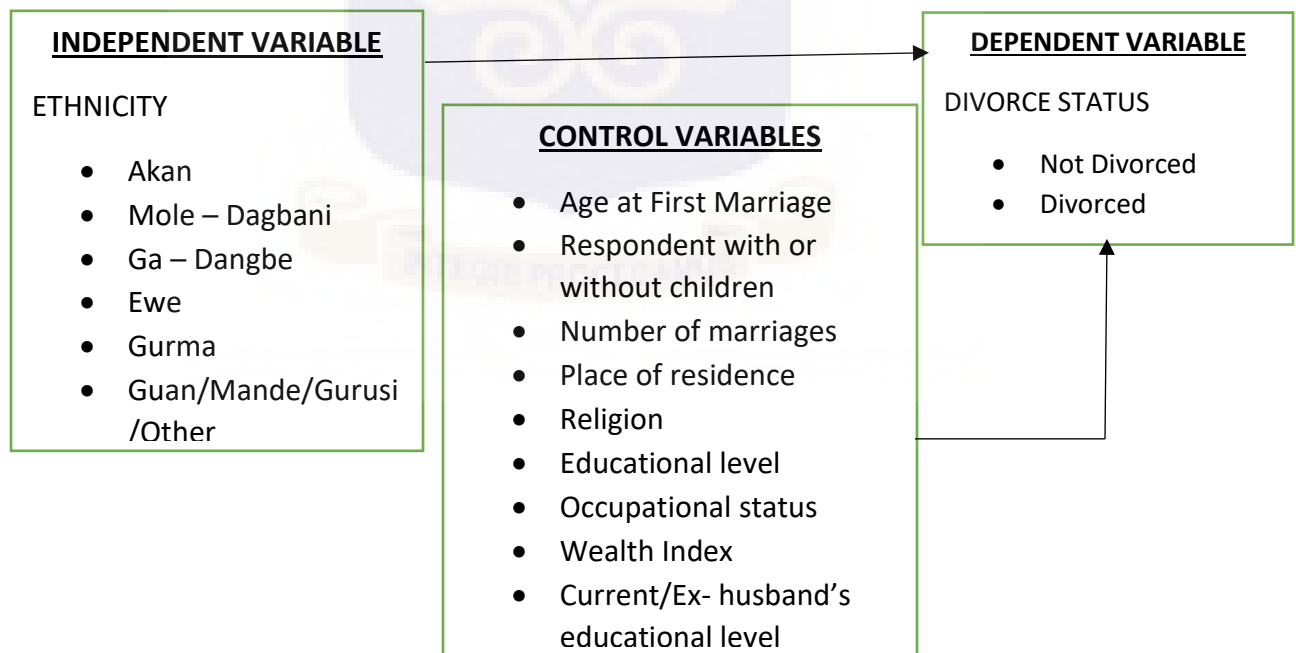
The rational choice theory which is originally an economic theory is based on the assumption that human decisions are taken rationally. Thus, a person will take a decision if he knows it will yield to his benefit. Klein and White (2002) related this theory to the family institution. Thus, most family decisions are taken rationally. The practices of ethnic groups will influence their marriage and divorce decisions. Thus, a Ga-Dangbe wife who knows she may end up not returning her bride wealth in case of a divorce because her husband may wave it off in order not to compensate her will go in for a divorce. This is regardless of the fact that the bride wealth in this society is high. Although this ethnic group is patrilineal with high bride wealth, the divorce practice of Ga-Dangbes makes it easy for one to opt for a divorce. However, a Mole – Dagbani woman will not seek divorce although their bride wealth is not expensive (Mahama 2004). This is because of the structure of the Mole-Dagbani society. Children in this society belong to the father and his family. Hence, in case of a divorce the wife loses

custody of the children. Even when the man is unable to take care of the child, he or she is given to the closest female relative of his (Mahama 2004). Thus, although a wife may be able to return her bride wealth in case of a divorce, she may stay in the marriage in order not to lose custody of her children. On the other hand, an Akan woman will easily seek for a divorce not only because the bride wealth she has to return is not expensive, but also because she does not lose her children as they belong to her kin group.

## 2.12 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, the conceptual framework will outline the form this work will take. In this framework, the independent variable and other socio-economic and demographic variables that are associated with divorce are shown.

**Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework of independent (ethnicity), control and outcome (divorce status) variables**



ADAPTED AND MODIFIED FROM BRYANT 2010

In the figure above, a framework of factors that can predict divorce have been drawn for the purposes of this study. After the review of literature, these variables have been settled on for this study. The main focus of this work to examine the relationship between ethnicity and divorce. However, other factors that can predict one's divorce status have been acknowledged and controlled for. Researchers have established the fact that there is a relationship between ethnicity and divorce. As discussed in the literature above, matrilineal ethnic groups have a higher divorce rate than patrilineal ethnic groups. Reasons given for this include, value of bride wealth, allegiance of wife to her extended family versus her husband, and the type of residency practiced by the couple. The control variables include age at first marriage, respondents with or without children, number of marriages, place of residence, religion, educational level, occupational status, wealth index and current/ex-husband's educational level. The educational level of a wife's current or ex-husband alone is looked at because information on the educational level of current/ex-wife of the men was not taken in the data used for this study. These variables as discussed in the review section can determine the divorce status of individuals. Thus, these factors will have to be controlled for.

### **2.13 HYPOTHESES STATEMENTS**

Based on the statement of problem, objectives and literature reviewed, these hypotheses have been postulated;

1. Akans are more likely to divorce than Ga-Dangbes
2. There is an inverse relationship between age at first marriage and divorce status, and
3. Urban dwellers are more likely to divorce than rural dwellers.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the source of data used for this study, where it was collected from, the sample size, how variables are measured, mode of analysis and the limitations associated with the data.

#### **3.1 SOURCE OF DATA**

The research employs secondary data, the 2014 Ghana Demographic and Health Survey. As part of the global Demographic and Health Survey program (DHS), partner countries are expected to conduct this survey every five years. Since 1988, Ghana has been conducting this survey with the most current conducted in 2014. It is a household survey conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) with help from its donor partners. Respondents sampled and selected for this survey are a representation of the national population. This survey employs a multi-stage probability sampling method to select areas where the survey will be conducted. Again a systematic sampling method was used to select the various households. Females between the ages 15 to 49 representing a total of 9,396 in the selected households were interviewed and males between the ages of 15 to 59 representing 4,388 from every other household selected were also interviewed. Like its name suggests, information collected from respondents were their demographic information like age, ethnicity, marital status and more as well as health information like children's anemic status, information on HIV/AIDS, malaria and more.

### 3.2 UNIT OF ANALYSIS

This research is conducted separately for women and men. After considering the dependent variable and weighting the data, the sample size to be used for this research is 6,049 for the women and 2,494 for men. This is made up of males and females who have ever married within the ages of 15 to 59 and 15 to 49 years respectively. The ever married excluded widows and widowers as their marriage was disrupted as result of death and therefore were not at a risk of divorce. This category represented 269 women and 38 men. Again, never married respondents representing 3041 women and 1866 men were excluded from the sample as they have never been married and therefore are also not at a risk of divorce. Cohabiting couples of 1213 women and 335 men and separated couples representing 370 women and 84 men have been added to the sample as the former recognized under the laws of Ghana as type of marriage and the latter in GDHS was measured as not living together with partner. Thus, since the law recognizes living together as a type of marriage then not living together anymore can be considered as a form of divorce. Consequently, 1213 and 335 cohabitating women and men respectively have been added to the married category which originally was 4243 for the women and 1967 for the men. Again, the separated category for both female and male respondents have been added to the divorced category which was originally 260 for the women and 98 for the men. Thus, the sample size for the women and men is 6084 and 2469 respectively. However, after weighting the data, the final sample size for the women came to 6049 and that of the men was 2494 respondents.

### **3.3 DATA ANALYSIS**

Quantitative methods of analyses were used for this study with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS, version 23) software. The three main types of quantitative data analyses techniques were used; univariate analysis, bivariate analysis and multivariate analysis. At the univariate stage the description of the characteristics of each variable was presented. Simple frequencies were used with results presented in tabular form, or as bar graphs or pie charts. This was done because all the variables of interest are categorical in nature. The bivariate analysis was done using cross- tabulations (performing Chi-square tests) to establish whether there is an association between the independent variable and the dependent variable as well as the control and dependent variables. The results are presented as percentages in a tabular form. In the last stage of analysis - multivariate analysis - a binary logistic regression is used to explore the strength of the relationship between the explanatory and outcome variables. This has been done as the variable of interest, divorce status, is dichotomous. Maximum likelihood estimation method of estimating the quantum of the relationship was used to maximize the success of the category of interest in the outcome variable which is divorce.

### **3.4 MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES**

The manner in which variables were measured in the 2014 GDHS was used as a guide for measuring all the variables (independent, control and dependent variables) in this study. However, some variables were filtered through and or re-categorized for the purpose of this study.

### **3.4.1 INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

Ethnicity in the 2014 GDHS dataset was categorized into nine groups; Akan, Mole – Dabgani, Ga – Danbge, Ewe, Guan, Gurusi, Gurma, Mande and Others. However for the purpose of this study, the ethnic groups have been categorized into six groups; Akan, Mole – Dabgani, Ga – Danbge, Ewe, Gurma, Gurusi/Guan/Mande/Others. This has been done for two reasons. First, my interest is mainly in three ethnic groups; the Akans, Mole-Dagbani and Ga-Dangbe. This is to be able to explore the differences in two patrilineal ethnic groups vis-à-vis Akans to see if indeed the divorce rates for Mole-Dagbani and Ga-Dangbes are lower than that of the Akans. Second, categories less than 5% have been merged into one category. This is to minimize the error during the analyses.

### **3.4.2 DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

In the 2014 GDHS dataset, marital status was the variable of interest with six categories; never married, living with partner, married, widowed, divorced and no longer living together/separated. Since the variable of interest is divorce status, the dependent variable will be measured as divorced status with two categories; divorced and not divorced. Thus, the original categories have been regrouped into divorced which is made up of divorced and no longer living together/separated respondents and not divorced made up of married and living together respondents.

### **3.4.3 CONTROL VARIABLES**

Age at first marriage in the original survey is measured as a continuous variable with the ages for the female respondents ranging from 10 years to 49 years and 15 years to 55 years for the male respondent. In this study however, age at first marriage has been put into three categories; below 18 years, 18 to

21 years and above 21 years. Age at first marriage has been categorized this way because the legal age for marriage in Ghana is 18 years. Hence, the first category was done for people who got married before the legal marriage age. Again, according to the GDHS 2014 report, the median age at first marriage was for females between 25 and 49 was 20.7 in 2014. Thus by age 21 half of the women who by the time of the survey were aged between 25 and 49 were married. Hence, the second classification has been categorized to the end of the age by which half of most of the respondents were married. It must be noted that the female categorization has been used for the males because results from both respondents can be assessed fairly even though literature suggests that men marry relatively older than women.

The variable with or without children in the 2014 GDHS dataset has been measured as a continuous variable with children ever born as the variable name. However, in this study, this variable has been put into two categories; with children and without children. Respondents with at least a child have been put in the “with children” category and those with no children have been put in the without children category. This is because my interest is in whether the respondent has at least a child or not and not necessarily on the number of children a respondent has.

Number of marriages has been measured as a dichotomous variable, married once and married more than once, and this same measurement has been used for this study. The measurement has been left as it is because of our interest in remarriage regardless of how many times one has remarried.

Place of residence in this study has been measured as urban and rural, dichotomous, just as it has been measured in the 2014 GDHS dataset.

Religion in 2014 GDHS dataset has been measured as a categorical variable with 10 categories; Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal/Charismatic, Other Christian, Islam,

Traditional/Spiritualist, No religion and other. However for the purpose of this study, religion has been put into four categories; Christian (being made up of all the Christian denomination), Islam, Traditional/Spiritualist and No Religion/Other. All Christian denominations have been put together as my interest is mainly focused on the type of religion and not on the denominations of the respondents. Also, other religions were added to no religion as only one person was in that category for the male respondents and two for the female respondents hence having no significant impact when added to the no religion category.

Educational level of the respondents in this study has been measured as a categorical variable with five categories; no education, primary, junior high, senior high and higher. This is the same way the original variable has been classified.

Occupational status of respondents will be derived from the occupation of the respondents. In the GDHS 2014 occupation of respondents has been group into 10 categories, not working, professional/technical/ managerial, clerical, sales, agriculture – self-employed, agriculture – employee, services, skilled manual and unskilled manual. However, for this study occupation of respondents will be reclassified into two groups; no occupation and have occupation. Thus, respondents who are not working are put into the no occupation category and all other are put in the have occupation category. This is variable has been used as it helps us to understand to some extent the level of autonomy of respondents. Also, it gives a more current working status of respondents than their employment status in the dataset.

Wealth Index has been measured in the original survey as quintiles; poorest, poor, middle, richer and richest. This same measurement has been used in this study. This is to help us fully understand the divorce status in relation to one's wealth index as described in literature.

Current or Ex – partner’s educational level has been put into five categories in the 2014 GDHS dataset; no education, primary, secondary, higher and don’t know. These categories have been maintained in this study. Again this variable is only measured in relation to the female respondents as this information in the original data was taken from the female respondents. Thus, the male dataset excluded this variable.

### **3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study used a secondary data hence desired measurements and variables which would have made the study more comprehensible are unavailable. For example, the ethnicity of partners are asked for only currently married respondents and not for formerly married people. This has made it impossible to do inter- ethnic and intra- ethnic marriage comparison on divorce. In this survey, further questions were not asked on when the divorce occurred. Thus, we are unable to determine the duration of the marriage especially in reference to age at first marriage. Again, the data limited our study to current divorce status and not an ever divorced status. This data could have been derived from the number of marriages variable. However, the current data does not allow us to tell if a remarriage was as a result of the respondent being divorced or widowed. This ambiguity would have misrepresented the results achieved from the study. We are also unable to tell the number of divorces respondents have had from the number of marriages variable. Also, the divorce status of men in polygamous relationship was difficult to tell when the divorce is between him and his subsequent wives. This is so because detailed information was taken only on the first wife and not subsequent ones.

Another limitation the data presents is in relation to the occupational status and educational level of the respondents. Since information on occupational status and educational level of respondents taken are current, we are unable to tell if that was the occupational status or the level of education a

respondent had as of the time of divorce. Also, although the percentage of men with no occupation reflects the situation on the ground, it may introduce some level of bias in the analysis as it is small (1%). Again wealth index in the original study was taken for the household. Hence, it is difficult to tell if the wealth belongs to the wife or husband. Another limitation associated with the wealth index is the inability to tell whether the household wealth was gained before or after the divorce. This is because information on the household wealth is current.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **SOCIO – DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the socio – demographic characteristics of respondents for each of the variables of interest. This is to provide a detailed description of the distribution of respondents across the categories of each variable. The variables of interest include divorce status, ethnicity, age at first marriage, respondents with or without children, number of marriages, place of residence, religion, educational level, occupational status, current/ex – husband’s educational level and wealth index. They are analyzed separately for male and female respondents with the aid of appropriate charts and tables.

#### **4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS**

##### **4.1.1 ETHNICITY**

In this study, the majority of the respondents for both females and males are Akans (49% and 47.1%) respectively. While the female respondents who are Ga-Dangbe represent 7.7% of the female respondents, they make up 9.4% of the male respondents. The Gurma ethnic group represents the lowest proportion for both sexes, 6.3% for females and 5.9% for males. Table 4.1 presents the ethnic distribution of respondents.

**Table 4.1 Percentage distribution of respondents by ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Akan	2965	49.0	1176	47.1
Mole-Dagbani	936	15.5	377	15.1
Ga-Dangbe	467	7.7	234	9.4
Ewe	803	13.3	345	13.8
Gurma	382	6.3	147	5.9
Guan/Gurusi/Mande/Others	497	8.2	215	8.6
Total	6049	100.0	2494	100.00

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GHDS

#### 4.1.2 AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE

In this study, women who first got married below the age of 18 represent 35% of the female respondents while men in this category are only 4.6% of the total male respondents. Women and men who first got married between the ages of 18 and 21 are 32.6% and 22.2% respectively. Again, while women who first married above the age of 21 made up 32.4% of the female respondents, men who did same represent 73.2% of the total men sample. Thus, approximately 7 in every 10 men first got married above the age of 21. This trend is in agreement with literature. Men generally marry at older ages than women (Goldscheider and Waite, 1986; Johnson and Dye, 2005; Uecker and Stokes, 2008).

**Table 4.2 Percentage distribution of respondents by age at first marriage**

Age at First Marriage	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Below 18	2117	35.0	116	4.6
18 – 21	1975	32.6	554	22.2
Above 21	1957	32.4	1824	73.2

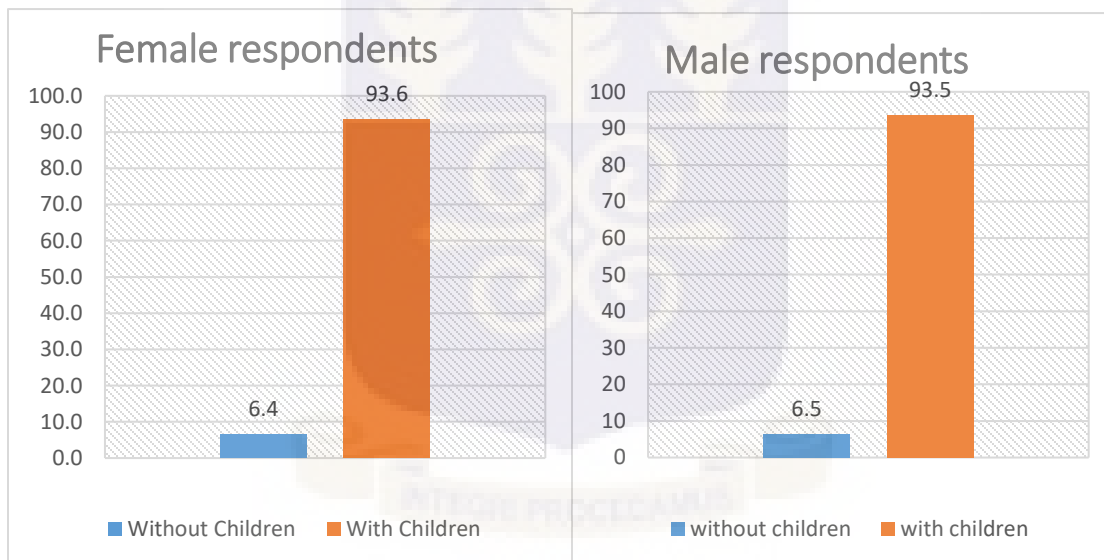
Total	6049	100.0	2494	100.0
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Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

#### 4.1.3 RESPONDENTS WITH OR WITHOUT CHILDREN

Not having children is one of the reasons why couples will seek for a divorce. In this study, the distribution of both male and female respondents with or without children is almost even. Out of 6049 female respondents, 6.4% of them are without children and out of 2493 male respondents, 6.5% of them are also without children. This trend reiterates the importance of having children in Ghana and by extension sub-Saharan Africa.

**Figure 4.1, Percentage distribution of respondents by respondents with or without children**

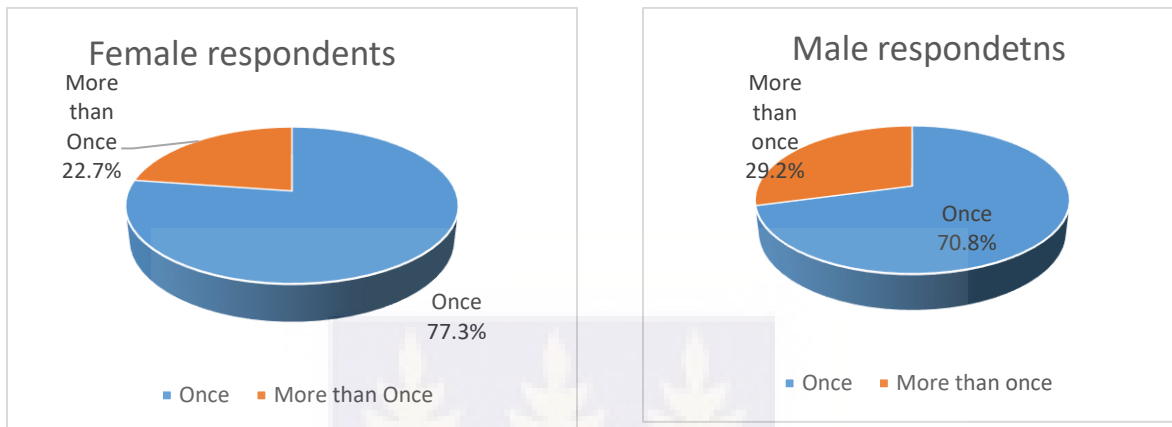


Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

#### 4.1.4 NUMBER OF MARRIAGES

In this study, more men have married more than once than women. Whiles 22.7% of the female respondents have married more than once, 29.2% males have done same.

**Figure 4.2 Percentage distribution of respondents by number of marriages.**

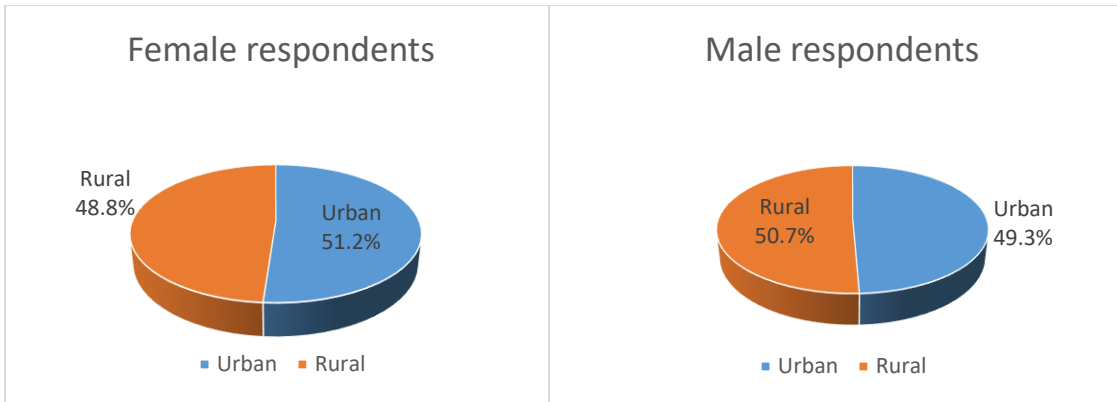


Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

#### **4.1.5 PLACE OF RESIDENCE**

In this study a little more than half of the female respondents reside in urban Ghana (51.2%). On the other hand, 50.7% of the male respondents live in rural Ghana with 49.3% of them living in urban Ghana. This reflects the population distribution of Ghana. In 2010, about 51% of Ghanaians were living in urban areas (GDHS, 2014)

**Figure 4.3 Percentage distribution of respondents by place of residence**

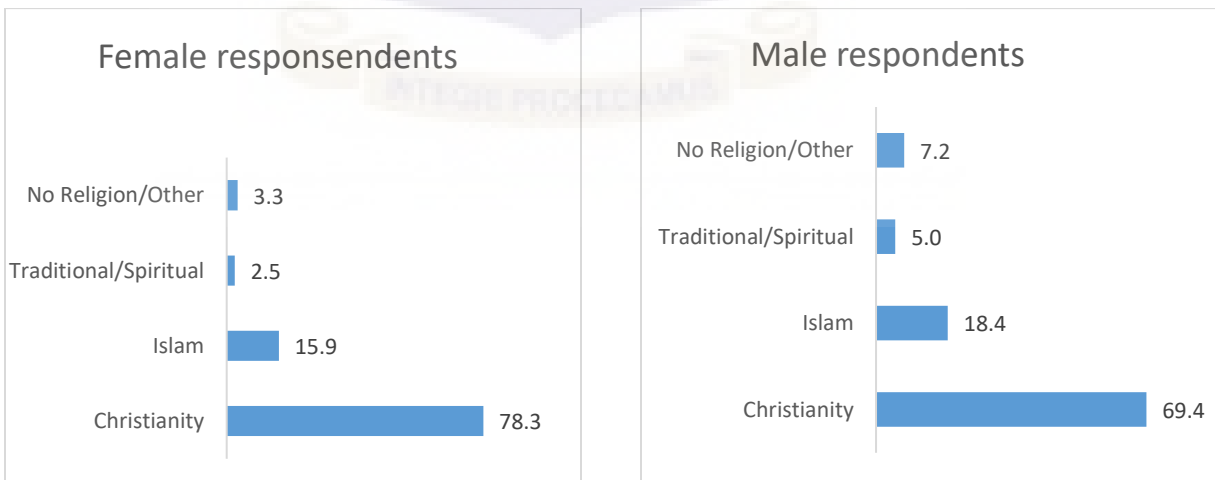


Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

#### 4.1.6 RELIGION

For this study, majority of female and male respondents are Christians with 78.3% and 69.4% respectively as shown in the graphs below. However, only 2.5% of the female respondents reported to be Traditionalist or Spiritualist and 5.0% of male respondents reported same representing the lowest category for religion. Furthermore, 3.3% of female respondents and 7.2% of the male respondents belong to no religion or other religion.

**Figure 4.4, Percentage distribution of respondents by religion**



Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

#### 4.1.7 EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

According to the table below, female respondents with no education are about 10% more than the male respondents with no education (26.1% versus 16.0%). Women with primary education are 19.2% of the female respondents and the male respondents are 12.7%. Men with junior high education are 3% more than women with junior high education (43.1% versus 40.1%). Again, more men have a secondary education than the women, 16.2% and 9.5% respectively. For both sexes, people with a higher level of education are the least. However, 7% more male respondents have a higher education than females. This is a reflection of the educational situation in Ghana and by extension sub-Saharan Africa.

**Table 4.3, Percentage distribution of respondents by their educational level**

Educational Level	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No Education	1581	26.1	399	16.0
Primary	1162	19.2	316	12.7
Junior High	2427	40.1	1074	43.1
Senior High	575	9.5	405	16.2
Higher	305	5.0	300	12.0
Total	6049	100.0	2494	100.0

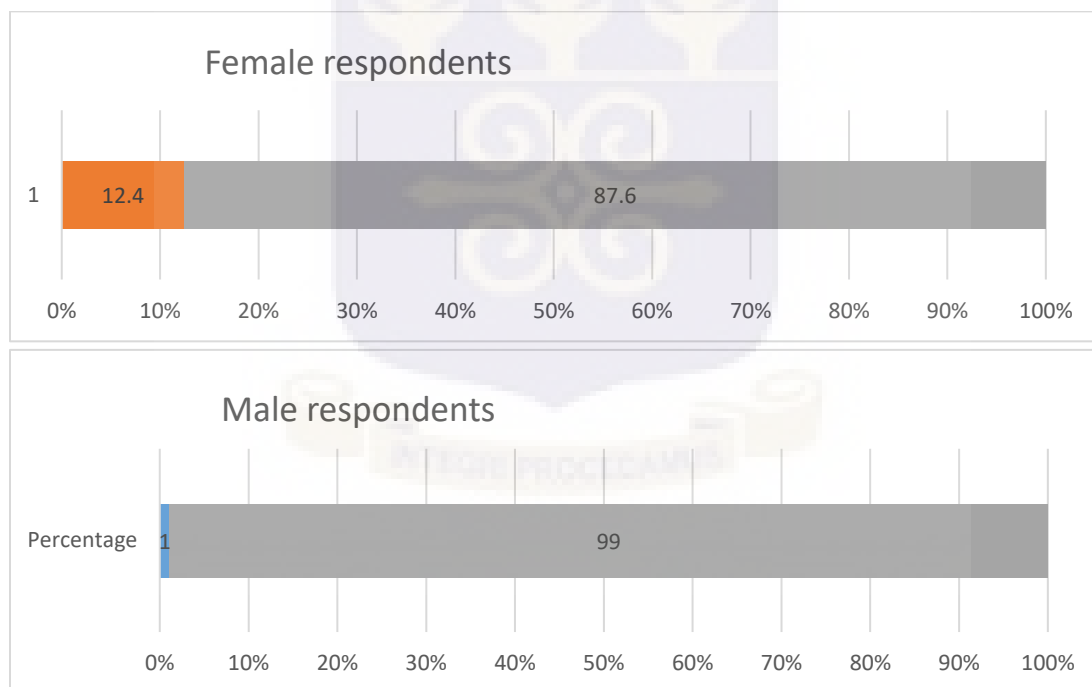
Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS.

#### 4.1.8 OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

In the figure below, it can be seen that more females have an occupation as compared to the men. While 12.4% of females had no occupation, only 1% of the males had no occupation.

This is no surprise as men are still considered as breadwinners for the families and women are also supposed to be the home makers and caretakers of their families (Becker et al. 1977; Killewald 2016; Jalovaara 2003)

**Figure 4.5, Percentage distribution of respondents by occupational status**



Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

#### 4.1.9 WEALTH INDEX

From the table below for both sexes, majority fall under the richest households, 22.7% for females and 24.1% for the males. Women and men from the poorest households are 17.5% and 17.2% respectively representing the lowest proportion. Again, 0.7% more men than women are poorer (18.8% vis-à-vis 18.1%).

**Table 4.4, Percentage distribution of respondents by wealth Index**

Wealth Index	Females		Males	
	Frequency	Total	Frequency	Total
Poorest	1056	17.5	430	17.2
Poorer	1098	18.1	468	18.8
Middle	1230	20.3	483	19.4
Richer	1293	21.4	512	20.5
Richest	1373	22.7	601	24.1
Total	6049	100.0	2494	100.0

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

#### 4.1.10 CURRENT/EX-HUSBAND'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

In this table, more than half of the women representing 57.5% reported that their partners have or had a secondary education. Again, 2.3% reported not knowing the educational level

of their ex or current partner which is the lowest number followed by respondents who reported their ex or current partners have a higher education (11.9%).

**Table 4.5, Percentage distribution of female respondents by current/ex partner's educational level.**

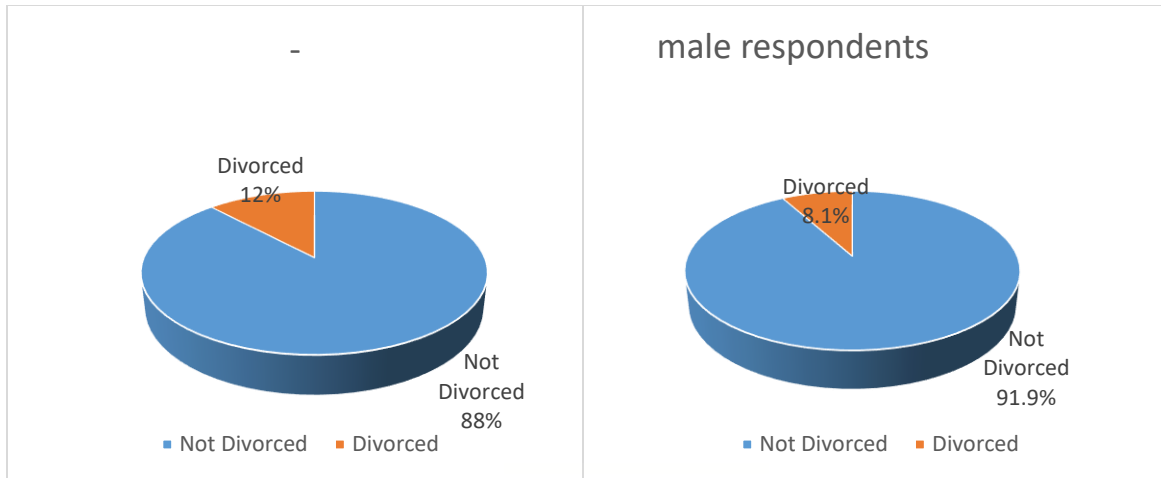
Current/Ex-Husband's Educational Level	Females	
	Frequency	Total
No Education	1172	19.4
Primary	535	8.8
Secondary	3479	57.5
Higher	722	11.9
Don't Know	141	2.3
Total	6049	100.0

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

#### 4.1.11 DIVORCE STATUS

In the charts below, more females are divorced than males. Exactly 12% of the total female respondents are divorced and 8.1% of the total male respondents are divorced. This could be the reason why most studies in the sub-Saharan Africa have focused on women and not men (Takyi 2001; Takyi and Gyimah 2007; Arnaldo 2004; Reiners 2003; Takyi and Broughton 2006).

**Figure 4.6, Percentage distribution of respondents by divorce status.**



Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

#### 4.2 SUMMARY

The distribution of the socio- demographic characteristics within the categories differ for women and men. For some of the variables, the distribution reflects the situation in Ghana. For example it can be seen from the educational level distribution that men tend to achieve higher education at all levels than women. This depicts the situation in Ghana and sub-Sahara Africa at large. Although a lot of education and sensitization have gone into the education of females, much still needs to be done. Again, women with no occupation are more than men in this same category. This reflects the role of men being the bread winners and care takers of their homes. Men in the Ghanaian society are expected to work and take care of their families. Such responsibilities are not imposed on women although in recent times there have been an increase in female labour force participation. Thus, society frowns on a husband not working than a wife not working.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **ETHNICITY AND DIVORCE STATUS IN GHANA**

#### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the relationship between the explanatory variable, ethnicity, and the outcome variable, divorce status are discussed. The relationship between the control variables and divorce status will be explored as well. Cross tabulations and chi square tests are used in this chapter for the analyses. Also, regression models will be run to analyze the quantum of the relationship between the variables.

#### **5.1 ASSOCIATION BETWEEN CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS AND THEIR DIVORCE STATUS**

##### **5.1.1 ETHNICITY AND DIVORCE STATUS**

From Table 5.1.1 below, it can be seen that there is a significant association between ethnicity and divorce status for both female and male respondents (p-value < 0.01 for both respondents). For both sexes, Ga-Dangbes have the highest proportion of divorced persons for both women (17.8%) and men (13.7%). Akans have the next highest proportion of divorced women (14.7%) while Ewes have the next highest proportion of divorced men (10.1%). The Gurma ethnic group have the least proportion of divorced persons for both female and male respondents (2.9% and 4.1% respectively). With the exception of the Gurma ethnic group, women have higher proportions of divorced persons in all categories than men.

**Table 5.1, Association between ethnicity and divorce status of respondents**

Ethnicity	Females			Males		
	Divorce Status			Divorce Status		
	Divorced	Not Divorced	N	Divorced	Not Divorced	N
Akan	14.7	85.3	2965	8.3	92.7	1176
Mole-Dagbani	5.1	94.9	936	4.2	95.8	377
Ga-Dangbe	17.8	82.2	467	13.7	86.3	234
Ewe	13.1	86.9	803	10.1	89.9	345
Gurma	2.9	97.1	382	4.1	95.9	147
Guan/Gurusi/Mande/Other	9.3	90.7	497	7.5	92.5	215
Total	12.0	88.0	6049	8.1	91.9	2494
	$\chi^2=110.883$ df=5 p-value<0.01			$\chi^2=22.511$ df=5 p-value<0.01		

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

### 5.1.2 AGE AT FIRST MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE STATUS

In this study, there is no significant relationship between age at first marriage and divorce status at a 95% significance level for the men. Thus, age at first marriage does not determine one's divorce status for the men. On the other hand, females who got married before age 18 years for the first time have the highest proportion of divorced persons of 14.1%. Those who first got married above 21 years have the least proportion of divorcees of 10.6%. It can be again noted that women have higher proportions of divorcees in all categories than men. This could be because more females marry at relatively younger age than men. Thus, they are less matured for marriage.

**Table 5.2 Relationship between age at first marriage and divorce status of respondents**

Age at First Marriage	Females			Males		
	Divorce Status			Divorce Status		
	Divorced	Not Divorced	N	Divorced	Not Divorced	N
Below 18	14.1	85.9	2117	8.6	91.4	116
18 to 21	11.2	88.8	1975	7.6	92.4	554
Above 21	10.6	89.4	1957	8.3	91.7	1824
Total	12.0	88.0	6049	8.1	91.9	2494
	$\chi^2=13.120$ <b>df= 2</b> <b>p-value&lt; 0.01</b>			$\chi^2=0.314$ <b>df= 2</b> <b>p-value&gt; 0.05</b>		

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

### 5.1.3 RESPONDENT WITH OR WITHOUT CHILDREN AND DIVORCE STATUS

In this study, there is no significant relationship between whether respondents have children or not and divorce status for both respondents at a 95% confidence level. Thus, 10.9% of the female respondents without children are divorced as compared with 12.1% of respondents with children who are divorced. Again, 11% of male respondents who are without children are divorced and 8% of them with children are divorced.

**Table 5.1.3 Association between respondent with or without children and divorce status**

Respondent with or without children	Females			Males		
	Divorce Status			Divorce Status		
	Divorced	Not Divorced	N	Divorced	Not Divorced	N
Without Children	10.9	89.1	387	11.0	89.0	164
With Children	12.1	87.9	5662	8.0	92.0	2330
Total	12.0	88.0	6049	8.1	91.9	2494
	$\chi^2= 0.544$ <b>df= 1</b> <b>p-value &gt; 0.05</b>			$\chi^2= 1.832$ <b>df= 1</b> <b>p-value &gt; 0.05</b>		

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

#### 5.1.4 NUMBER OF MARRIAGES AND DIVORCE STATUS

Women who have been married more than once have more divorced people than those who have married only once (13.8% and 11.5% respectively). However, for the male respondents it the other way round. Men who have married once have a higher proportion divorced than those who have married more than once (9.1% and 5.9% respectively). With this variable too, women in all the categories are more divorced as compared to the men.

**Table 5.4 Relationship between number of marriages and divorce status of respondents**

Number of Marriages	Females			Males		
	Divorce Status			Divorce Status		
	Divorced	Not Divorced	N	Divorced	Not Divorced	N
Once	11.5	88.5	4676	9.1	90.9	1765
More than Once	13.8	86.2	1373	5.9	94.1	729
Total	12.0	88.0	6049	8.1	91.9	2494
	$\chi^2 = 5.036$	$df = 1$	$p\text{-value} < 0.05$	$\chi^2 = 7.137$	$df = 1$	$p\text{-value} < 0.01$

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

#### 5.1.5 PLACE OF RESIDENCE AND DIVORCE STATUS

The relationship between place of residence and divorce status is significant for women and not for men ( $p\text{-value} < 0.01$  and  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$  respectively). While 13.9% of women in urban areas are divorced, 10.1% of the total number of women living in rural areas are divorced. For the men, 8.8% of those who live in urban areas are divorced and 7.5% of those who live in rural areas are divorced.

**Table 5.5 Relationship between place of residence and divorce status of respondents**

Place of Residence	Females			Males		
	Divorce Status			Divorce Status		
	Divorced	Not Divorced	N	Divorced	Not Divorced	N
Urban	13.9	86.1	3094	8.8	91.2	1230
Rural	10.1	89.9	2955	7.5	92.5	1264
Total	12.0	88.0	6049	8.1	91.9	2494
	$\chi^2=21.111$ $df=1$ $p\text{-value}<0.01$			$\chi^2=1.320$ $df=1$ $p\text{-value}>0.05$		

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

### 5.1.6 RELIGION AND DIVORCE STATUS

From Table 5.6, the highest proportion of divorced persons is amongst Christians and people with no religion/others for female and male respondents respectively (13.5% and 16.2%). Females of the Islamic faith have the lowest proportion divorced, 5.3%, and the lowest for the male respondent is 4.8% representing people of Traditional/Spiritual faith. Here, there is a significant relationship between religion and divorce status for both respondents. Again, with the exception of people with no religion, women seem to have more divorced persons than men within all the categories.

**Table 5.6 Relationship between religion and divorce status of respondents**

Religion	Females			Males		
	Divorce Status			Divorce Status		
	Divorced	Not Divorced	N	Divorced	Not Divorced	N
Christianity	13.5	86.5	4736	8.3	91.7	1730
Islam	5.3	94.7	963	5.4	94.6	460
Traditional/Spiritual	7.4	92.6	148	4.8	95.2	124
No Religion/Other	12.4	87.6	202	16.2	83.8	180
Total	12.0	88.0	6049	8.1	91.9	2494
	$\chi^2 = 54.327$ df= 3 p-value < 0.01			$\chi^2 = 21.895$ df= 3 p-value < 0.01		

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

### 5.1.7 EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND DIVORCE STATUS

In this study, women in all the educational level categories have higher proportions of divorcees than men. For women with no education, 6.5% of them are divorced. However, only 3% of men in the same category are divorced. This category has the least proportion divorced for both respondents. People with primary education have the highest proportion of divorced persons for both respondents (15.7% for women and 11.1% for men). Women with higher education have a 0.1% less divorcees than men in the same category. This result is in agreement with studies of Takyi (2001). The relationship between educational level of women and their divorce status is not linear; women with no education and those with a higher education have lower proportion of divorcees as compared to the other levels. Although studies in Ghana have not included men, the same trend can be noticed for them. Table 5.7 shows the association between educational level of respondents and their divorce status.

**Table 5.7 Association between educational level and divorce status for respondents**

Educational Level	Females			Males		
	Divorce Status			Divorce Status		
	Divorced	Not Divorced	N	Divorced	Not Divorced	N
No Education	6.5	93.5	1581	3.0	97.0	399
Primary	15.7	84.3	1162	11.1	88.9	816
Junior High	15.0	85.0	2426	9.1	90.9	1074
Senior High	9.9	90.1	575	9.2	90.8	405
Higher	6.9	93.1	304	7.0	93.0	300
Total	12.0	88.0	6049	8.1	91.9	2494
	$\chi^2 = 90.376$ df= 4 p-value< 0.01			$\chi^2 = 20.252$ df= 4 p-value< 0.01		

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

### 5.1.8 OCCUPATIONAL STATUS AND DIVORCE STATUS

From the table below, there is a significant relationship between occupational status and divorce status of the male respondents. However, it is the opposite for the female respondents. Men with no occupation and are divorced represent 23.1% of the total proportion of men with no occupation. For men who have an occupation, only 8% of them are divorced.

**Table 5.8, Relationship between occupational status and divorce status of respondents**

Occupational Status	Females			Males		
	Divorce Status			Divorce Status		
	Divorced	Not Divorced	N	Divorced	Not Divorced	N
No Occupation	10.4	89.6	753	23.1	76.9	26
Have Occupation	12.3	87.7	5296	8.0	92.0	2467
Total	12.0	88.0	6049	8.1	91.9	2494
	$\chi^2 = 2.278$	$df = 1$	$p\text{-value} > 0.05$	$\chi^2 = 7.841$	$df = 1$	$p\text{-value} < 0.01$

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

### 5.1.9 HOUSEHOLD WEALTH AND DIVORCE STATUS

For both males and females, respondents who come from households in the middle wealth quintile have the highest proportion of divorcees (18.6% for females and 10.6% for males). The lowest proportion for both sexes is among respondents from the poorest households; 3.8% for female respondents and 3.3% for the male respondents. Female respondents in all categories are more divorced than the males. There is a significant relationship between wealth index and divorce status for both respondents.

**Table 5.9 Relationship between wealth index and divorce status of respondents**

Wealth Index	Females			Males		
	Divorce Status			Divorce Status		
	Divorced	Not Divorced	N	Divorced	Not Divorced	N
Poorest	3.8	96.2	1056	3.3	96.7	430
Poorer	12.2	87.8	1098	10.3	89.7	468
Middle	18.6	81.4	1230	10.6	89.4	483
Richer	15.7	84.3	1293	9.0	91.0	512
Richest	8.9	91.9	1373	7.3	92.7	601
Total	12.0	88.0	6049	8.1	91.9	2494
	<b><math>\chi^2=146.531</math> df= 4 p-value&lt; 0.01</b>			<b><math>\chi^2= 21.883</math> df= 4 p-value&lt; 0.01</b>		

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

#### 5.1.10 CURRENT/EX - HUSBAND'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

In this table, the proportion of divorced women respondents who do not know their current/ex-husband's educational level is 39%. Thus, nearly 4 in every 10 females who did not know their current or former husband's educational level are divorced. Females with a husband or ex-husband who has had a secondary education have 13.3% of them divorced. The proportion of women divorced whose husband/ex-husband's had a primary education are 5.4%.

**Table 5.10, Relationship between current/ex- husband’s educational level and divorce status of female respondents**

Current/Ex- educational level	husband’s		Females
	Divorce Status		
	Divorced	Not Divorced	N
No Education	8.9	91.9	1172
Primary	5.4	94.6	535
Secondary	13.3	96.7	3479
Higher	10.4	89.6	722
Don’t Know	39.0	61.0	141
Total	12.0	88.0	6049
			<b><math>\chi^2= 137.596</math>      <b>df= 4</b>      <b>p-value&lt; 0.01</b></b>

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

## 5.2 SUMMARY

The association between the explanatory variables and outcome variables for women and men vary from variable to variable. Ethnicity, number of marriages, religion, educational level and wealth index were significantly associated with divorce for both respondents. Age at first marriage, place of residence and current/ex-husband’s educational status are significantly associated with divorce for only women. Occupational status was a significant predictor only for the men. Respondents with or without children was did not have a significant relationship with divorce for both women and men. The next stage of analysis will ascertain whether the associations still hold when other variables are controlled for.

### **5.3 BINARY LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS**

In this section the explanatory, control and outcome variables are analyzed using regression analysis. There are two models - the first has the explanatory variable (ethnicity) and the outcome variable (divorce status) alone. In the second model, other variables that are associated with divorce are controlled for. Binary logistic regression models are used as the outcome variable is dichotomous. The beta co-efficient, odds ratio also with its confidence interval and the significance level will be reported in a tabular form. Results and interpretations will be made in relation to the odds ratio. All reference categories have an odds ratio of 1.00. Categories with odds ratio more than 1.00 means divorce is high for that category in relation to the reference category and an odds ratio less than 1.00 means divorce is low for that category in relation to the reference category. Results for both models will be presented in this section too. Below are Table 5.11 and 5.12 representing model one for both female and male respondents and model two for the female and male respondents.

**Table 5.11, Binary logistic regression of ethnicity and divorce status**

Divorce Status						
	Females			Males		
Variables	B	P-value	Exp $\beta$ [C.I 95%]	B	P-value	Exp $\beta$ [C.I 95%]
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
Akan (RC)	0.00	-	1.00	0.00	-	1.00
Mole-Dagbani	-1.16	0.00	0.32 [0.23, 0.43]	-0.65	0.01	0.50 [0.29,0.86]
Ga-Dangbe	0.23	0.08	1.26 [0.98, 1.63]	0.57	0.01	1.77[1.16, 2.71]
Ewe	-0.13	0.26	0.88 [0.70, 1.10]	0.21	0.31	1.23[0.82, 1.85]
Gurma	-1.78	0.00	0.17 [0.09, 0.31]	-0.71	0.09	0.49[0.21, 1.12]
Guan/Gurusi/Mande /Other	-0.53	0.00	0.59 [0.43, 0.81]	-0.11	0.70	0.88[0.52, 1.55]
Constant	-1.76 p-value < 0.01			-2.40 p-value < 0.01		
Nagelkerke R-square	0.041			0.021		
Model Chi-square	131.26 (5)			22.41 (5)		
Predicted Percentage Correct	88%			91.9%		

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

RC = Reference Category

## 5.4 RESULTS I

In this model for the female and male respondents, the Nagelkerke  $R^2$  value is 0.041 and 0.021 respectively. This means that ethnicity explains 4.1% and 2.1% of the variation in the divorce status for female and male respondents respectively. The constant beta for the female and male respondents were -1.76 and -2.40 respectively and there was a significant relationship between ethnicity and divorce status at a p-value less than 0.01 for both respondents. The model chi-square is 131.26 for the females and 22.41 for the males. The correct predicted percentage is 88% and 91.9% for female and male respondents respectively. In this model,

Mole-Dagbanis are 68% and 50% less likely to be divorced than Akans for females and males respectively. Ga-Dangbes are 0.262 times more likely to divorce than Akans for the females and 0.177 times more likely to divorce than Akans for the males. Gurma women had the lowest odds of getting a divorce. Thus, they were 83% less likely to divorce than Akan women and the men were also 51% less likely to divorce than Akan men.



Table 5.12, Binary logistic regression for explanatory, control and outcome variables

Divorce Status						
Variables	Females			Males		
	$\beta$	P-value	Exp $\beta$ [95% C.I]	B	P-value	Exp $\beta$ [95% C.I]
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
Akan (RC)	0.00	-	1.00	0.00	-	1.00
Mole-Dagbani	-0.62	0.00	0.54 [0.37, 0.79]	-0.15	0.64	0.86 [0.45, 1.64]
Ga-Dangbe	0.29	0.04	1.34 [1.02, 1.75]	0.65	0.00	1.91 [1.24, 2.99]
Ewe	-0.02	0.90	0.99 [0.78, 1.25]	0.24	0.26	1.27 [0.84, 1.95]
Gurma	-1.21	0.00	0.30 [0.15, 0.59]	-0.28	0.55	0.75 [0.31, 1.89]
Guan/Gurusi/Mande/ Other	-0.12	0.51	0.89 [0.62, 1.27]	0.11	0.73	1.11 [0.60, 2.08]
<b>Age at First Marriage</b>						
Below 18 (RC)	0.00	-	1.00	0.00	-	1.00
18 to 21	-0.28	0.00	0.76 [0.62, 0.92]	-0.35	0.35	0.70 [0.33, 1.48]
Above 21	-0.36	0.00	0.70 [0.56, 0.86]	-0.29	0.41	0.75 [0.37, 1.50]
<b>Respondents with or without children</b>						
Without children (RC)	0.00	-	1.00	0.00	-	1.00
With children	-0.05	0.79	0.95 [0.67, 1.35]	-0.21	0.44	0.81 [0.47, 1.38]
<b>Number of Marriages</b>						
Once (RC)	0.00	-	1.00	0.00	-	1.00
More than once	-0.11	0.27	0.90 [0.74, 1.09]	-0.57	0.00	0.57 [0.39, 0.82]
<b>Place of residence</b>						
Urban (RC)	0.00	-	1.00	0.00	-	1.00
Rural	-0.49	0.00	0.61[0.50, 0.76]	-0.18	0.38	0.83[0.56, 1.25]
<b>Religion</b>						
Christianity (RC)	0.00	-	1.00	0.00	-	1.00
Islam	-0.72	0.00	0.47 [0.34, 0.70]	-0.09	0.74	0.91 [0.53, 1.57]
Traditional/Spiritual	0.16	0.65	1.17 [0.60, 2.30]	-0.15	0.75	1.16 [0.46, 2.92]
No Religion/Other	-0.02	0.92	0.98 [0.61, 1.56]	0.99	0.00	2.69 [1.71, 4.25]

	Females			Males		
	$\beta$	P-value	Exp $\beta$ [95% C.I]	$\beta$	P-value	Exp $\beta$ [95% C.I]
<b>Educational level</b>						
No education (RC)	0.00	-	1.00	0.00	-	1.00
Primary	0.54	0.00	1.72 [1.30, 2.29]	1.10	0.00	3.06 [1.47, 6.16]
Junior High	0.45	0.00	1.58 [1.19, 2.08]	0.82	0.02	2.26 [1.14, 4.50]
Senior High	0.19	0.33	1.21 [0.82, 1.80]	0.81	0.03	2.26 [1.07, 4.78]
Higher	-0.90	0.76	0.92 [0.52, 1.60]	0.68	0.11	1.97 [0.86, 4.52]
<b>Occupational Status</b>						
No Occupation (RC)	0.00	-	1.00	0.00	-	1.00
Have Occupation	0.29	0.03	1.39 [1.04, 1.74]	-1.22	0.01	0.29 [0.12, 0.75]
<b>Wealth Index</b>						
Poorest (RC)	0.00	-	1.00	0.00	-	1.00
Poorer	0.83	0.00	2.33 [1.57, 3.46]	0.96	0.00	2.61 [1.35, 5.04]
Middle	1.11	0.00	3.03 [2.03, 4.51]	0.84	0.02	2.31 [1.16, 4.60]
Richer	0.76	0.00	2.14 [1.39, 3.29]	0.56	0.15	1.74 [0.82, 3.72]
Richest	0.08	0.74	1.09 [0.67, 1.75]	0.33	0.43	1.40 [0.61, 3.17]
<b>Current/Ex-Husband's Educational Level</b>						
No Education (RC)	0.00	-	1.00			
Primary	-1.30	0.00	0.27 [0.17, 0.43]			
Secondary	-0.47	0.00	0.63 [0.47, 0.83]			
Higher	-0.37	0.06	0.69 [0.47, 1.01]			
Don't Know	0.92	0.00	2.52 [1.63, 3.89]			
Constant	-2.18 p-value < 0.01			-2.04 p-value < 0.05		
Nagelkerke R-square	0.12			0.074		
Model Chi-square	389.28 (26)			80.88 (22)		
Predicted Percentage Correct	88%			91.9%		

Source: Compiled by author from 2014 GDHS

RC = Reference Category

## 5.5 RESULTS II

In the second model for the female and male respondents, other determinants of divorce were controlled for. The Nagelkerke  $R^2$  value for the female and male respondents are 0.12 and 0.074 respectively. This means that the variables in this model explain 12% and 7.4% of the variation in the divorce status of the female and male respondents respectively. The constant beta is -2.18 for females and -2.04 for the males with a significant association less than 0.01 and 0.05 respectively. The model chi-square is 389.28 for the females and 80.88 for the males with a correct predicted percentage of 88% and 91.9% respectively. In this model, ethnicity was still significantly associated with divorce status. Mole-Dagbanis are 46% less likely to divorce than Akans for the women and 14% less likely to divorce for the men. On the other hand, Ga-Dangbes are 0.34 times more likely to divorce than Akans for the women and 0.91 times more likely to divorce than Akans for the men.

Age at first marriage was a significant predictor of divorce for the women but not for the men. Women who first married between the ages 18 to 21 were 24% less likely to divorce than those who first got married below 18 years and women who first married above 21 years were 30% less likely to divorce than women below 18 years. Respondents with or without children was not significantly associated with divorce for both respondents. There was a significant relationship between number of marriages for the male respondents and not the female respondents. Male respondents who have been married more than once are 43% less likely to divorce than those who have been married once. However, place of residence was significantly related with divorce status for the females and not the males. Women living in rural areas were 39% less likely to divorce than women living in urban areas. Religion was a significant predictor of divorce in this study. Muslim women and women belonging to no

religion and other religion were 53% and 2% less likely to divorce than Christian women respectively. Although men with no religion and other religion were 1.69 times more likely to divorce than Christian men, Muslim men were 8% less likely to divorce than Christian men. The educational level of both respondents were significantly associated with divorce. While women with higher education were 8% less likely to divorce than women with no education, men with a higher education were 0.96 times more likely to divorce than their counterparts with no education. In all the levels of education, men had higher odds ratio than women. With the exception of respondents with no education, there was an inverse relationship between educational level and divorce and men were more times likely to divorce than women at all levels. Again, occupational status of both female and male respondents were significant predictors of divorce. While women who had an occupation were 1.39 times as likely to divorce compared to women with no occupation, men with an occupation were 71% less likely to divorce than their counterparts with no occupation. Household wealth of respondents was a significant predictor of divorce for both respondents. For both women and men, respondents in all the categories were more likely to divorce than women and men from the poorest household. Current/ex-husband's educational level was significantly associated with divorce. While women whose current or ex-husbands with primary, secondary or a higher education were 73%, 37% and 31% less likely to divorce than women whose current or ex-husbands have no education respectively, women who reported not knowing their current or ex-husbands educational level were 2.52 times as likely to divorce as women whose current or ex-husbands are not educated.

## 5.6 DISCUSSION

From the results of this study, Ga-Dangbes were more likely to divorce than Akans for both women and men. Consequently, the first hypothesis is rejected. Work done by Takyi and Gyimah (2007) revealed that divorce rates are higher among Akan women than non- Akan women including Ga-Dangbes. Contrary to most literature, the Ga-Dangbe ethnic group which is a patrilineal ethnic group has high rates of divorce amongst the women and men despite the fact that bride wealth is high in this society as argued by scholars. This could have resulted from always putting all patrilineal groups together. Hence, the low divorce rates amongst the northern patrilineal groups mask the high rate from this society. Again, although a wife has to return the bride wealth to her husband in case of a divorce, the husband is supposed to compensate his wife (Crawford, 1971). However, amongst the Ga-Dangbes, the husband may choose to waive the repayment of the bride wealth in order to avoid compensating her (Crawford, 1971). Thus, in most cases wives do not end up returning their bride wealth which makes it easy for them to divorce. Again, it becomes even easier for a couple in a consensual union to break up as no bride wealth was paid from the beginning. Another possible explanation for the high divorce amongst the Ga-Dangbes is the type of residency practiced in this society, duolocal residency. This is still practiced in most indigenous Ga-Dangbe societies. Husbands and wives live in separate household with wives only joining their husbands in the evenings. This type of residency weakens marital bond thus the end results being divorce. Also, Ga-Dangbe women have enjoyed some level of autonomy which makes it easy for them to make decisions for themselves (Dodoo et al., 2019). This makes it easy for them to request or divorce their spouses.

On the other hand, Mole-Dagbanis were less likely to divorce than Akans although it is also a patrilineal ethnic group. This is because of the social organization of that society. Wives become heavily dependent on their husband as it is the responsibility of the man to cater for his wife and children (Mahama, 2004; Takyi and Gyimah 2007). Children belong to the man and his family. Thus a woman who may want a divorce may not do so because she may lose her children (Mahama, 2004). Again, it is an embarrassment to extended family of the woman when there is a divorce (Mahama, 2004). Consequently, women are forced to stay in their marriage even when they are unhappy. Men are also embarrassed if the reason for the divorce is cruelty towards the wife or his inability to take care of his family (Mahama, 2004). Hence, in this patrilineal community where bride wealth is relatively inexpensive, divorce is low because of their norms and traditional practices.

Again, age at first marriage was significantly associated with divorce for the women and not for the males. Thus, the second hypothesis has been accepted for the women and not the men. This means that once women delay the age of their first marriage, the risk of divorce diminishes for them. This has been confirmed by literature for the women (Becker, 1974; Oppong 1980; Oppenheimer, 1988; Tilson and Larson, 2000; Arnaldo, 2004; Lehrer and Chen, 2013). Women who marry young are not mature enough to make the right choice when selecting a partner and they are again matured enough to take care of a home and children. Hence, these mistakes later translate to marital instability which leads to divorce. Although there is more literature about age at first marriage for women than men, one can infer from these literatures to give an explanation for why the relationship was not significant. One explanation that can be given is that men tend to marry later than women (Goldscheider and Waite, 1986; Johnson and Dye, 2005; Uecker and Stokes, 2008). This means that men tend to

mature before getting married. Inferring from Becker (1974) and Oppenheimer (1988), men tend to take their time in the marriage market. Hence, they mostly make the right choice when choosing a spouse. Again, among the Mole-Dagbanis, a northern patrilineal tribe where patrilocal residency is still practiced, the head of the family is always the eldest male in the house. Hence, although a male may get married at a young age, most decisions taken in home must be approved by the head of the family (Mahama, 2004). Thus, young couples are guided in their marriage and therefore do not make a lot of mistakes.

Place of residence was significantly associated with divorce in women and not for men. Consequently, the third hypothesis has been accepted for the women and not the men. For women, urbanization is the main reason given by some researchers on this issue (Takyi, 2001; Takyi and Broughton, 2006; Oya and Sender, 2009). One of the characteristics of urbanization which is the increase in female labour force participation and autonomy. This has been given as one of the reasons for high divorce in urban areas than rural areas (Takyi, 2001; Takyi and Broughton, 2006; Oya and Sender, 2009). However, the third hypothesis was rejected for the men because there was no significant relationship between their place of residence and their divorce status. This is because men's traditional role have not been affected that much by urbanization. They are regarded especially in the traditional African society as the bread winners of the family (Mahama 2004, Nukunya 1969). This means the participation of men in the labour force has always been the norm regardless of the place of residence of the man.

Number of marriages was a significant predictor of divorce for the men and not for the women. Thus for this study, the number of times a woman has been married did not predict their divorce status. Men in remarriage were less likely to be divorced than men who had married once. This is contrary to findings in most literature. However, work by Lehrer (2004)

attested to this fact. Findings of his study were that people going into another marriage after a divorce learn from their mistakes and try not to repeat them in their subsequent marriage. Hence, such persons are less likely to experience another divorce.

Occupational status was also significantly associated with divorce for both women and men. In this study, women who have an occupation had divorced more than women with no occupation. This was in agreement with majority of the literature (Becker, Landes and Michael, 1977; Greenstein, 1990; Oppenheimer, 1997; de Rose, 1992). This is because women who have some sought of occupation are economically independent and autonomous. Hence, they are able to cater for themselves once there is a divorce. On the other hand men who have an occupation are less likely to be divorced than men who have no occupation. This again is in agreement with literature. This is because traditionally men are seen as the bread winners of the home and that view is still held in recent times (Becker, Landes and Michael, 1977; Jalovaara, 2003; Killewald, 2016). The Ghanaian society is not different. Men are seen as the breadwinners and women are the homemakers. Therefore, a man who is unable to cater for his wife and family is not considered a man. For example, one of the reasons a woman can stand on and divorce her husband for Mole-Dagbanis is his inability to take care of his family (Mahama, 2004). The same reason has been given by Nukunya (1969) for the Anlos, a sub-group of the Ewes.

Religion was also significantly associated with divorce. Muslims were less likely to divorce than all the other categories. Women and men who were traditionalist or spiritualist were more likely to divorce than Christians. This could be because divorce is allowed and accepted in the African society. Studies done in the sub-Saharan African region attest to this fact (Takyi 2001; Takyi and Gyimah 2007; Arnaldo 2004, Reiners 2003; Chae 2013). Hence, although

marriage is still revered in the traditional African society, divorce is currently not abhorred either. Also, even though women with no religion were less likely to divorce than Christians, men within the same category had higher divorce rate than their Christian counterparts. This could be because men belonging to no religion do not have any divine or moral authority to guide and shape their views on marital formation and dissolution (Lehrer, 2004).

Also, educational levels of both women and men were significantly associated with divorce. With the exception of women with a higher education all women in the other categories had higher divorce than women with no education. This was in agreement with the studies of Takyi (2001) and Tilson and Larson (2000). Women with no education and women with high education according to their studies, have the least divorce rates. This relationship is in contradiction with other studies which claim there is a positive relationship between one's level of education and their divorce status. (Bumpass et al. 1991; de Rose 1992; Isuigo-Abanihe 1998) while White (1990) argue there is an inverse relationship.

The wealth of the household of women and men was a significant predictor of divorce. For both sexes, people from households of the richest quintile are more likely to divorce than people from households belonging to the poorest quintile. This is in contradiction with Killewald (2016). She argued that couples with limited financial resources are likely to divorce as it puts undue stress on the family. This was not so in this study. However, results from this study for the women is in agreement with some literature (Rootalu, 2010; Kurderk 1993; Scanzoni 1979; Phillips 1991). Women in the poorest quintile are less likely to divorce. This is because they are financially dependent on their husbands.

The educational level of current or ex-husbands of the women was a significant predictor of divorce. Women who did not know the educational level of their current or ex-husband were

more likely to divorce than those who knew the educational level of their current or former husband. This is hard to explain as there are no literature on this. However inferring from other literature on divorce could give a possible explanation to this results. There are a lot of studies on the consequences of divorce on the family especially on divorced women (Amato, 2010; Clark and Hamplova, 2013; Thombiano, LeGrande and Kombiane, 2011). These effects as described by some scholars can still be felt years after the divorce (Forste and Heaton, 2004; Lorenzo et al., 2006; Kimiko, 2010). Thus, such women may be hesitant to give any information about their ex-husbands. Also, recollecting events from the past could account for this. Thus, if the couple had been divorced for a very long time, it may be difficult for the woman to remember certain information about their ex-husband. Another possible explanation could be because of lack of communication or not knowing their husbands well enough. Thus, if the couple hardly communicated or do not spend enough time knowing each other, then the marital bond weakens. This then leads to instability which can lead to marital dissolution.

## **5.7 SUMMARY**

In the binary logistic regression analysis, ethnicity was still significantly associated with divorce when other variables were controlled for. Religion, educational level, wealth index and occupational status which was not significant predictor of divorce for the women in the bivariate analysis, were significantly associated with divorce in this section for both sexes. Respondents with or without children was still not significantly associated with divorce for both women and men after other variables were controlled for. Place of residence and

current/ex-husband's educational level were significantly associated with the divorce status of women only and number of marriages was a significant predictor of divorce for men only although it was a significant predictor of divorce for the women at the bivariate stage. Thus, although number of marriages was significantly associated with divorce and occupational status was not significantly associated with divorce during the bivariate analysis, the results changed for both variables during the binary logistic regression.



## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 6.1 SUMMARY

This section gives an overall summary of the study. This includes a summary of the objectives and results of this study. For this study, the specific objectives were to determine whether one's ethnicity can affect their divorce decisions and examine some of the factors that can predict divorce in women and men.

Data used for this study were obtained from the 2014 GDHS. After filtering the data, the final sample size for the females and males were 6049 and 2494 respectively. Analyses were done separately for each of the sexes. The economic and socio-demographic characteristics of the independent, control and dependent variables were described. Further, the relationship between ethnicity and divorce and the control variables and divorce were tested for their significant associations. In the final stage, the magnitude of this association was analyzed.

Ethnicity was found to be a significant predictor of divorce for both men and women, with Ga-Dangbes being more likely to be divorced than Akans. Therefore, the first hypothesis of the study was rejected. Although there was a significant relationship between one's age at first marriage and their divorce status for women, it was not so for men. As a woman's age at first marriage increases, the risk of divorcing reduces. Hence, the second hypothesis was accepted for the females and not the males. Place of residence significantly predicted the divorce status of women and not men. Thus, women living in urban areas were more divorced than women in rural areas. Once again, the hypothesis was accepted for the women and not men. Other factors - religion, educational level, occupational status and the household wealth index were statistically significant predictors of divorce status for both women and men.

Current /Ex-Husband's educational level was significantly associated with the divorce status of women. While number of marriages was a significant predictor of divorce for men only. The variable, 'respondents with or without children' was not a significant predictor of divorce for both sexes.

## **6.2 CONCLUSION**

This study has given more credence to the fact that, even within lineage systems, practices of different ethnic groups are not necessarily uniform. Every ethnic group has its own social structure and organization that shapes the behavior of its members. For example, it was realized that although the Ga-Dangbes are a patrilineal ethnic group, divorce was higher in that society than amongst the Akans, a matrilineal society. On the other hand, the Mole-Dagbanis, another patrilineal ethnic group had lower divorce rates than Akans. Although this was in agreement with literature (Takyi 2001; Takyi and Gyimah 2007), the reasons differ.

Another conclusion drawn from this study was that factors that can predict divorce are different for women and men. Societal roles and expectations differ for men and women. Hence, in African traditional society, a man with no occupation is more likely to divorce than a woman who has no occupation. This is because the role of men as bread winners of their homes is still strong and revered in this society. However, the societal role of women in the African society is to be home makers. Thus, it is the norm to have women who have no occupation and married. Even though, there has been an increase in the participation of women in the labour force, they are still expected to perform their traditional roles as caretakers of their homes. In the end, this participation of women in the labour force, increases their risk of divorce. Further, whilst women tend to marry young in sub-Saharan Africa, men

are expected to mature to be able to take care of their family before they marry. Hence, although there is a relationship between a woman's age at first marriage and her divorce status, that relationship does not exist for men. Consequently, societal expectations of the socio-economic role of men and women have an effect on their decision to divorce.

### **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The data used for this study, 2014 GDHS, was a secondary data. Hence, the limitations of the data affected possible analysis that could have been conducted. Therefore, in future collection of data, divorce information should be taken extensively. Information like duration of the marriage, the educational level and employment status of the partners as at the time of divorce and partner's characteristics at the time of divorce should be collected. This will lead to a more rigorous analysis of divorce in the future.

Again, in this study, ethnicity was analyzed with the assumption that respondents and their spouses belong to the same ethnic group. This is because information on the ethnic group of the former spouse of divorced respondents was not collected. Thus, the differences between inter - intra ethnic marriages with respect to divorce were not explored. Future studies on ethnicity and divorce should consider inter and intra ethnic marriages and how that can also affect divorce.

This study also, sought to explore the factors that can predict divorce in men due to the dearth of research on that topic. It is recommended that, this line of research should be extended, especially in the sub- Saharan Africa region, as it is evident from the findings that, the factors associated with women's divorce status and the mechanisms via which they operate may

differ greatly for men. Carrying out gender-specific research will enable targeted interventions to be carried out, leading to more effective outcomes.

In this study, it was realized that divorce had not just demographic implications, but also social, psychological and even anthropological implications on the parties involved and the society as a whole. Hence, future research should take a multi-disciplinary approach in order to get a broader view on divorce.

Finally, from this study it was realized that the Ghanaian society has not fully accepted the idea of married women participating in the labour force. Hence, government, non-governmental organizations and civil societies should increase the education of men and the society on the importance of female labour force participation. Again, couples should be educated on how to balance work and family. This will gradually lead to the acceptance of women in the labour force thus, reducing their likelihood of divorce. Again, government should pass the Affirmative Right Bill in order to realize this target.

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