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COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

ASSESSING THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THE DIPO RITE AMONG TEENAGERS OF YILO

KROBO

BY

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DECLARATION

I, **GETRUDE NANA ADJOA DENKYI**, declare that this dissertation “**Assessing the Acceptability of the Dipo Rite Among Teenagers of Yilo Krobo**” is my own research work under the supervision of Dr. Elizabeth Asiedua Asante. This dissertation has not been produced elsewhere for the award of any degree. I have duly acknowledged the work of other authors and the literature used.


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DEDICATION

Glory to the Trinity One God



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My first appreciation goes to God Almighty for his grace, mercy, and goodness throughout the MA program. He made it possible and I give him all the thanks.

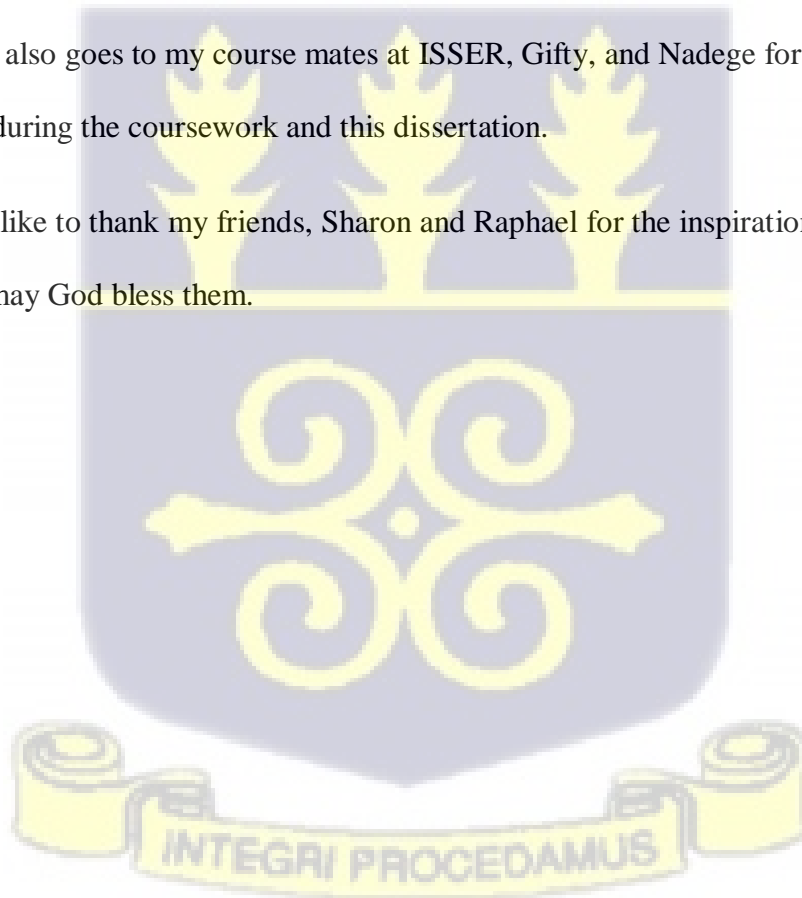
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ABSTRACT

In certain cultures, rites of passage are performed. An adolescent rite of passage forms one of the rite of passage performed for both girls and boys to transition into adulthood. In Ghana, although many rites of passage are less performed for young girls in recent times, the Dipo rite is still performed for Krobo girls every year to teach them societal values, morals, and chastity. Despite the teachings that come with the Dipo rite, teenage pregnancy is high in the Yilo Krobo municipality and other Eastern parts of Ghana where the rite is performed for girls. This study used a qualitative research approach to examine the acceptability of the Dipo rite among the teenagers of Yilo Krobo. The study examined the factors that affect the girls' acceptability of the Dipo rite and also sought to find out whether the rite influences teenage pregnancy.

From the findings, some factors that influence the girls' attitudes included banishment from the community, prohibition, and sanctions due to refusal to go through the Dipo initiation. Also, the study indicated that the confidence of the girls in avoiding pre-marital sex lies in the teaching they receive as part of the Dipo initiation. Moreover, the study noted that formal education has not affected the decision of the girls to go through the Dipo initiation rite.

However, the findings of the study indicated that the people of Krobo do not frown on girls who become pregnant after the Dipo rite. Furthermore, the community believes a girl can engage in pre-marital sex after the Dipo initiation. For teenage pregnancy to reduce in Yilo Krobo, both girls and boys must be educated on the use of contraceptives and other reproductive health concerns.

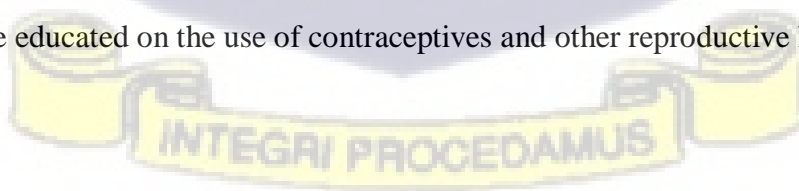


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ACRONYMS

UNDP: United Nations Population Fund

FGM: Female Genital Mutilation

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

UNICEF: United Nations' Children Emergency Fund



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Societies around the world have adolescent rites of passage performed for young boys and girls to mark the transformation from childhood into adulthood. In some African societies, adolescent rite of passage serves as a means of maintaining standards and inculcating some moral values into young adults who have attained a certain age and have been recognized as community members after their adolescent rite. In some communities, these adolescent rites of passage are seen as a necessary step that the individual must pass through to live according to community standards. In Ghana, the Dipo rite of passage is still held in high esteem (Boakye, 2010) and performed yearly for young girls in order to transition them from childhood to adulthood. Also, the rite is performed to inculcate moral values into these young girls to maintain societal standards and acceptable behaviors. Abbey et al. (2021) mentioned that Dipo rite of passage imbibes social responsibilities and teaches young girls to avoid risky sexual behaviors which may result in teenage pregnancies. This research aims to examine the acceptability of the Dipo rite among young adult girls who have gone through it. The study specifically looks at the factors that affected the attitudes of the girls to go through the rite, whether the rite influenced their pre-marital sex decisions, and also if education played a role in their decision to participate in the Dipo rite. The study focused on young female adults between the ages of 15 to 19 years who reside at Yilo Krobo and have gone through the Dipo initiation rite.

1.1 Background

Almost all communities and societies in the world have rites of passage they perform for individuals to transition from one stage of life to another stage. Rites of passage are performed for people upon reaching a new chapter of their lives (Glozah & Lawani, 2014). Also, different rites of passage are performed for individuals at different stages of their lives. The rite of passage performed for people at birth differs from those at puberty, marriage, priesthood, and death (Boakye, 2010). An adolescent rite of passage forms one of the passage rites performed for both young girls and boys to transition them into adulthood. Many societies and communities have used adolescent rite of passage to transfer, maintain and preserve societal values and morals (Abbey et al., 2021). Although most communities aim to maintain societal standards through adolescent rites of passage (Abbey, 2016), other embedded societal norms and beliefs influence young boys and girls to participate in rites (Armstrong, 2010). Moreover, societies expect young adolescents who have gone through the rite to live according to the teachings and guidelines that come along with the rite of passage (Armstrong, 2010). The societal beliefs that motivate people to go through an adolescent rite of passage differ from community to community across various countries in the world, depending on the tribe, culture, or society that the adolescent finds himself or herself. These norms and beliefs surrounding the adolescent rite of passage are not the same across the various societies in Africa (Safeguard Young People, 2020). While some societies see the adolescent rite of passage as outmoded, others believe it has to be maintained and practiced to keep standards, enhance community development, and transfer morals and cultural values from generation to generation (Ezenweke, 2016).

Despite the influx of religion and education, the Kinaalda rite of passage is performed among many North American Indians found in Arizona State, New Mexico, and Southern Utah. According to Abbey (2016), young ladies undergo the Kinaalda rite of passage to gain an understanding of how

to interpret values, abilities, and capabilities. Also, the girls are taught by elderly women how to go about some gender-specific responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and being attentive and respectful in society (Abbey, 2016). The Kinaalda rite of passage is viewed by the societies that practice it as a way of imbibing moral values and as a means of directing girls to remain focused and become responsible future wives (Abbey, 2016).

Also, in order for girls to qualify for marriage and gain acceptance, girls of Kisii and Kuria which are found in Kenya are made to go through Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) although there has been advocacy by international organizations like UNICEF for its abolishment (Oloo et al., 2011). The people of Kisii and Kuria further believe girls whose clitoris are not cut are a threat to society because they become disrespectful and engage in fornication and adultery in the future (Oloo et al., 2011). Furthermore, the people of Kisii and Kuria uphold that if FGM is done for girls, their tradition will not fade out and the sexual morality of girls will be preserved from generation to generation (Oloo et al., 2011).

Moreover, in Norway, the Russ rite of passage is done to transition girls and boys into adulthood at the age of 18. The rite is performed to maintain societal expectations from the youth as they become recognized community members (Masheck, 2022). Although the Russ rite of passage is different from most rites because of the consumption of alcohol during the passage rite, the Norwegians hold and believe that such a rite promotes equality and oneness among members of the society (Masheck, 2022). In addition, the people of Venda in South Africa have three major rites of passage they perform for young girls when they reach puberty which they term as Vhusha, Tshikanda, and Domba (Abbey, 2016). The Vendas of South Africa esteem these rites of passage in the present age because they maintain that girls learn good morals and values they need to have a good marriage (Abbey, 2016).

Furthermore, in Eswatini, the “Liguma” rite of passage still holds. The rite is performed for adolescent girls to usher them into adulthood with a cultural belief that it will instill moral values and also admonishes them to avoid any pre-marital sex that may lead to teenage pregnancies (Safeguard Young People, 2020). Also, the Iria ritual is a passage rite that is performed at Delta state in Nigeria (Abbey, 2016). The society of Iria performs this passage rite to teach and instruct girls to keep their virginity and avoid any sexual intercourse with any man before they marry (Abbey, 2016). The three major ethnic groups in Malawi, Chewa, Lomwe and Yao have rites of passage they perform for adolescent girls. During the initiation, the girls are given various teachings on womanhood which the society expects them to exhibit after the initiation rite. One of the key lessons to adolescents as they transition into adulthood is abstaining from risky sexual behaviors that may lead to teenage pregnancies (Safeguard Young People, 2020).

In Ghana, there are several rites of passage that are done to usher young girls into adulthood. Notable among such rites are the Bragoro practiced among the Akans, Otufu which is noted among Gas and the, Dipo rite found among the Krobo in the Eastern part of Ghana (Boakyee, 2010). As part of Akans belief, the Bragoro puberty rite curbs teenage pregnancies in society and foster good moral behavior which further enhances unity and peace among societal members (Arthur & Mensah, 2021). The Akans believe when a girl goes through the Bragoro, she becomes a good woman to her children and husband because she has learned the necessary social values and also kept herself pure until marriage (Arthur & Mensah, 2021). Despite these societal beliefs, Bragoro has dwindled in recent times, and the decline in Bragoro puberty rite among the Akans has harmed their cultural values and standards of society (Crentsil, 2015). Among the Krobos, the Dipo rite of passage is still held in high esteem as every girl has to go through the Dipo rite in order to be recognized in society as a Krobo girl (Boakyee, 2010). The people in Krobo believe the Dipo rite

serves as a pride for every girl through which she becomes a full member of the community. They further hold that when girls go through the rite it helps their communities in curtailing teenage pregnancy, pre-marital sex, and promiscuity (Abbey, 2016). Although religion, education, and technology have contributed to reducing adolescent rite of passages in various communities (Abbey et.al., 2021), the Dipo rite of passage is still performed for girls every year between the month of March and April (Boakye, 2010).

This study examined the acceptability of the Dipo rite among the girls who have gone through it, by identifying the factors that still influence their attitude towards the rite, whether the rite affect pre-marital sex decision, and also to find out if formal education influences their intention to go through the Dipo initiation

1.2 Problem Statement

Rites of passage for girls have seen much decline in recent times (Ahwenekoko, 2008). Boakye (2010) and Sackey (2001) added that the high rate of sexually transmitted diseases, risky sex indulgence, and early pregnancies among young adults in current societies happens as a result of a decrease in puberty rites ceremonies (Boakye, 2010; Sackey, 2001). Despite the decline in puberty rite ceremonies for girls, Dipo rite is prominent in Ghana and held in high esteem by the people of Yilo Krobo and other people who hail from the Eastern part of Ghana. Society believes the Dipo rite is still part of the cultural systems of the people of Krobo and the belief is that it serves as a traditional way of instilling moral values and admonishing girls to remain chaste, avoid pre-marital sex and other behaviors which may bring shame to their families (Abbey, 2016). Despite modernization, Dipo plays an important role in the lives of young ladies who go through the initiation process and serve as a way of instructing them to remain chaste before marriage (Abbey et al., 2021). However, statistics from the Health Directorate of Yilo Krobo, indicate that

high teenage pregnancies were recorded among those between 15-19 years although they were not married. In the years 2018 and 2019, 1,630 pregnancies were recorded and in 2020 and 2021 1,717 pregnancies were recorded among the same age group (Municipal Health Directorate, 2021). As part of its sensitization programs, the Department of Social Welfare of Yilo Krobo organizes sensitization programs every year at the Junior High School and community levels to educate boys and girls about the dangers of teenage pregnancies (Department of Social Welfare, 2022). Although these sanitization programs are organized every year, teenage pregnancy is still high in the municipality (Department of Social Welfare, 2022).

Concerns have been raised on the importance and relevance of initiation and rites of passage for girls and boys in recent times (Abbey, 2016). Despite this concern, every Krobo girl is supposed to go through Dipo initiation before she becomes a Krobo lady (Boakye, 2010). It is necessary to examine the girls who have gone through Dipo initiation and find out whether they accept Dipo and its teachings. Also, recent literature on Dipo assessed the psychological well-being of the girls who go through Dipo initiation and how modernity has influenced the Dipo rite (Abbey et al., 2020; Boakye, 2010). This study seeks to contribute to the limited literature on the acceptance of the Dipo rite of passage by the girls who go through it.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to achieve the research objectives, this study seeks to answer the following research questions;

- 1) What factors influence the girls' attitudes towards the Dipo rite?
- 2) What are the perceived behavioral control of the girls towards the Dipo rite?

- 3) Does formal educational attainment influence the intention of the girls to accept Dipo rite?

1.4 Research Objectives

The main research objective is to examine the acceptability of the Dipo rite among girls who have gone through it. Specifically, the study seeks:

- 1) To investigate the girls' perceived behavioral control towards the Dipo rite.
- 2) To find out the factors that influence the girls' attitudes towards the Dipo rite
- 3) To examine whether formal education attainment influences the intention of the girls to accept the Dipo rite

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will add on and contribute to the literature on puberty rite of passage. The study contributes to previous literature on the Dipo rite by bringing to light the issues and reasons why young girls accept to go through Dipo initiation. Also, the study will inform the people of Yilo Krobo of why the girls decide to go through Dipo rite, their attitude, and perceived behavioral control towards the Dipo rite. The study will further enlighten Queen mothers, and community leaders on how the girls perceive the Dipo rite.

This study is relevant and would inform the people of Yilo Krobo whether the intention of the young girls to go through Dipo initiation affects pre-marital sex. The study also brings to light the issues surrounding the acceptability of the rite and whether the teachings guide their decision to indulge in pre-marital sex. The study will not only be beneficial to Yilo Krobo Municipality but also the Ga Adangme and all the people of Krobo of the Eastern part of Ghana as well as other national and international societies and communities that perform an adolescent rite of passage for young girls.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The Study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One covers the introduction, background of the study, problem statement, research objectives and research questions, significance, and organization of the chapters. Chapter Two provides a detailed review of relevant literature and a profile of the study area, including its administrative, political, physical, and socio-economic settings. The research methodology is in Chapter Three. The findings and analysis of data are presented in Chapter Four. Chapter Five ends the dissertation with conclusions and recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, existing literature on the adolescent rites of passage is reviewed. The chapter consists of two parts. The theoretical background and main concepts are examined in the first part. The major concepts are defined and the theory explains factors that affect peoples' attitudes in accepting to perform a behavior is examined, also, their confidence in the Dipo rite in affecting their pre-marital sex decision is discussed. In addition, formal education as a factor affecting the intention of the girls before going through the Dipo rite is further discussed. The second part of this chapter gives a profile of the study area.

2.1 Conceptual Definition and Theoretical Framework

The main concepts underlining this study are discussed in this section. Rites of passage, the adolescent rite of passage, and the Dipo rite form the main concepts of the study. Defining the concepts enhances the understanding of the research. The chapter presents each concept's definition and gives further explanation of the Theory of Planned Behavior in relation to the Dipo rite's acceptability. The theory details the factors that influence the girls' attitude towards the Dipo rite, how their confidence in the rite determines their pre-marital sex decisions, and their educational background affecting their intention to go through the Dipo initiation.

2.1.1 Rite of Passage

Rites of passage play an important role in ushering individuals from one stage of life to another stage. Boakye (2010) defines rites of passage as transition ceremonies that are performed for individuals as their stages in life change from time to time. Glozah and Lawani (2014) further add that rites of passage mark a significant change in the lives of people and come with an important ceremony to mark that change. A rite of passage is an important mark in the lives of people and

has to be treated with much attention and enthusiasm (Ezenweke, 2016). When rites of passage are performed, people are given new roles and responsibilities in society, and also bring new experiences and directions to people (Masheck, 2022). Ahwenkoko (2008) and Boakye (2010) mentioned that different rites of passage are performed at different stages in the lives of people. The various stages include birth, adulthood, marriage, priesthood, and death. Although the ceremony which is performed to transition people from a particular stage to another has some similarities across societies and communities, they also differ. In the Akan community of Ghana, a child is given water and alcohol during the child's birth ceremony with the belief that he would be able to tell the differences between the truth and a lie when he grows up. On the other hand, a metal necklace is hung on a child's neck during the birth ceremony before he is recognized as a human being among the Akambas of Kenya. Also, a rite of passage plays an important role not only in the lives of the individual but the whole community or society as a whole. Rites of passage bring people together, enhance peace and unity, and add to community development by inculcating acceptable values and morals in people (Ezenweke, 2016).

2.1.2 Adolescent Rite of Passage

The rite of passage for young people to transition into adulthood is called the adolescent rite of passage. Various societies define adolescent rite of passage differently per the traditions and customs peculiar to transitioning the young into adulthood (Safeguard Young People, 2020). Some communities refer to the adolescent rite of passage as the puberty rite, whereas others call it the initiation rite (Boakye, 2010). Boakye (2010) further mentioned such rites for adolescents comes in different forms, the adolescent can be tested for endurance, some parts of their genitals are cut off, strip naked, bath at the riverside, and others. Moreover, the age for an adolescent rite of passage differs from community to community. In Norway, the Russ rite of passage is performed at age 18 (Masheck, 2022). Among the Akans of Ghana, the Bragoro is performed for a girl when she

experiences her first menstruation (Arthur & Mensah, 2021). Also, the Dipo rite of passage among the Krobos does not have a specific age for a girl's initiation. According to literature, most societies believe that the adolescent rite of passage is necessary for young adults because it teaches them how to behave according to the standards and values societies expect of people who live within the communities. As young girls and boys transition into adulthood, the initiation rites serve as a means of teaching them the values and morals that societies expect them to live by after they are transitioned. People become part of a community after they have gone through an adolescent rite of passage as they learn traditions and culture meant to guide them throughout their lives (Arthur & Mensah, 2021). Ahwenekoko (2008) further adds that the decline in the adolescent rite of passage in societies and communities has given rise to teenage pregnancies, pre-marital sex, theft cases, and others. In recent times the young are not taught the values and morals which societies expect them to exhibit after they become teenagers as these teachings, according to literature, are usually embedded in the adolescent rite of passage.

2.1.3 The Dipo Rite

Dipo rite is an initiation rite performed for young girls who live in Krobo communities in the Eastern part of Ghana. Dipo refers to informal training for girls to acquire some basic skills required for marriage and also inculcate values societies expect them to exhibit after they have transitioned into womanhood (Boakye, 2010). Abbey (2016) terms Dipo rite as a process girls go through to acquire basic life skills, morals, and values and learn to be responsible adults. According to Boakye (2010), the Dipo can be referred to as initiation rite because there is no specific age required for a girl to go through the initiation. Boakye (2010) further adds that Bragoro for young girls in the Akan community is performed when they experience their first menstruation but the Dipo rite is performed at different ages and may not happen on the first menstruation of young girls. According to Boakye (2010), Dipo rite was institutionalized as a result of jealousy of a

woman who gave birth to only female children. The woman's husband had a second wife whose children were males and received gifts during their circumcision period. The jealous wife together with other women raised concerns in the presence of traditional authorities about the neglect of the girl child and Dipo was instituted by a female community leader named Nana Kloweki (Abbey, 2016; Boakye, 2010). Thus, the Dipo rite was instituted not only to instill values and morals but for the community to celebrate the girl child and offer her gifts during her initiation period. According to Boakye (2010), in the past, the stages of Dipo involved a period of one year for the girls to receive moral values and learn how to manage their homes when they marry. The one-year period served as training for the girls to learn basic skills and societal morals and values required by society in maintaining standards (Abbey, 2016). The period for the initiation was reduced to four days because of the formal education introduced by the colonial masters. The initiation is done between the month of February and June every year across various communities (Boakye, 2010). Among the various societies of Ghana, the Dipo is the prevailing initiation rite performed for girls every year as every girl must go through the Dipo initiation before she is recognized by society as a true Krobo girl (Abbey et al., 2021; Boakye, 2010).

The first stage of the Dipo rite involves coaching and teachings by women who serve as spiritual counselors for the girls (Abbey, 2016). The girls are given various teachings on womanhood and how to conduct themselves as ladies after the initiation (Boakye, 2010). According to Boakye (2010), the people of Krobo further expect the ladies to emulate the good examples of their counselors and visit them for advice, guidance, and directions from time to time. The hair of the ladies who go through the Dipo initiation is shaved as part of the process (Abbey, 2016). Moreover, the girls bathe on plantain leaves after which their feet are washed with the blood of a goat, with the believe of driving away any misfortune in the lives of the girls (Abbey et al., 2021 ; Boakye, 2010).

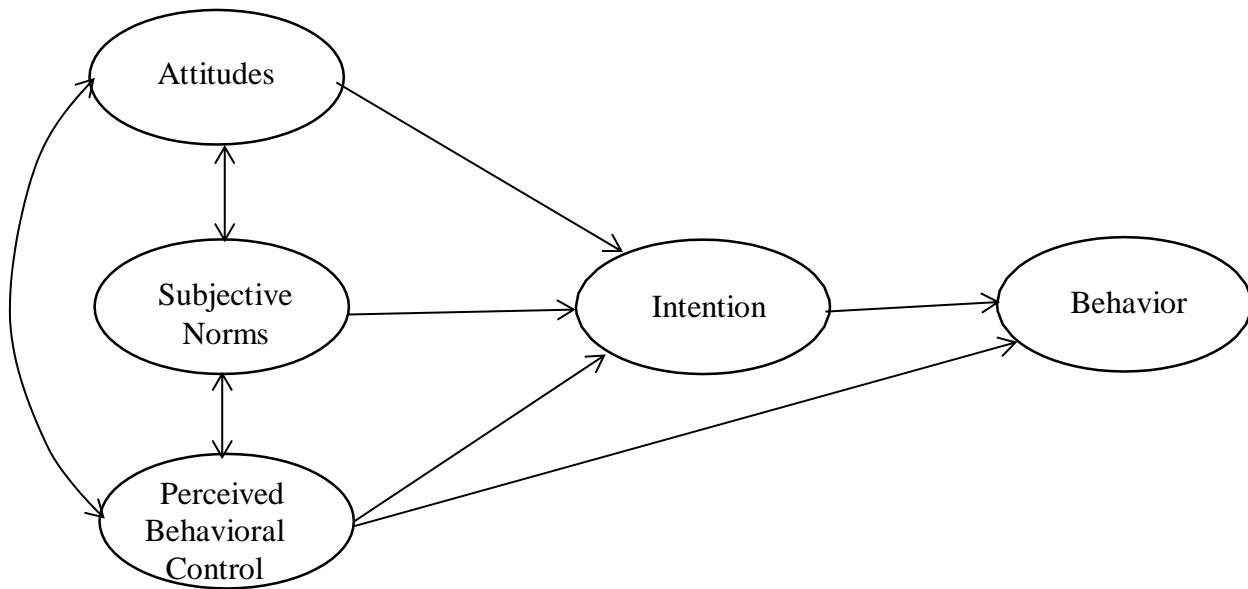
On the final day of the initiation rite, the girls are made to sit on a black stool to test their virginity and also find out if they had aborted any pregnancy, after which they are adorned with beads and fabrics and perform the Klama dance which signifies the reunion between those who are alive and the dead (Abbey, 2016).

2.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Discussion

In this study, the Theory of Planned Behavior propounded by Ajzen (1991) is adopted as the theoretical basis. The Theory of Planned Behavior uses three constructs to explain reasons why people engage in an action or behavior. The three constructs according to the theory are attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. For this study, attitudes and perceived behavioral control are the two constructs adopted to examine how they influence the girls' decisions to go through the Dipo rite and also know how their confidence in the Dipo rite affects their pre-marital decisions. Moreover, the theory maintains that the intentions of people play a key role before they engage in an action, thus the study assesses how formal education influences the intentions of the girls in participating in the Dipo rite of passage. The Theory of Planned Behavior has been used extensively to examine people's decisions behind their actions and how it affects them.

The theory helps the researcher to assess the factors that influence the girls' attitudes before they go through the rite. Also, the theory enables the researcher to find out how successful the girls see the Dipo initiation in helping them keep chaste before they get married. Moreover, the theory is relevant in examining how education has influenced the intention of the ladies to go through the Dipo initiation. The action or behavior performed in this study is the Dipo rite.

Figure 2.1 show the illustration of Theory of Planned Behavior



Source: Ajzen, 1991

Attitude has been identified over the years as a factor that determines the behavior people engage in (Fazio, 1986). The attitudes of people are influenced by their beliefs and values. Although attitudes determine peoples' actions or behavior, a person's moral values and personal beliefs cannot solely be used to determine the action that they decide to engage in (Trafimow, 2009). Attitudes toward action are further dependent on the individual's perception or what he or she thinks about that action. Fazio (1986) mentioned that peoples' actions depend largely on their taught. Fazio (1986) further explains that peoples' attitude towards an action depends on their exposure to the action they want to engage in. Moreover, attitudes toward actions can be influenced by affiliation or the environment in which people find themselves. Ajzen (1991) termed these as general attitudes which are associated with a particular organization or setting that tend to influence peoples' actions. According to Ajzen (1991), some scholars have argued such a general attitude should partly be used to predict or explain why people engage in certain actions because they do

not fully predict the specific behavior of people but rather predict the general behavior of the individual within that particular environment.

Ajzen (1991) further defines perceived behavioral control as people's own control over the action they intend to engage in and how difficult or easy they perceive that action. The perceived behavioral control of peoples' actions according to Ajzen (1991) also depends on how affordable that action is and if the behavior is within their control. People who engage in activities may have low or high perceived behavioral control of the action they want to engage in, and this determines whether they will perform that action or not. According to Ajzen (1991), the information people have about an action influences their perceived behavioral control, this may inform whether they would engage in that action or not. The available information concerning a particular action has a way of determining whether they would engage in that action or not. In addition, a person's self-efficacy about a behavior relates to perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Confidence in a behavior determines whether people would engage in it or not (Ajzen, 1991). Aside from attitudes, and perceived behavioral control that determine the action of people, the theory further mentioned that other factors influence the intentions of action. The influence of formal education and technology has led to a decline in the adolescent rite of passage (Abbey et al., 2021). This study further examines how education influences the intention of the girls before they go through the Dipo rite.

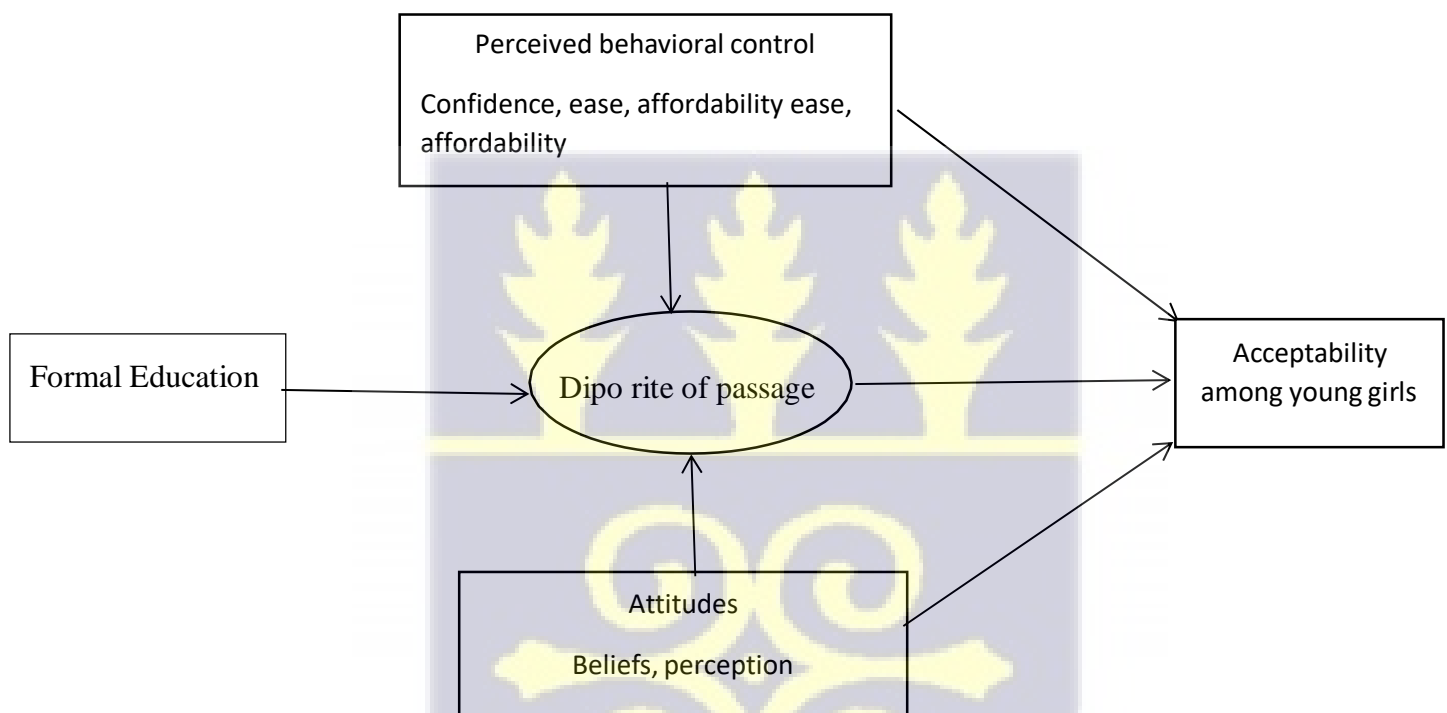
2.3 Conceptual Framework of the study

In constructing the conceptual framework, the objectives and research questions were examined. Per the discussed literature, attitudes are affected by some factors which in turn influence a person's decision to engage in an action. Also for people to perform a certain behavior, they consider the ease, success, and confidence in the action before they engage in it. Moreover,

people’s intentions to perform certain actions are further influenced by factors such as education (Abbey et al., 2021) The conceptual framework of this study was derived from the theory of planned behavior. A conceptual framework gives clarity to a study and further enhances the understanding of the research (Punch, 2005).

The below figure shows the factors that influence the girls to go through the Dipo initiations

Figure 2.2: Conceptual framework



The Theory of Planned Behavior gives the factors that influence people before they engage in an action. The conceptual framework details factors that affect attitude and perceived behavioral control per the literature on the Theory of Planned Behavior. Beliefs and perceptions are some factors that affect attitudes before the girls go through the Dipo rite. The beliefs of the girls emanate from the environment, cultural setting, and the orientation they receive. Kiecolt (2019) termed

beliefs that affect peoples' attitudes in society as cognitive attitudes. The girls' attitudes towards the Dipo rite further determine whether they accept the rite based on their beliefs and perception. Also confidence, easiness, and affordability of the Dipo rite influence the girls perceived behavioral control. Their acceptability of the Dipo rite in determining their pre-marital sex decisions is linked to their confidence and how easily they see the rite. Moreover, formal education is seen as a factor that has influenced the rite of passage in recent time (Abbey et al., 2021). The formal educational background of the girls influences their intention to go through the Dipo rite which also determines their acceptability of the rite.

2.4 Significance of Dipo Rite

The various rites of passage in Ghana for girls are fading out gradually due to modernization, religion, formal education, and cultural dynamism. The Bragoro among the Akans and other rites of passage by the Ewes and Gas are gradually dwindling out. However, the Dipo rite is still held in high esteem by the Krobo in the Eastern part of Ghana, educating them on social responsibilities, and societal standards before becoming a true Krobo lady (Boakye, 2010). The people of Krobo see Dipo as a cultural way of instilling and inculcating moral values, educating them on social responsibilities and, avoiding sexual behaviors before marriage (Abbey et al., 2021). A study by Boakye (2010) states that, culturally, the Dipo rite is a way of preventing risky and early sexual behavior among young girls because of the teachings and grooming centered on morals and self-discipline. Abbey (2016) also reports that Dipo serves as a guide to young girls by instructing them that sex with any man is taboo before marriage. Glozah and Lawani (2014) further add that the Krobo value the Dipo rite because they see it as a way of instructing the girls to avoid pre-marital sex until their parents hand them over to their future husband. The importance of Dipo is also seen in the key roles mothers of the initiate play before the initiating process of their daughters. Mothers believe when their daughters go through the Dipo initiation they learn cultural, societal, and moral

values which will help them avoid pre-marital sex and become good women, wives, and mothers to their children, husbands, and society at large. When girls go through Dipo initiation, society respects their mothers and guardians for allowing their daughters to become true Krobo ladies (Glozah & Lawani, 2014).

Moreover, the accessories, beads, and dresses the girls wear during the initiation process also have significant meaning in their lives. In her study, Abbey (2016), mentioned that the blue and yellow beads which the ladies wear during the initiation rite signify how important society values them and also the belief that they will remain focused and become successful in all their endeavors. Also, the Klama dance which the ladies perform during the initiation ceremony plays a major role in their lives. According to Boakye (2010), the Klama dance teaches them to behave well and control themselves in their happy moments.

2.5 Dipo as a Cultural Identity

The values of people are shown through their culture and the way they behave. When people find themselves in a certain environment they are bound by the values and standards of the group. The group's ethics create a sense of belongingness and identity (Boakye, 2010). Boakye (2010) reports that although people have migrated from Krobo to other parts of the cities, they frequently report home for funeral rites, ceremonies, and other rituals. The way they value their culture translates into the Dipo initiation. Every girl has to go through the Dipo initiation before she is identified as a true lady of the land (Boakye, 2010). When a girl in Krobo refuse to through the Dipo initiation, she is rejected by her family and society (Glozah & Lawani, 2014).

2.6 Dipo and Modernization

Although various rites of passage among the various ethnic groups in Ghana are not done in recent times due to modernization and religious reasons, the Dipo rite is still performed for girls in Yilo Krobo and other Krobos in the Eastern part of Ghana every year. Dipo is still held in high esteem

but it has gone through some form of changes due to modern influence and religious factors. Boakye (2010) mentions that early missionaries who arrived in Ghana tried to stop the Dipo initiation because they saw it as contrary to the gospel and this led to the abolishment of the Dipo rite in the early years but it was secretly practiced by some people in Krobo land (Boakye, 2010). As people in Krobo believed in Christianity and Islam, they still held to their traditions but it had an effect on the rite. As a result of religious beliefs, Boakye (2010) reports that the time frame for the Dipo initiation was reduced, and younger children were now initiated. The early age initiation was to allow for both the initiation process and baptism (Boakye, 2010). Moreover, the time spent for the initiation process before the missionaries arrived was almost a year but because of formal education, the time had to reduce to allow the girls to learn from the classroom and spend a little time participating in the Dipo initiation. Also, previously, during the initiation, the breasts of the ladies were exposed as part of the initiation rite but in recent times, their breasts are covered with leaves (Boakye, 2010).

2.7 Debates Surrounding Dipo rite

Despite the relevance of the Dipo rite to the people of Yilo Krobo, there have been various debates for its abolishment. Questions have been raised about the age at which girls are initiated into the rite (Abbey, 2016). Children as young as two years are initiated into the Dipo rite. This was not so in the past; the ladies were initiated at a mature age and were ready to marry (Abbey, 2016). Also, Boakye (2010) reports that the exposure of the breast of girls who go through the initiation rite has raised concerns for its abolishment. Some religious groups such as Christians see the rite as contrary to the Christian faith when it comes to the pouring of libation and other traditional processes the ladies are made to go through (Abbey, 2016). Abbey et al (2021) argue that the Dipo rite must continue because of its importance in preventing pre-marital sex, HIV/AIDS, and teenage pregnancies among others.

2.8 Overview of the Study Area

Yilo Krobo is found in the Eastern part of Ghana, it forms part of the 32 districts and municipalities in the Eastern region. (Yilo Krobo Municipal Profile). The land coverage of Yilo Krobo consists of about 4.2 percent of the land in the Eastern region and covers an area of about 805 square kilometers. Yilo Krobo lies between latitude $6^{\circ}.00'N$ and $0^{\circ}.30'N$ and between longitude $0^{\circ}.30'W$ and $1^{\circ}.00'W$.

As represented by figure 2.3, it is bounded in the north and east respectively by Lower Manya Krobo Municipality and Upper Manya Krobo District, in the South by Akwapim North Municipality, and Shai-Osudoku District, and on the West by New Juaben South Municipality, Okere District, and Fanteakwa District.

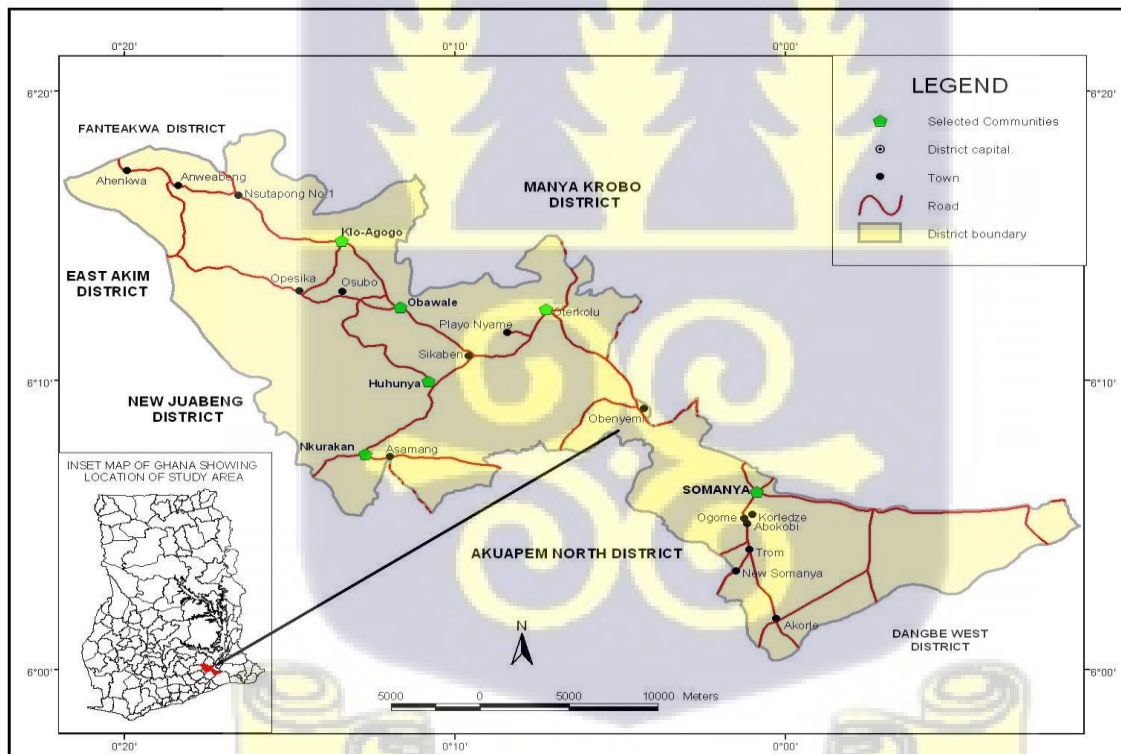
According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census by the Ghana Statistical Service, the total population of Yilo Krobo was 87,847, which represented 3.3% of the entire population in the Eastern region of Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, District Report, 2014). Out of the total population of Yilo Krobo, the females consisted of 51.8% and the males were 48.2% (Ghana Statistical Service District Report, 2014). Per the Population and Housing Census in 2010, the population was youthful, the youth consisted of 47.4%, and the elderly 8.7% (Ghana Statistical Service District Report, 2014). The total age dependency ratio was 77.1%, the male had the highest age dependency ratio of 70% and the female were 62% (Ghana Statistical Service District Report, 2014).

The percentage of people who were Ghanaian by birth was 96, and the non-Ghanaians were 1.7 % (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014 District Report). Also, 79.0% of people aged above 11 years were literate and 21.0% were illiterate. (Ghana Statistical Service District Report, 2014). The percentage of males who were literate was more than the number of females who were literate, 87.9% of the

males were literate and 71.0% of females were literate (Ghana Statistical Service District Report, 2014).

Moreover, economically active people above the age of 15 were 72.1%, and 27.9% were not economically active. (Ghana Statistical Service District Report, 2014). Out of those who were employed, 41.9% were engaged in forestry, fishery, and agriculture, 21.7 were in sales and service and 7.1% were professionals, managers, and technicians.

Figure 2.3: Map of Yilo Krobo Municipality.



Source: The Municipal Profile of Yilo Krobo; 2022

The Yilo Krobo municipality also has many tourist attractions which bring both local citizens and foreigners to the place. The Boti Falls, Nsutapong waterfalls, umbrella rock, the three-edged palm tree with stone breasts, and the mountains where rituals like the Dipo used to be performed are all tourist attractions unique in form and nature at the municipality (Ghana Statistical Service District Report, 2014)

In terms of developmental challenges in the municipality, the municipal profile outlined poor health facilities, a high rate of street children as a result of teenage pregnancies, poor conditions of the road networks, poor market infrastructure, a high rate of HIV/AIDS patients, inadequate toilets and sanitation facilities, and underdeveloped tourist sites and facilities.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This Chapter presents details on how the study was conducted. It provides a description of the research design. It specifically discusses the methods and methodology employed to arrive at the stated objectives of the research design including data sources, sample size, the sample selection procedure, data collection method, and data analysis are highlighted.

3.1 Methodology

In this study, the qualitative research approach was adopted. The qualitative method was used to assess and understand the attitudes, and perceived behavioral control. The qualitative method was further used to analyze how formal educational attainment influenced the intention of the ladies to go through the Dipo initiation. Qualitative research provides a deeper understanding of what a researcher seeks to find out from respondents (Punch, 2005). A qualitative study further gives a broad look and explains the reasons why people engage in certain actions or behaviors. According to Punch (2005), qualitative research explains and gives details of the overall phenomenon under study. Also, a qualitative study avoids pre-judgment by the researcher by asking for more information from the respondents (Punch, 2005).

The methodology further described comprehensively the target population, sampling, data collection tools, and the techniques used in collecting and analyzing the data. Also, the study limitation concludes this chapter.

3.1.1 Target Population

The population consisted of young girls who had gone through the Dipo initiation and resided at Yilo Krobo, the purpose of this population was to understand attitudes and perceived behavioral

control towards the Dipo initiation. The target population of interest of this study consisted of young girls between the ages of 15-19 years who had gone through the Dipo initiation and resided in Yilo Krobo. Moreover, the target population included an Assistant School Teacher, Family Heads, and traditional leaders of Yilo Krobo who understand the objectives of the Dipo rite, why it is performed, why young girls of Yilo Krobo are made to go through it and the girls' attitude towards the initiation rite. Interviewing the traditional leaders and Family Heads and the Assistant School Teacher gave the researcher more understanding of the Dipo rite and its objectives

3.1.2 Sampling Techniques

This research sought to understand attitudes and perceived behavioral control and how education influences the intention of young girls to go through the Dipo initiation. Therefore, the sampling criteria entailed young girls between the ages of 15-19 years who had gone through the Dipo initiation, two Family Head, two Queen Mothers and an Assistant School Teacher. This study employed a sample size of 25 respondents, 5 community leaders and 20 young girls who had gone through the Dipo initiation rite. A researcher gathers the appropriate data when the sample size contains all the relevant respondents related to the study (Young & Casey, 2018).

In this study, convenience and purposive sampling techniques were adopted. Purposive sampling enables a researcher to choose respondents who are appropriate for a particular study, willing to participate in the study and have knowledge about a particular subject matter (Rai, 2004). The Researcher visited the Yilo Krobo Municipality with an introductory letter from Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), and was directed to a Family Head. With assistance from the Family Head who was also a respondent, all twenty girls who had gone through the Dipo initiation were conveniently sampled to participate in the Focus Group Discussion and

In-depth interviews. The Family Head further assisted the researcher in identifying the other key informants, consisted of two Queen Mothers, an Assistant School Teacher and a Family Head.

3.2.3 Data Collection Tools and Data Analysis Techniques

The study used primary sources of new data. Three Focus Group Discussions were organized with fifteen young ladies in three different communities at Yilo Krobo. The communities were Ogome, Okpe and Sra. The Dipo rite is performed for girls in all these communities. The “Dipo house” where the girls are kept during the entire initiation process is located at Okpe. Also, five In-depth interviews were conducted with five girls in the same communities. The In-depth interviews enabled the researcher to obtain detailed information on factors that affected their attitudes to participate in the Dipo initiation rite and also their perceived behavioral control towards the rite. Moreover, Five Key Informant Interviews were conducted with five respondents which included two Families Head, one Assistant School Teacher, and two Queen Mothers. A semi-structured interview guide was used, this enabled the researcher to have a broader understanding of the Dipo rite. An audio recording was used for the Focus Group Discussions and In-depth interviews. The audio recorder helped the researcher gather all responses provided by the ladies and the other respondents in the study. The study also used data from secondary sources such as published articles and reports from scholars. These reports and articles gave more information on the study. The data from the focus group discussion and interviews was transcribed. Also, the profile of the Yilo Krobo Municipal Assembly provided information on the study area, moreover, the Ghana Statistical Service Population and Housing census of 2010 gave information on the study area.

3.2.4 Ethical Consideration

As part of adhering to ethical procedures, a proposal of this study was submitted to the Ethics Committee for the Humanities, University of Ghana, for review and approval before the field work commenced. Parents of the girls below the ages of 15-17 years signed the Guardian/Parental

Protocol Consent Form before interviews and Focused Group Discussions were conducted with the girls. Also, all participants were assured of confidentiality, respondents names were assigned with Roman Numerals. Moreover, respondents were informed data collected was for only academic purposes.

3.2.5 Limitations of the Study

Due to time limitations, the researcher was unable to do a participant observation of the Dipo rite to observe the process of the rite and also get to know the moral values given to the ladies during the initiation rite.



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the empirical findings of the study are presented and analyzed. The chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, data gathered from the focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews are presented and arranged thematically according to the objectives of the study. The second part analyzes the findings thematically.

Presentation of Findings

4.1 Demographic Information

The study was carried out in the Yilo Krobo Municipality. The study involved community leaders and teenagers within three communities who are familiar with each other. Table 4.1 presents the demographic features of the respondents.

Table 4.1 Demographic Information of Teenage Respondents

Respondents	Age	Religion	Education level	Ethnicity
B1	17	Christian	JHS 3	Krobo
B2	15	Christian	JHS 2	Krobo
B3	16	Christian	JHS 1	Krobo
B4	15	Christian	JHS 1	Krobo
B5	15	Christian	JHS 1	Krobo
B6	16	Christian	SHS 1	Krobo
B7	15	Christian	JHS 1	Krobo
B8	18	Christian	SHS 1	Krobo
B9	16	Christian	JHS 2	Krobo
B10	17	Christian	JHS 3	Krobo
B11	15	Christian	JHS 1	Krobo
B12	17	Christian	SHS 1	Krobo
B13	18	Christian	SHS 2	Krobo
B14	19	Christian	JHS 3	Krobo

B15	15	Christian	JHS 1	Krobo
B16	16	Christian	HJS 2	Krobo
B17	17	Christian	JHS 3	Krobo
B18	19	Christian	SHS 2	Krobo
B19	18	Christian	SHS 2	Krobo
B20	17	Christian	JHS 3	Krobo

Source: (Field Work, 2023)

Table 4.2 Demographic Information of Community Leaders

Respondent	Age	Religion	Ethnicity	Position as a community leader
E1	75	Christian	Krobo	Queen Mother
E2	76	Christian	Krobo	Queen Mother
E3	68	Christian	Krobo	Family Head
E4	55	Christian	Krobo	Family Head
E5	60	Christian	Krobo	Assistant school teacher

Source (Field work, 2023)

Per the demographic representation, a total of twenty-five respondents were interviewed, specifically twenty teenagers and five community leaders. All respondents that were interviewed belong to the Christian religion. On the age range, the girls' ages ranged between 15- 19 years and the community leaders' age ranged between 60-76 years. All respondents that were interviewed were of Krobo ethnicity.

The Semi-structured interviews, Focused Group Discussions, and In-depth interviews with the teenage girls and community leaders revealed some findings which are presented in accordance with the objectives of this study.

4.2 The Dipo Initiation Processes

The Dipo initiation process was explained as different stages the girls have to go through for a period of four days. They mentioned that the Dipo initiation rite usually starts on Thursday and ends on Sunday. Twelve of the girls explained that the Dipo initiation was an easy process to go

through and four of the girls mentioned they found the Dipo rite a difficult process to go through. Some of the responses were as follows;

“I found the Dipo rite so easy because those who took us through the process treated us like queens, they cooked and did everything for us” (B18, 19 years).

“I was happy to participate in the Dipo rite, the dance was easy to learn, and the beads were beautiful to wear” (B12, 17 years).

However, the data gathered showed some of the girls found the Dipo rite a difficult process.

Some of the responses were as follows;

“During the Dipo rite, the traditional mothers shaved my hair as part of the process, I was not happy about this” (B19, 18 years)

“I did not like the food the traditional authorities gave us during the Dipo rite, they gave us yam and plantain throughout the process. We were not made to enjoy any other delicacies (B3, 16 years).

“We were made to bath naked at the river side during the Dipo initiation process, we also walked barefooted throughout the process, I found these difficult to do” (B4, 15 years).

“I liked all the process of the Dipo rite, but what I dislike was when we were made to bath at the riverside, this pollute and contaminate our water bodies because my community use and drink from this river” (B10, 17years)

Data gathered from the Queen mothers and family heads revealed that, the Dipo initiation used to last for one year in the olden days. According to a queen mother, the Dipo process was difficult in the past compared to what is being done in recent times. They gave the following responses;

“In the olden days, the traditional authorities used knife or sharp object to mark some parts of the girls who went through the Dipo initiation rite. The scar served as a sign of participation in the rite” (E2, Queen mother).

“The ladies used to walk naked in town as part of the initiation process in time past but now we cover their breast and private parts with some leaves or cloth” (E4, Family head).

4.3 The Teachings of the Dipo Rite

The study revealed the Dipo rite forms the major part of the teachings of gender roles and responsibilities. During the Focused Group Discussions and in-depth interviews, all the girls said they learned how to cook, wash, and how to be good wives in the future and also, how to behave as ladies after they have gone through the Dipo initiation.

Some of the ladies shared what the Dipo rite has taught them as follows;

“By participating in the Dipo rite, I have learned how to keep myself clean during my menstrual period and also how to keep my home clean when I marry” (B14, 19 years).

“The Dipo rite taught me how I can keep my home clean when I marry and how to be a good wife and mother to my husband and children” (B6, 16 years).

“The Dipo rite has taught me to remain focused, work hard, and get a job before I get married” (B10, 17 years).

Also, the data gathered from the Focus Group Discussion and In-depth interview with the ladies revealed that some of the ladies participate in the Dipo rite to learn special dance called “Klama”. According to ten ladies, the Klama dance is one of the major dance every Krobo lady is supposed to learn in order to be a true lady of the land. Also, the songs used to perform the Klama dance recounts the achievements of some female ancestors of Krobo.

Some of the girls commented as follows:

“I used to watch the other ladies who went through the Dipo rite perform the “Klama” dance I liked the way they lifted their hands so I was eager to go through the Dipo rite so I can also learn how to dance” (B 10, 17years).

“I liked the songs we used to perform the Klama dance, it reminds us about the history of our land, it also tells us about what our ancestors, especially women have done for our land” (B14, 17years)

“A lady who does not know how to perform the Klama dance is not a true woman of this land because the dance portrays our culture and identity as Krobo women” (B6,16years)

4.3.1 Dipo Teachings on Pre-Marital Sex Decision

With regards to teachings on abstinence from pre-marital sex before marriage, many of the respondents informed the researcher that the Dipo teachings admonish them to avoid pre-marital sex, remain focused on their education and get a career before they settle with a man and start having children. According to Abbey et al. (2021), girls who went through the Dipo initiation in time past were instructed to have self-discipline and avoid pre-marital affairs after they have gone through the Dipo rite, this served as a means of curbing teenage pregnancies in the Krobo community. The Queen Mothers and Family Heads commented on this as follows;

“As part of the Dipo rite teachings, we tell them to avoid pre-marital sex and focus on their education and become responsible ladies in future” (E2, Queen Mother)

“One goal of the Dipo rite is to prepare the girls for marriage, we teach them how to be good wives and mothers to their husbands and children. They are supposed to practice what we teach them in marriage” (E3, Family Head)

Also, during the In-depth interview with the girls two of them remarked;

“The traditional authorities who took us through the Dipo rite told us that if men start showing interest in us we have to inform our parents about it and not engage in sexual activities with the men” (B20, 17 years).

“We were taught to remain chaste after the Dipo rite, keep the teachings we have received on marriage and practice the lessons we have learnt in the Dipo rite after we marry.” (B14, 19 years).

However, the data gathered also revealed that, after a girl participates in the Dipo rite, the community does not punish or penalize her if she becomes pregnant or engages in pre-marital sex. One of the teenage girls who participated in the In-depth interview and had given birth affirmed to this as follow;

“Since I have gone through the Dipo rite, I was not afraid when I got pregnant, I knew my family, friends and community would not humiliate me. Although I am not happy that I have a baby at this age, I have peace with my community because I have participated in the Dipo rite” (B6, 16 years)

One of the Queen mothers affirmed to this as follows;

“When a girl goes through the Dipo rite, the community does not punish or humiliate her for getting pregnant. Once the Dipo rite is done we do not frown on any girl that get pregnant” (E1, Queen Mother)

4.4 Confidence in the Dipo rite on Pre-Marital Sex Decision

During the Focus Group Discussions with the girls who have gone through the Dipo rite, they explained that their confidence in the Dipo rite in avoiding pre-marital sex comes from the

teachings they received during the initiation. They said the rite also plays a role in their decisions on pre-marital sex. Some of the girls commented on this as follows;

“I have decided to abstain from pre-marital sex because of the teachings I received during the Dipo rite initiation. I was taught to remain focused on my education, work hard and become a responsible woman in future” (B8, 18 years).

“The Dipo initiation rite has prepared me for marriage, I will wait until I marry before I engage in sexual activities” (B2, 15 years).

“My community will not punish me if I engage in sexual activities and become pregnant after the Dipo rite but we were also taught by the traditional authorities that as a lady who has gone through the Dipo initiation rite you have to bring honor to your parents by getting married before you start having children. In this regard I have decided to marry before I start having children” (B19, 17 years).

“I have seen other ladies get pregnant immediately after they have gone through the Dipo rite, as for me, I will abide by the teachings I received during the initiation by engaging in sexual activities when I get married” (B7, 15 years)

Furthermore, one community head contributed to this by commenting that;

“The Dipo rite teaches the girls not to engage in pre-marital sex activities. We are happy to see them live by this teaching, get to a certain age and get marry before they engage in sexual activities” (E5, Assistant school Teacher).

4.5 Factors that Influence the Girls' Attitudes Towards the Dipo rite

During the Focus Group Discussion and the in-depth interviews with the girls, four themes emerged as major factors that affected their attitudes and contributed to their participation in the Dipo rite initiation.

4.5.1 Dipo as a Mandatory Traditional Rite

One factor that emerged from the FGD and the in -depth interview with the girls was the fact that the Dipo rite was a necessary traditional rite which they have accepted because of the community in which they find themselves and the culture they identify with. The FGD and in depth interview with the young girls showed they participated in the Dipo rite to carry on with the traditions their ancestors and mothers also practiced. Some of the girls shared these responses in relation to Dipo as a mandatory traditional rite. The typical responses were as follows;

“I believe I have to go through the Dipo initiation rite because it is part of my tradition” (B2, 15 years).

“As a girl, and a Krobo, I have to go through the Dipo rite in order to be a true lady as my tradition tells me, I also know if I go through the Dipo rite I have fulfilled the tradition and customary rite of my land” (B10, 17 years).

“Here in Krobo, the Dipo rite is a mandatory celebration for all girls who find themselves on this land. A girl has to go through before she is recognized as part of this community, so I decided to participate in it” (B20, 17 years)

Moreover, throughout the FGD and In -depth interview with the girls, they said they participated in the Dipo rite because of the advice and the encouragement they received from their parents, guardians and grandparents. The girls informed the researcher that, their parents explained the

Dipo rite to them as a necessary traditional custom they have to go through before they could be recognized as Dipo ladies.

Some of the responses were as follows;

“Initially, I didn’t want to participate in the Dipo rite but my mother told me I would not be accepted as a true lady of the Krobo land so I decided to participate in the initiation” (B6, 16 years).

“I would have gone through the Dipo even if my mother had not advised me because Dipo is a beautiful puberty rite, I enjoyed watching other girls go through it so I also decided to participate in it.” (B20, 17years).

“My parents did not advise me to participate in the Dipo rite, I made the decision to participate in the Dipo rite immediately after I got to know it was about to be done for young girls because I wanted to be recognized as a lady of the Krobo land” (B1, 17 years)

4.5.2 Banishment from Home

Prohibition and penalties are other factors influencing attitudes towards the Dipo rite. With regards to this, responses were voiced out by five respondents during the Focus Group Discussion as follows;

“As a girl who comes from Krobo, if I don’t participate in the Dipo rite and indulge myself in sexual activities or become pregnant I have to leave my parents’ house and never return” (B19, 19 years).

“I know I have peace of mind at home and in my community if I go through the Dipo before indulging in any sexual activities or becoming pregnant” (B13, 18 years).

“Even if my parents and family members are no more, I know my sisters who have gone through the Dipo initiation will not allow me to enter our parents’ home if I don’t go through the Dipo rite before giving birth to my children” (B2, 15 years).

“If I travel abroad and start having children before I go through the Dipo rite, I can’t come home to bury my parents or attend any family member’s funeral if they die” (B12, 17 years)

“As a young girl in Krobo land If I don’t go through the Dipo rite and give birth, I cannot enter my home again, I will be banned from my community forever” (B7, 15 years),

In addition, one of the Queen Mother responded as follows;

“If a young girl does not go through the Dipo rite before she gives birth, she has to be banned from entering her home and community because she becomes a curse to society” (E2, Queen Mother)

4.5.3 Dipo as a Cultural Requirement for Marriage

From the data gathered from the Focused Group Discussions and one-In-depth interviews with the girls, another factor that contributed to a girls’ participation in the Dipo rite was the believe that the Dipo rite was required of every girl before she can be married off. Respondents explained that all Krobo men prefer ladies who have gone through the Dipo initiation, if a lady had not gone through the Dipo rite no man in the community will marry her.

Some of the responses were as follows:

“I believe no man will marry me here in Krobo if I don’t go through the Dipo initiation I wish to marry in future so I decided to participate in the Dipo rite” (B16, 16 years).

“I know my in-laws will not accept me when I am due for marriage and have not gone through the Dipo initiation” (B19, 18 years).

“I knew if I go through the Dipo initiation rite, I will have a good marriage and also know how to treat my husband in the future” (B2, 15 years).

The researcher further asked how a man would know if a lady had gone through the Dipo initiation before seeking her hand in marriage. One of the participants in the FGD responded as follows;

“I took some pictures during the Dipo initiation rite, I have kept those pictures and will show them to my in-laws and the man who will marry me during the marriage ceremony” (B1, 17 years)

Also, a family head responded as follows,

“In time past, the evidence to show a lady had gone through the Dipo rite was incision. Some parts of the ladies were marked with a knife, and the lady shows the scars to her husband-to-be and her in-laws before the marriage ceremony was performed” (E4, Family Head).

The researcher had the opportunity to see some of the pictures from the young girls during their initiation rite. They said they have kept it very well; the pictures would serve as evidence of their participation in the Dipo initiation during their marriage ceremony.

4.5.4 A Societal Curse on Ladies

Respondents believe that young ladies who refuse to go through the Dipo rite before giving birth becomes a curse in society. The girls explained that it was a taboo not to go through the Dipo rite before a girl attains a certain age in her life. Responses from the girls indicated that a girl becomes dirty and an outcast if she refuses to participate in the Dipo rite. They maintained as follows;

“I will have bad marriage and a difficult life if I refuse to participate in the Dipo rite before having my children but if I go through the initiation rite my life and marriage will be better” (B17, 17 years).

“Any girl who does not go through the Dipo initiation rite becomes dirty and unclean, she is rejected by her family, friends, and the community” (B13, 18 years).

Two of the family heads involved in organizing the Dipo initiation for the girls every year commented on this as follows;

“In the land of Krobo, women play a major role when it comes to decision-making at both the family and community levels, the Dipo rite purifies and prepares the ladies to participate in decision-making process” (E3, Family Head).

“We cast out girls and women who have not gone through the Dipo rite before they start having children, such girls become abomination in our society” (E4, Family Head).

4.6 Formal Education Influence of Dipo

From the data gathered, it was revealed that school has not influenced the girls’ decision to participate in the Dipo rite initiation. Some of the girls who participated in the Focus Group Discussion mentioned that some of the teachers encouraged them to participate in the Dipo rite. Moreover, they did not find any conflict with the teachings they received in school and that of the Dipo rite. Some of the girls commented on this as follows;

“At school, we have a Ga Adangbe teacher who teaches us about the importance of puberty rite, he explains the Dipo rite to us anytime we have questions about it”. “I don’t see any contradiction with the teachings I receive from school and that of the Dipo rite, they are the same” (B14, 19 years)

“When the Dipo initiation is approaching every year, our teachers encourage the girls who have not gone through to register with the traditional authorities so they also go through the initiation process” (B 14, 19 years).

“After a group of us participated in the Dipo rite, our teachers made us dance the Klama in the presence of other students and congratulated us for going through the Dipo rite” (B20, 17 years)

However, one girl mentioned that after she participated in Dipo rite, she was rejected by her friends who belong to the Christian religion. She commented on this as follows;

“After I participated in the Dipo rite, my Christian friends rejected me, they saw me as dirty because of the traditional nature of the rite” (B20,17 years).

Attitudes and Perceived Behavioral Control according to the theory of Planned Behavior, plays a significant role in determining the action people engage in (Ajzen,1991). From the findings, the factors that affect the girls’ attitudes to go through the Dipo initiation rite are cultural beliefs and norms in the Yilo Krobo community. Some of these cultural beliefs and norms have both positive and negative effect on girls who refuse to abide by them. Also the orientation the girls receive from their family and the community have shaped their perception and beliefs, this has further affected their attitudes towards Dipo rite. In addition, the girls saw the Dipo rite as an easy process they could go through without any difficulty. The easiness of an action influences the decision of people in participating in that action (Ajzen, 1991). Also, the girls have confidence in the teachings they received during the Dipo initiation. However, the community does not frown on girls who become pregnant after going through the Dipo rite. The findings further revealed formal education has not affected the decision of the girls in going through the Dipo initiation rite. Based on the findings, the acceptability of the Dipo rite depends on the cultural beliefs and norms, the easiness of the Dipo process, and also, the encouragement they received from their school teachers to take part in the Dipo initiation.

Discussions of Findings

In this section, the findings of the study are analyzed according to the objectives of the study. Adolescent rites of passage among the various ethnic groups in Ghana have declined in recent times. The decline in these adolescent rites of passage has increased risky sexual behaviors leading to increased teenage pregnancies among young girls in various communities in Ghana (Ahwenekoko, 2008). Despite this decline, the Dipo rite of passage is known as the only initiation rite in Ghana which is still performed every year for young girls to transition them into adulthood. Although the rite is still held in high esteem among the Krobos, statistics from the Municipal Health Directorate in Yilo Krobo indicated teenage pregnancies recorded in year 2020 and 2021 was 1717 despite the Dipo rite initiation in these two years. Research on Dipo rite reports that young girls who go through the rite are supposed to live by the morals and teachings that comes with the initiation rite so the societal standards are maintained (Abbey, 2016).

4.7 The Girls' Perceived Behavioral Control towards the Dipo Rite

The Dipo initiation process has evolved with time and undergone changes. This has made it easy for girls who go through it in recent times. When people have control over an action and the action is less stressful, the likelihood of engagement in that action is high (Ajzen, 1991). Boakye (2010) mentioned that the Dipo initiation used to last for a period of one year before the girls were recognized as Krobo ladies. The one year involved a lot of intensive training which prepared the girls for responsibilities and marriage. The Dipo initiation process now takes a period of four days for completion of the rite. Formal education serves as a contributing factor to the current number of days used to initiate the girls (Boakye, 2010). From the study, the four days used for the Dipo rite initiation did not have much conflict with the school learning hours of the girls, the girls could afford the time for the Dipo initiation processes. Ajzen (1991) mentioned that before an individual performs any action, affordability of that action is weighed before it is performed. The study

revealed the reduction in the number of years of the initiation process took away some tedious aspect of the initiation process like climbing of the sacred rock which was supposed to test whether a girl was pregnant or not. Moreover, in times past, girls used to prepare their food, fetch water, wash their clothes and do other chores while they stayed in the Dipo house as part of the process (Boakye, 2010). The study revealed that the traditional authorities do the chores and other cleaning in the Dipo house in recent times. This was noted when one of participants mentioned she was treated as a queen during the Dipo initiation, the traditional authorities did everything for her and the other girls. Also the study noted the girls were happy to participate in the Dipo initiation because of the popular dance in the community called Klama. Majority of the girls in Krobo enjoy the Klama dance (Abbey, 2016). The perception of the Klama dance revealed that the girls saw it as a beauty which every girl must have before she becomes a complete Krobo lady. Although the study revealed the girls found some aspect of the process difficult, those difficult aspect has undergone changes in recent times. The breast of the girls is now covered with leaves during the initiation. (Sackey, 2009) reports the public don't see the private parts of the girls who go through the Dipo initiation, this has increased the girls' confidence level in participating in the rite in recent times. In addition, the fear of inflicting pain on the girls has prevented the traditional authorities from using knife to mark some parts of the ladies which served as evidence of the initiation. This was noted during an interview with a Family Head, he mentioned the traditional authority do not want to see blood and pains on the faces of the girls during the initiation, now the girls are allowed to take many pictures as evidence of their participation.

With regards to teachings on pre-marital sex, the study noted the girls are taught to remain chaste and avoid pre-marital sex during the initiation rite. This was mentioned during the Focus Group Discussion and in-depth interview with the girls. The study revealed traditional authorities and

societal leaders still play a role in shaping the sex life of young ladies. Abbey (2016) in her report, mentioned that girls who have gone through Dipo initiation rite depend on moral teachings they were taught by traditional authorities and Christian teachings to practice abstinence from pre-marital sex. Traditional teachings add to influencing the pre-marital sex decision of girls who go through the Dipo initiation rite. The girls have some confidence in the teachings they receive during the initiation rite in helping their sex life.

However, the study revealed the teachings of the Dipo contradicts what society believes after the girls have gone through the Dipo initiation. At the community level, pre-marital sex and teenage pregnancies are not frowned upon after a girl has gone through the Dipo initiation. Agra and Gbadegbe (2014) asserts that the Krobo community condone pre-marital sex after the Dipo rite. Agra and Gbadegbe (2014) further add that the age at which the girls are initiated in recent times has contributed to increase in teenage pregnancies in the community. Girls as young as three and five are made to go through the Dipo initiation (Boakye, 2010; Agra & Gbagedge, 2014; Abbey, 2016). Majority of these young girls who are initiated at this tender age may forget the teachings they received from the traditional authorities on pre-marital sex avoidance. Moreover, the silence position of the Krobo community on pre-marital sex after the young girls have participated in the Dipo rite increases teenage pregnancy in the municipality. Girls who have gone through the Dipo rite think they have the support of the community to engage in pre-marital sex (Agra & Gbadegbe, 2014). In time past girls were given off to marriage immediately they went through the Dipo rite. Some of them had met their marriage partners already and had to through the Dipo initiation before the marriage ceremony was done (Boakye, 2010).

4.8 Factors that Influence the Girls' Attitude to Participate in the Dipo Rite

The attitudes of people are affected by what they believe in and the traditions they practice.

Research shows norms and cultural beliefs of a community affect their perception and the way they think. Pauketat (2001) mentioned that traditions are learned and observed by generations who find themselves in that traditional setting. From the study, it was revealed that cultural beliefs that comes in the form of penalties and sanctions influence the girls' acceptance of the Dipo rite. Although research shows Dipo rite is a mandatory rite for every Krobo lady, any girl who refuses the rite is not recognized as a true member of the Krobo community. Girls who refuse the rite are not members of the community (Boakye, 2010). The study revealed that the Krobos see the Dipo as a form of purification for the girl child and the refusal of it calls for sanction. From the focus group discussion and In-depth interviews, the girls mentioned the ladies who refuse the rite are not considered as society members, they are seen as unclean. All the girls mentioned they will not be allowed to enter their family house or participate in family related ceremonies if they refuse to go through the Dipo initiation.

In addition, the study revealed another factor that makes the Dipo initiation rite mandatory is the lead role women plays in the Krobo community when it comes to decision making both at the family and community levels. This was noted during an in depth interview with one of the family Head, he mentioned that women mostly play the lead role in decision making process. Boakye (2010) reports, Queen Mothers are respected in Krobo, they are part of all traditional decision making bodies across the various communities.

Also, the study revealed that no male in the community will accept to marry any girl who has not gone through the Dipo rite. This was mentioned in the Focus Group Discussion when the girls said all Krobo men prefers ladies who have gone through the Dipo initiation as marriage partners. In

the Krobo community ladies who do not go through the initiation rite have not learnt the basic requirements of marriage and not fit for any Krobo man. The men in Krobo prefers ladies from the land and see the Dipo as a tradition which prepares and teach the ladies how to be good wives and mothers. Through the Dipo rite, girls learn how to handle conflict and quarrels that may arise in their marriage (Glozah & Lawani, 2014). In addition, as part of cultural beliefs, any girl who does not go through the Dipo initiation rite is seen as a bad omen in the community. The study noted all the girls interviewed showed they wanted society to see them as good community members and also their respect for societal traditions. Moreover, the belief of becoming an outcast from the community was noted in the study. During the Focus Group Discussions, some of the girls mentioned society would have banned them from the community if they had gone through the Dipo rite before getting pregnant. Baokye (2010) reports that in time past girls who were found pregnant during the initiation rite were sacked from the community. Although the girls mentioned they were afraid of been driven out from the community if they hadn't gone through the initiation rite before pregnancy, the study further noted girls who refuse the Dipo rite are not driven out from the community. This was revealed when one of the girls in the Focus Group Discussion mentioned some of her Christian friends rejected her after she went through the Dipo rite.

4.9 Educational Intention of the Girls Toward the Dipo Rite

Introduction of formal education in Ghana faded out most rite of passages performed for adolescents. Abbey et. al (2021) mentioned that most rite of passage in various communities of Ghana are no longer performed for young girls because of formal education. The study noted that some of the teachings and advice the girls receive from teachers influence their intention positively to go through the Dipo initiation rite. The study revealed both male and female teachers at Yilo Krobo advice and encourage the girls to go through the initiation rite. Although Boakye (2010) reported that education has reduced the numbers of months used to perform the Dipo rite for the

girls, the intention to participate in the rite has not been affected. The girls see their formal educational teachings as a complement to the Dipo teachings. The girls seek clarification on things they do not understand concerning the rite from their teachers. This was noted in the focus group discussion when they mentioned their Ga Adangbe teacher explained aspects of the Dipo they found difficult understanding.

From the findings, the study has identified that education has not affected their perception of and decision to participate in the Dipo rite. Although the findings relate to literature on Dipo rite instilling cultural values and admonishing girls to remain chaste until marriage, the study also identified that the community accept it when girls become pregnant after they participate in the Dipo rite.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This Chapter provides a summary of the main findings in the study. It also presents the conclusion and policy recommendation based on the outcome of the study.

5.1 Summary

The study sought to assess the acceptability of the Dipo rite among teenage girls who have gone through it and know whether the rite affect their pre-marital sex decisions. The study used factors that affect their attitudes towards the rite, the girls perceived behavioral control towards the rite and also educational influence as the main research objectives. The main source of data employed in the study was primary data from teenage girls of Yilo Krobo, Queen mothers, Family's' Head and an Assistant School Teacher. Also, secondary data on teenage pregnancies from Yilo Krobo Municipal Health Directorate was employed. In addition, the study used a thematic method of analysis in the presentation of the findings.

From the study, it was noted that embedded cultural values, norms, and beliefs affect the attitudes of the girls who go through the Dipo initiation. These cultural values form part of the orientation the girls receive from family and the community from childhood. Some of the cultural values identified were Dipo as a mandatory traditional rite, a requirement for marriage, and also a societal curse on any girl who refuses to participate in the rite before marriage or childbirth.

Also, from the study, the confidence of the girls in abstaining from pre-marital sex rest on the teachings they receive from the traditional authorities during the rite. Dipo rite admonishes them to abstain from pre-marital sex but the study further noted that the Krobo community does not frown on any teenage girl who become pregnant after going through the rite. Some studies have

attributed the increased in teenage pregnancy in the region to the young age at which the girls are initiated in recent times. In time past, the girls were initiated at age 27, when they were due for marriage (Boakye, 2010). The study noted the early age of which the girls are initiated contributes to teenage pregnancies in the region.

Moreover, the study established that although formal education has affected the Dipo in terms of time period, it has not influenced the intentions of the girls in participating in the Dipo rite. They see the Dipo rite as a necessary tradition every girl must pass through despite her educational teachings or level. In addition, the study further revealed that some teachers in the Yilo Krobo community encourage and advice students who have not gone through the Dipo initiation to do so.

5.2 Conclusions

Three conclusions are reached based on the findings of the study. First, girls who refuse to participate in the Dipo rite face consequences. These consequences are embedded in the cultural values and norms of the people of Yilo Krobo. The fear of societal punishment influences the attitudes and motivate them to participate in the Dipo initiation rite. This was noted in the Focus Group Discussion when most of the girls mentioned that any lady who refuses the Dipo initiation faces expulsion from the community. Ajzen (1991) mentioned peoples' attitudes towards an action can be influenced by the environment they find themselves. The attitudes of the girls are affected by the cultural environment they find themselves, this makes them go through the Dipo initiation.

The second conclusion also noted that the confidence of the girls in the Dipo rite is tied to the teachings they receive as part of the initiation process. They listen to what the traditional authorities tell them and build their lives on the teachings. Also, the girls find the Dipo rite interesting and see it as a beautiful traditional rite of the community. Also, the use of pictures as evidence instead of incision has made the Dipo process easy and attractive. Perceived Behavioral Control of an action

depends on how easy or difficult of that action (Ajzen, 1991). One Queen Mother indicated in the interview that knives were used in olden days to cut some part of the ladies as evidence of participation in the Dipo rite.

The study further concludes that there is a contradiction between the teachings of the Dipo rite that admonish the girls to abstain from pre-marital sex and what the Krobo community believes. From the findings, the community does not frown on any teenage girl who becomes pregnant after the Dipo rite. Since the community does not frown on this, most of the young girls become pregnant after the rite.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, this study suggests that the age at which the girls go through the Dipo initiation could be revised to a much older age between 18 -20 years. Since the community does not frown on girls who get pregnant after the rite, late initiation age will prepare them directly into marriage as it was done in time past.

Based on the revision of the age, the study further suggests that bathing naked at the riverside as part of the Dipo initiation could be changed to a more enclosed space where the nakedness of the ladies will not be exposed to the general public. This will encourage more participation by the youthful females without society resorting to sanctions to bring about compromise.

The study further recommends that government, stakeholders, and civil society organizations sensitize young girls at the community level on the dangers and consequences of teenage pregnancies. This will supplement the teachings they receive during the initiation process and help reduce the number of teenage pregnancies in the Yilo Krobo municipality.

In addition, the study recommends that the family, community members, government, and civil organization educate and sensitize both young girls and boys at the Krobo communities on the use of contraceptives and other reproductive health concerns.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION FOR THE TEENAGE GIRLS OF THE YILO KROBO MUNICIPALITY

I am a student of the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER) conducting a study on **Assessing the Acceptability of the Dipo Rite Among Teenagers of the Yilo Krobo municipality**

The information being sought from you is purposely for academics thus all responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation.

Do I have your permission to proceed?

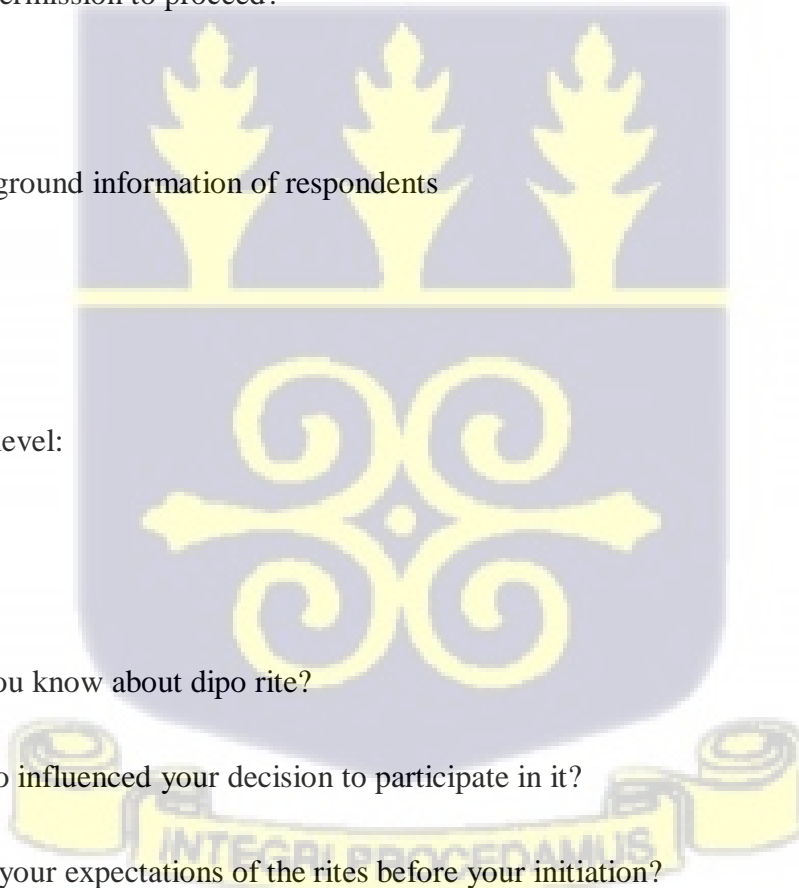
Question

Section A: Background information of respondents

- 1) Age:
- 2) Religion:
- 3) Education level:
- 4) Ethnicity

Question

- 5) What do you know about dipo rite?
- 6) What or who influenced your decision to participate in it?
- 7) What were your expectations of the rites before your initiation?
- 8) Were you happy to participate in the Dipo rite?
 - A) If yes, why



B) If no, why

9) How easy or difficult was it for you to participate in the Dipo initiation?

10) What were your likes and dislikes about the rite?

11) What advantages do you perceive of the Dipo initiation?

12) What disadvantages do you perceive of the Dipo rite?

13) Were you confident in the Dipo rite that can help you avoid premarital sex before you participated in it?

a) If yes, how confident were you

b) If no, why

14) Has your education influenced in any way your decision to participate in the Dipo rite?

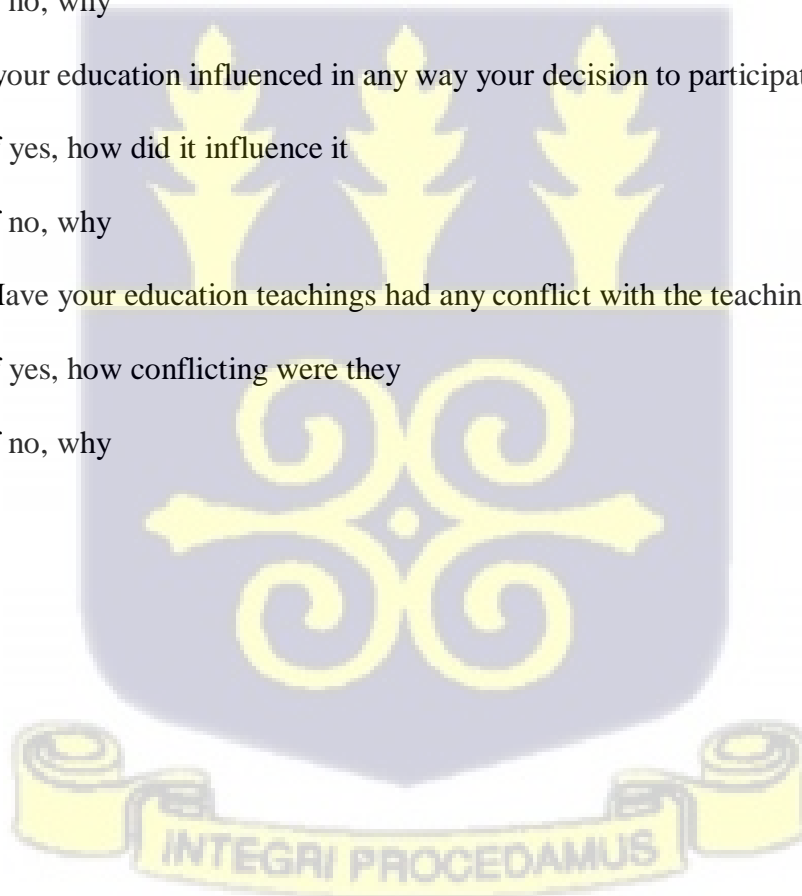
a) If yes, how did it influence it

b) If no, why

15) Have your education teachings had any conflict with the teachings of the Dipo rite?

c) If yes, how conflicting were they

d) If no, why



**APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANT - COMMUNITY HEAD,
QUEEN MOTHERS AND FAMILY HEADS- YILO KROBO**

I am a student of the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER) conducting a study on the **Assessing Dipo rite acceptability among teenagers of the Yilo Krobo municipality**

The information being sought from you is purposely for academics thus all responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation.

Background Information

Age

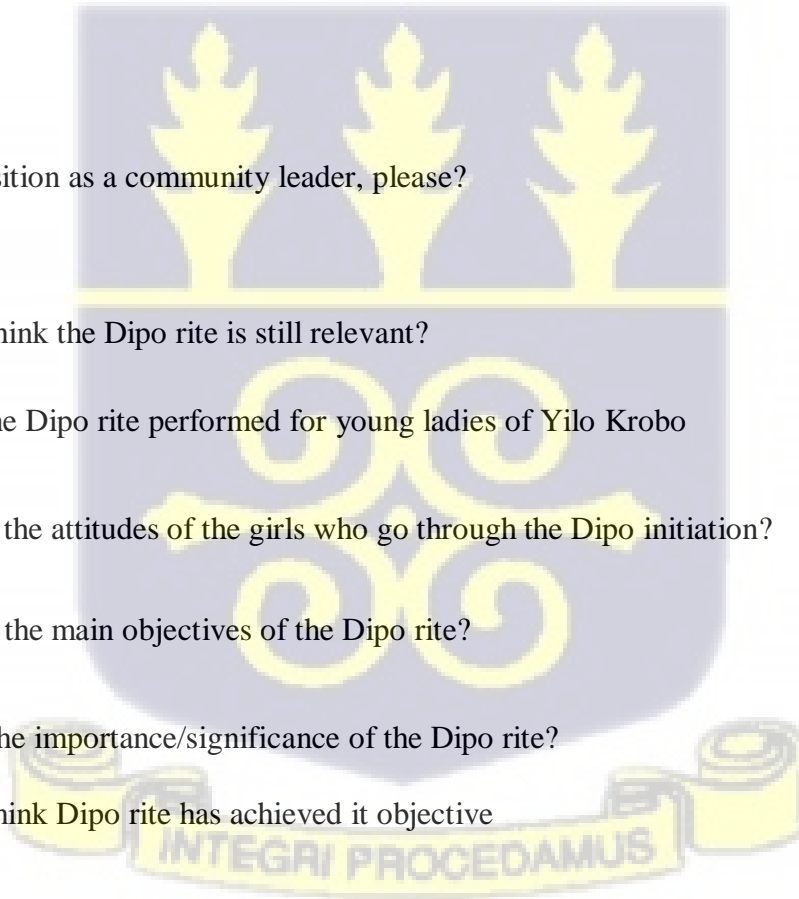
Religion

Ethnicity

What is your position as a community leader, please?

Question

- 1) Do you think the Dipo rite is still relevant?
- 2) Why is the Dipo rite performed for young ladies of Yilo Krobo
- 3) What are the attitudes of the girls who go through the Dipo initiation?
- 4) What are the main objectives of the Dipo rite?
- 5) What is the importance/significance of the Dipo rite?
- 6) Do you think Dipo rite has achieved its objective





UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR THE HUMANITIES (ECH)

P. O. Box LG 74, Legon, Accra, Ghana

My Ref. No: ECH 135/22-23

March 30, 2023

Miss Getrude Nana Adjoa Denkyi
Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research
University of Ghana
Legon

ETHICAL CLEARANCE
(ECH 135/ 22-23)

The Ethics Committee for the Humanities (ECH) conducted a full board review and approved your protocol titled:

ASSESSING DIPO RITE ACCEPTABILITY AMONG TEENAGERS OF YILO KROBO

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: MISS GETRUDE NANA ADJOA DENKYI

Please note that the final review report must be submitted to the Committee at the completion of the study. Your research records may be audited at any time during or after the implementation. Any modification of this research project must be submitted to ECH for review and approval prior to implementation.

Please report all serious adverse events related to this study to ECH within seven (7) days verbally and in writing within fourteen (14) days.

This certificate is valid until March 29, 2024. You are required to submit annual reports for continuing review.

Please accept my congratulations.

Yours Sincerely,

Professor C. Charles Mate-Kole
ECH Chair

Cc: Dr. Elizabeth Asiedua Asante, ISSER, UG



Ref. No.: ISSER-AC 5/6



INSTITUTE OF STATISTICAL, SOCIAL
AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

November 28, 2022.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MS. GETRUDE NANA ADJOA DENKYI (10933252)

The Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), wishes to introduce to you Ms. Getrude Nana Adjoa Denkyi, an MA student in Development Studies with ID number 10933252.

Ms. Denkyi's research topic is '**Assessing Dipo Rite Acceptability among Teenagers of Yilo Krobo**'. She will therefore need the assistance of your establishment to collect data for the research work. All data collected will be used solely for academic purposes and treated with the strictest confidentiality.

If you have any queries about this, please do not hesitate to contact the MA Coordinator on +233 26 8363 281 or klasante@ug.edu.gh.

We hope we can count on your kind co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Peter Quartey".

Prof. Peter Quartey
Director

