

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

**THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF- ESTEEM IN THE GHANAIAN CULTURAL
CONTEXT**

BY

JOSEPH DENNIS NII NOI QUARCOO

(10206137)



**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,
LEGON IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF MPhil PSYCHOLOGY DEGREE**

JUNE, 2013

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this is the result of my own research and has not been presented by anybody for any academic award in this university or any other university. All references used in this work have been duly acknowledged. I thereby bear sole and full responsibility for any shortcomings of this research work.

.....

.....

Joseph Dennis Nii Noi Quarcoo

Date

Student

We hereby certify that this was supervised in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University of Ghana.



.....

.....

Prof. Charity S. Akotia

Date

Principal Supervisor

.....

.....

Dr. Benjamin Amponsah

Date

Co-Supervisor

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

DEDICATION

I dedicate this master piece to my mother, Madam Evelyn Odonkor for standing by my side through my whole academic journey; especially for her encouragement towards the achievement of this qualification. Most importantly for her love, support and sacrifice. Mama, thank you for not giving up on me. God bless you.



THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Him who sits on the throne and unto the lamb be all blessings and glory and honour and power forever. My highest gratitude goes to the sovereign God who is able to accomplish in months what would take years to do. To you I owe this accomplishment. From the depths of my heart I say a big thank you to my supervisors – Prof. Charity S. Akotia and Dr. Benjamin Amponsah – without whose guidance I wouldn't have completed this programme. My immense appreciation also goes to Dr. Joseph Osafo, Mr Ferdinand Reimmer and those individuals who have contributed in diverse ways to the successful completion of this thesis.

I acknowledge the efforts of the participants of the study and further thanks to my research assistants who devoted their time and effort in the data collection and translation procedures. My sincere gratitude also goes to my family headed by Mr. Joseph Q. Addo, and also to Mr. and Mrs. Kessie, Rev. Ellis Coffie, Ms. Claudia Eyram Mensah, Mr. Nana Yaw Adjei and Mr. Bright K. Sowu.

Special appreciation also goes to my colleagues Victoria, Wendy V. Lawson and R. Coleman.

Much love

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

ABSTRACT

Current perspectives on the self have focused on a range of issues including the determinants of self-esteem. Twenty eight (28) adolescent and adult males and females were interviewed about their considerations of self-worth. Using thematic-content analysis, results indicate that Ghanaians make self-worth judgments through personal evaluations, social comparisons and social appraisals. Further findings show that, character stands as a core determinant of self-esteem among participants. The study identified seven (7) overarching themes namely Character, Identity, Attractiveness, Achievement, Feelings of belongingness, Autonomy and Other composed of seventeen (17) subthemes. The present study presents practical evidence that indeed Ghanaians have a collectivist culture; it provides an in-depth empirical understanding into the Ghanaian self with respect to its meanings, contexts of assessment and processes involved in self-evaluation. The study thus makes available to researchers, explanations to causal claims in future quantitative studies on the Ghanaian self.

Keywords

Determinants of self-esteem, self-worth judgement, self-evaluation, character



THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

TABLE OF CONTENT

Content	Page
Declaration.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Table of Content.....	v
List of Tables.....	viii
List of Figures.....	ix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0. Background of study.....	1
1.1. Defining Self-esteem	2
1.2. The Ghanaian Cultural Context	5
1.3. Statement of Problem	6
1.4. Rationale for Study.....	8
1.5. Research Questions.....	9
1.6. Aim /Objectives of study.....	9
1.7. Relevance of Study.....	10
1.8. Summary of Research variables.....	10

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction.....	12
2.1. Theoretical Framework.....	12

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Erickson's Psychosocial Theory	13
Looking Glass Self Theory	14
Social Acceptance Theory	16
Competency Model	16
2.2. Related Studies.....	18
2.3. Operational Definition of terms	23

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0. Study Area/Setting.....	24
3.1. Study Population.....	25
3.2. Participants/Sample.....	26
3.3. Sample size/Technique	27
3.4. Design.....	28
3.5. Materials/Instruments	28
3.6. Reliability	29
3.6. Procedure.....	29
Pilot Study.....	30
Main Study.....	31
3.7.Ethical consideration.....	31

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1. Introduction.....	33
THEMATIC CONTENT ANALYSIS	
4.2. Thematic Analysis	33

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

4.3. Means of self worth determination.....	34
4.4. Presentation of Themes	36
4.5. Summary of Results.....	50

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction.....	55
5.2. Discussion of Results.....	55
5.3. Summary of Findings.....	60
5.4. Limitations of the Study.....	61
5.4. Theoretical and practical implications of study.....	63
5.5. Suggestions for future studies	63
5.7. Summary and Conclusion.....	63
References.....	64
Appendix A: Sample Interview	77
Appendix B: Interview Guide	81

LIST OF TABLES

Demographic Characteristics of the Study by regions.....	27
• Table 1: Main Study	27
• Table 2: Pilot Study	30

LIST OF FIGURES

• Figure 1: Thematic map	54
--------------------------------	----

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

CHAPTER ONE**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a background to the study and sheds light on the variant definitions of self esteem; then zeros down to defining self esteem as it pertains to the present study. It then presents a picture of the Ghanaian context emphasizing its unique socio-cultural traits and how it could play on the study. This is followed by the problem statement and the rationale for the research; the research questions, study aims and objectives; the relevance of the study and finally, an outline of the study variables.

1.0. Background

The subject of self-esteem has been extensively researched, if not over researched. However, the bulk of these studies have dwelt on the Euro-American and Asian cultures. Few researches on the self-esteem of Africans and for that matter, Ghanaians, have been conducted (example, Gordon & Gordon, 1992; Mwizenge, 1993). Moreover, most studies on this subject have adopted a quantitative approach, few if any has utilized the qualitative means in understanding the self in the Ghanaian context. Self-esteem has been allured a great task in socialization. It is common knowledge, as perceived in the West that a primary factor affecting how well or how poorly an individual functions in society is self-esteem (DeWall, Twenge, Bushman, Im & Williams, 2010; Maltz, 2008; Smelser, 1989; Solomon, 2006). This assertion about three decades ago led to the creation of the California Task Force in the United States of America as a social reformation measure through the promotion of personal and social responsibility and more importantly, high self-esteem (Mecca, Smelser, & Vasconcellos, 1989). Although findings indicated a weak relationship between self-esteem and the social ills which were investigated – alcohol and drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, poor educational performance, crime, child abuse, and chronic welfare

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

dependency – (Gary, 1988; Hewitt, 1998; Leo, 1998; Martin & Bobgan, 1987; Smelser, 1989), some recent research findings report otherwise (DeWall et al., 2010; James, 1890; Leary, 1999; Maltz, 2008; Young-Hyman, Schlundt, Herman-Wenderoth & Bozylinski, 2003). The significance of self-esteem, as noted by Kitayama (2006) is a central issue in the current social psychology literature.

In his book, *Principles of Psychology*, James (1890) argued that self-esteem is a basic and fundamental human need. Branden (1994) stated bluntly that “self-esteem has profound consequences for every aspect of our existence” (p.5). Empirical proof from investigations by Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger and Vohs (2003) for instance suggests that high self-esteem enhances initiative and positive feelings – these qualities are undeniably pertinent to psychological and social wellbeing. On the flip side of the coin, others have argued that the concept of self-esteem is a cooked-up solution in search of a problem (Crocker & Nuer, 2004; Terrell, 1987). While the argument on self-esteem and what functions it serves continue, the self-esteem movement is active in its efforts to promote the well-being of the individual and society. However in the words of Baumeister et al. (2003), “as Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and other grand thinkers could assert if they were alive today, even the most elaborate and persuasive theories about human behaviour do not generally receive empirical support in all aspects.” Self-esteem is no exception (p.2).

1.1. Defining Self-esteem

Self-esteem generally depicts feelings of self-regard; a deeply felt appreciation of oneself and one’s natural being, a trust of one’s abilities – the degree to which an individual feels good about

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

themselves (Straus, 2002). Conventionally, self-esteem is defined as an individual's evaluation of his/her self-worth (Brown, Cai, Oakes & Deng, 2009; Twenge, 2006). Technically, self-esteem is *the evaluative component of the self-concept* which is a set of beliefs about one's personal qualities and typical behaviours. Purkey (1988) defined self-concept as "the totality of a complex, organized, and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence" (p.7). 'Self' here is used to represent a sense of 'identity', a mindful reflection of one's own being as an object distinct from others or from the environment (Huitt, 2011).

Brown and Marshall (2006) view self-esteem as "a capacity to construe events in ways that promote, maintain, and protect feelings of self-worth" (p.290). Thus implying that persons with high self-esteem have a strong love for themselves which makes them dwell on their positive qualities and react to events in such a way as to maintain feelings of self-worth. Mruk in Kernis (2006) on the other hand observed self-esteem as a "complex phenomenon that involves the dynamic relationship between competence and worthiness" (p.3). He argues that "while self-esteem involves worthiness, worthiness must be earned through competent action; likewise, competence involves actions that are worthy not meaningless successes..." (p.3)

Self-esteem can be conceptualized as a whole construct divisible into three major parts – *social* self-esteem, *performance* self-esteem and *physical* self-esteem – each of which can be further separated into subcomponents (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991). Social self-esteem refers to how people believe others perceive them (Heatherton et al., 2005). Though not always objective, these perceptions of value and admiration by significant others in particular result in high social self-esteem. Persons with low social self-esteem are often high self monitors especially in public.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Feelings of general sense of competence in several domains, example, confidence, intellectual abilities, self-efficacy etc. depict performance self-esteem. High performance self-esteem individuals trust in their abilities. Lastly, physical self-esteem reflects how individuals evaluate their physical bodies and includes such dimensions as physical attractiveness, talents/skills, body image, as well as race and ethnic affects.

In the light of James (1892) concept of *centrality* in self-esteem, an individual has high self-esteem to the degree that he/she feels good about the things that matter most to him/her. For instance, poor vocal dexterity is of no use to a non-musical person's self-concept. A research by Pelham (1995) gives credence to James concept of centrality as a significant predictor of self-worth. Brown et al. (2006) delineated three different outlooks to self-esteem. They identified Global Self-Esteem which they also termed as Trait Self-Esteem, Feelings of Self-Worth also known as State Self-Esteem and Self-evaluations or Domain Specific Self-Esteem. Global self-esteem represents the way people generally feel about themselves. Research has shown that Trait self-esteem, is enduring across time and situations and also that it is stable throughout adulthood (Orth, Trzesniewski, & Robins, 2010; Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005). State self-esteem on the other hand refers to self evaluative emotional reactions. While global self-esteem is lasting, feelings of self-worth are temporary. Self-esteem is also used to refer to valuations of abilities and attributes – Domain Specific Self-Esteem. For example, in the African cultural setting, an adult female who doubts her ability to cook (domestic chores) may be said to have low domestic self-esteem. Self-evaluations involve the way individuals appraise their physical attributes, abilities, and personality characteristics.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Current perspectives have further identified what is termed two dimensional self-esteem (Kernis, 2006). In their chapter, Jordan, Logel, Spencer and Zanna (2006) asserted the import of distinguishing between explicit and implicit self-esteem should a better understanding of how self views influence behaviour be achieved. Explicit self-esteem has been “conceptualized as a *conscious, reasoned self evaluation of global self-worth* and have been assessed traditionally using direct, self report procedures” (Karpinski & Steinberg, 2006 p.102). Implicit self-esteem on the other hand is that side of self-esteem that functions “outside of conscious awareness and control” (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995 p.164). The present research defines self-esteem as a deep feeling of appreciation, self-regard and a high sense of worth for one’s self.

1.2. The Ghanaian Cultural Context

Some critical questions worth answering include, *is there such a thing as ‘a Ghanaian cultural context’*? Is the Ghanaian culture any different from that of Nigeria or any other West African/African culture? Does the Ghanaian have *a sense of self*? Does the concept of self-esteem exist in the Ghanaian culture? How is it referred to in the local dialects? To the last question, there seem not to be an answer. One may therefore assume that perhaps, the degree to which individuals feel good about themselves might not exist in Ghanaian cultures. After all, the Ghanaian culture as are most African cultures is perceived to be communal in nature (Hollan, 1992).

However, it is worth noting that research findings by Hewitt (1998) suggest that there are certain features that are universal to human nature. These include self-consciousness and the evaluation of self in relation to “relevant cultural criteria.” That is to say, every people has a sense of self or

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

identity and a standard on which they assess their worth. So then Ghanaian culture, albeit similar to those of other cultures in the sub-region, is unique and different. And that Ghanaians do have a sense of self and standards of self-worth judgments peculiar to their culture. Although Ghanaian culture is generally collectivist, and thus places emphasis on meaningful relationships and respect for authority (Gyekye, 2003; Watkins, Akande, & Mpofu, 1995), Ghanaian culture also has a sense of individualism (Gyekye, 2003), depicted by such maxims as, ‘ono’ ji ono’, Ga term meaning “what you have is yours” and the Akan maxim ‘obra ni woarabo’, meaning “life is as you yourself make it”.

Also, the phrase ‘in the Ghanaian cultural context’ makes reference to nationality. *Citizenship* comes to mind then. Though the study draws on nationality, it is worth noting that Ghana, the then Gold Coast was created through forced artificial borders by the colonial masters and the plebiscite to include the Volta land, and thus harbours a rich *variety of cultures*. Over five decades or so, there might have been some cultural integration but be it as it may, the cultures trapped and crusted within the borders of Ghana are unique and heterogeneous, therefore making it prudent for the study to investigate if considerations of self-worth are any different in these cultures.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

In Ghana, low self-esteem has been associated with some social maladaptive behaviours such as armed robbery and suicide/suicide ideations (Baafi, 2013). Research findings suggest that high self-esteem is important for good mental health, academic achievement among other important elements for healthy personality development which is crucial for the development of every

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

nation (Solomons, 2006; Tangney, 2004; Torres, 2008). The focus of the present study, determinants of self-esteem stands central to current trends in self-esteem issues among others such as the stability of self-esteem, and non-conscious self-esteem (Kernis, 2006).

Self-esteem has been identified as a *universal construct* which is of general psychological importance and has both direct and latent effects on several aspect of human behaviour (Brown, Cai, Oakes & Deng, 2009; Solomon, 2006). For instance, low self-esteem has been found to be one reason why people commit crimes (Swann, Rentfrow & Guinn, 2003). This suggests that diminished self-esteem is a dominant independent variable in the creation of some social problems (Mecca et al., 1989). In this contemporary age, every society seeks to eventually eliminate such social vices using several approaches, however the cultural/contextual determinants of the self-esteem of its social members are not known which when conspicuous, would help develop appropriate strategies to curb these key social problems. Self-esteem is a highly internal construct but it is determined by several external factors, one important element being the level of individualism in a culture at a time (Twenge, 2006).

Studies have indicated variance in the determinants of self-esteem with respect to regions and cultures (Brown et al., 2009; Campbell & Foster, 2006; Geller, Johnston & Madsen, 1995; Leary, 1999; Twenge, 2006). Agentic cultures such as that of America view the self as Independent while Asian and African cultures, which are more collective in nature view the self as interdependent, placing importance on relationships. Studies by Kurman (2003) as well as Markus and Kitayama (1991) revealed that collective cultures score relatively low on self-esteem. In explaining these findings, Kurman (2001) discovered in a study that cultural

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

restrictions on the manifestation of self regard and cultural demands for modesty accounts for low self-esteem scores in collectivist cultures. Kurman and Sriram (2002) obtained similar conclusions. Could it be that in certain cultures, some self-esteem instruments are not really measuring what they intend to because of cultural variations?

Although most questionnaires are piloted and amended to fit respective cultural settings before administration, there is still more to be desired. A self-esteem instrument, if well-constructed based on findings from a particular culture will likely be more valid in measuring the construct in the respective culture. The present study is a necessary step towards this end in the Ghanaian cultural context.

1.4. Rationale for the study

There are lots of claims and arguments on Self-esteem. Some studies assert that lack of high self-esteem is said to be the cause of society's maladaptive behaviours (El-Anzi, 2005; Garfinkel, 2003; Mecca, Smelser & Vasconcellos, 1989; Swann, Rentfrow & Guinn, 2003; Tangney, 2004; Torres, 2008). Others challenge this assertion with counter evidence that high self-esteem is rather the trigger of these problems (Edelstein, 2011). Another group yet argues that there is no causal relationship between self-esteem and social ills, performance, interpersonal success, happiness and healthy lifestyle (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2003).

From the literature reviewed, diverse arguments have been raised on self-esteem. From each perspective, the core of the argument places much emphasis on this psychological construct. It therefore becomes prudent to explore the cultural determinants of self-esteem in the Ghanaian

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

context. Moreover, life in the twenty first century has increasingly laid emphasis on 'self'. For instance, current job requirements demand such self enhancing attributes as self confidence, assertiveness, and the ability to work independently without much supervision among others (Tangney, 2004). Further, the proliferation of materials on self-esteem – movies, music, books – cannot be ignored.

Studies on the determinants of self-esteem form part of current perspectives in studies on the self. Quite a number of studies on this subject have been conducted (example, De Cremer, Knippenberg, Knippenberg, Mullenders & Stinglhamber, 2005; Erol & Orth, 2011). Most of these studies have however dwelt on the western and Asian cultures. None has focused on the African context particularly the Ghanaian culture. More so, many of the studies on self have adapted a quantitative approach as opposed to the qualitative which is followed in the present study. Certain researchers have argued that the assumed centrality of self-esteem may not generalize to collectivist cultures, particularly Japan (Heine, Lehman, Markus & Kitayama, 1999; Kitayama, 2006). Contrary to this posit, Sedikides, Gaertner and Toguchi (2003) present evidence indicating that self enhancement is a universal concern, only it is experienced differently in eastern and western cultures. Sedikides et al. (2003), Hare and Castenell (1985) and Wade et al. (1989) present evidence indicating that the pool of determinants of self-esteem differ by race/ethnicity and sex even when the level of self-esteem are similar.

The absence of such important knowledge from the Ghanaian self-esteem literature is troubling. Therefore an empirical analysis of the determinants of Ghanaian self-worth is necessary for both theoretical and pragmatic reasons. Understanding the determinants of self-esteem means

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

identifying the factors on which Ghanaians evaluate themselves as good/bad, wise/foolish, competent or incompetent, beautiful/ugly and so on. These factors may differ from that of other cultures. This study will fill a significant gap in the Ghanaian self-esteem literature.

1.5. Research Questions

The present study sought to address this question.

1. What are the determinants of Ghanaians self-esteem?

1.6. Aims/Objectives

This explorative study sought to investigate the evaluative elements of the average Ghanaians self-concept. That is, the researcher determined to find out the factors on which Ghanaians judge their self-worth.

The study therefore sought to:

- i. Identify what the determinants of Ghanaians self-esteem are
- ii. Ascertain if these determinants are any different among male and female adolescents and adults living in urban and rural localities.

1.7. Relevance of the study

Findings from this study will make significant additions to our understanding of the Ghanaian self. Findings will provide empirical evidence for or against the view that Ghanaian culture is collectivist and present the internal dynamics of the Ghanaians self-esteem. It will provides us answers to such questions as ‘what makes the Ghanaian feel special?’ ‘What factors do Ghanaians consider in self evaluation?’ among others. Hence, these findings will help refine

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

theory on self esteem in the West African sub-region. It is an important step in building culturally tailored interventions toward a better Ghana and Africa. Further, findings from this research will fill a significant gap in the self-esteem literature.

1.8. Study Variables

a. Age

Age considerations in this study are as follows:

ADOLESCENTS: this research classified persons **13 – 20 years** old as adolescents. Persons within this bracket are still working on defining their identity (Erikson, 1968) and thus make it prudent to investigate what factors they judge their self-worth on.

ADULTS: Persons **21 – 60 years** + formed the final age consideration of this study. This research groups Ghanaians within this age bracket as adults. As the most active economic group (Ghana Living Standard Survey, 2008), it is prudent to understand their thought patterns as far as self evaluation is concerned.

b. Locality (Rural/Urban)

With the understanding that one's environment has significant impact on his or her behaviour (Brown & Cai, 2010), this study varied locality. This will afford us a full representation and hence understanding of the self in the Ghanaian case.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

CHAPTER TWO**LITERATURE REVIEW****2.0. Introduction**

This chapter presents the theoretical bases for the study. It further expounds reviews of studies related to the present one. The aim of the study is to determine the factors/traits Ghanaians use in making judgments of their self-worth.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

In this explorative study, although a number of theories are potentially relevant, the researcher adopted the four most related to the study. These are Erickson's psychosocial development theory, the social acceptance model, the competencies model and the looking glass theory.

Research findings (example, Costa & McCrae, 1997; Ferrer & McArdle, 2003; Harter, 1999; Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005; Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy, Gosling & Potter, 2002; Trzesniewski, Donnellan & Robins, 2003) have been consistent with the relative stability of self-esteem in adulthood compared to childhood and adolescence. Further, the suggestion that the factors of self-worth judgment differ across sex, age and culture have been persistent (see Brown, Cai, Oakes, & Deng, 2009; Brown, Wade, Thompson, Tashakkori & Valente, 1989; Hare & Castenell, 1985). Following Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development theory suggests different considerations for self-evaluation across the different stages of life. It is imperative to have an understanding of these self-worth determinants across the life span in the Ghanaian context.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development theory

Erikson's (1968) theory identified three aspects of identity: the *ego identity* (a conscious sense of self we develop through social interaction), *personal identity* (the personal experiences that differentiate us from others) and the *sociocultural identity* (the set of social roles a person might play). In explaining the impact of social experience across the lifespan, the theory implied the tenets that influence self-worth across the stages of life. For example, children aged 6 – 12 years at the Industry vs. Inferiority stage are likely to judge their self-worth primarily on how competent they are with certain skills especially among their peers. Children who exhibit creativity, new skills and knowledge are likely to have strong positive feelings of the self, compared to others who on the contrary might experience unresolved feelings of inadequacy and inferiority among peers, which most likely affect their self-esteem negatively.

Erikson's psychosocial development theory holds that every human being goes through eight (8) inevitable stages of development which eventually determines the kind of person (personality) one becomes. These are Trust vs. Mistrust for the infant, Autonomy vs. Shame and doubt for the toddler, Initiative vs. Guilt for the pre-schooler, Industry vs. Inferiority for the 6 -12 years school-age child, Identity vs. Role confusion for the adolescent, Intimacy vs. Isolation for the young adult, Generativity vs. Stagnation for the middle-aged adult and Integrity vs. Despair for the older adult. In the nature-nurture controversy, Erikson identified with nurture, explaining that our ego identity (self) goes through constant changes as we 'assimilate' and 'accommodate' through our experiences in daily interactions with others. The theory explains that at each developmental stage, one is faced with a psychosocial crisis – a challenge with two opposing emotional forces (example, trust vs. mistrust) which a person must deal with in order to grow and

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

develop. If one successfully deals with the crisis (trust vs. mistrust), it leads to a ‘positive’ outcome example, developing hope/trust in life otherwise a ‘negative’ one, for instance, feelings of insecurity, withdrawal and mistrust/pessimistic view of the world. Each crisis stage is tied to an age range. This theory guides the study in that it predicts variations in the constellation of predictors of self-worth across the age brackets.

Erikson’s theory has been criticized in some regards. Being a proponent of the nurture argument, his theory focused primarily on the influence of the environment on psychosocial development giving no recognition to genetic and biological influences and the nature argument in general. This poses a fundamental challenge to this theory. Further, Erikson acknowledged flaws in his theory stating that had he had the correct scientific training which he never had his theory could have been more precise (Erikson cited in Kroger, 1996). The theory has also been fairly criticized in recent times with regard to Erikson’s explanation that “women face the problem of finding their identity until they found a suitable partner” (Brown, 2012 p.5). As argued by Brown (2012), the statement does not support the notion of resolving the identity crisis during a particular stage of development; given the recent phenomenon, where some women defer marriage to attain heights in their careers.

Looking – Glass Self Theory

Cooley’s (1922) looking glass theory is simple yet complex. Drawing from philosophy, sociology and psychology, he argues that “*the self and society are twin born*” and that individuals do not make societies nor do societies individuals but rather, both are “distributive and collective aspects of the same thing” (Cooley, 1909, p.9). In consistency with his position, he

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

continues that the social origin of a person's life comes as a result of his/her interaction with other people and that nobody is born a human being rather we are socialized into being humans (Vijayan, 2008). It is through this process that the individual gets to know the sense of doing good and avoiding evil, loving beauty and rejecting ugliness etc. fitting into society (a concept known as idealism). In this way the individual develops a personality unique to him. Thus, the personality of an individual is composed of traits that are important in maintaining meaningful relationships (Heatheron & Wyland, 2005). In this sense, the self can be viewed as the feeling of uniqueness one experiences resulting from his association with others, birthed through communication. Through interaction, people develop the '*self idea*'; a basis for defining their bodies, selves, feelings, their situations and the wider social world in which their lives exist.

The theory thus states that, one's consciousness of himself is a reflection of the ideas about himself that he attributes to other minds. In other words, our inner thoughts about how another person perceives us plays an important role in the way we view ourselves. Thus, the theory postulates that, "*I am not what I think I am and I am not what you think I am. I am what I think you think I am*" (Vijayan, 2008). That is, people imagine how they appear to other persons for example, and then consider the judgement that others may be making regarding their appearance or behaviour and finally, they develop some feeling or self-image through this reflection such as pride (if perceived evaluation is positive) or embarrassment (if perceived evaluation is negative). So then, the self is social and self-consciousness cannot exist without a society. In studying his own children, Cooley noted that children build knowledge of who they are by how they imagine others take them to be. He therefore called the child's idea of himself the '*looking – glass self*'.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

The process begins at an early age and continues throughout the lifespan since humans will never stop adapting unless all social interactions end.

By implication, since one's conception of self is a reflection of what he/she thinks others perceive of him/her, the Ghanaian is likely to conform to his reflected image of what societal standards are (the looking – glass self). That is to say, the individual will judge his/her self-worth by how well he or she exhibits the perceived esteemed behaviours and attitudes in the society in which he exists. For example, people think about how their appearance and other behaviours will be judged by others and therefore curb their actions (self) in social situations in order to have good judgment from others (self presentation). Thus, painting a poignant picture of how the value of an individual will only emerge from his/her interaction in society. Pragmatically, an individual's behaviour is likely to vary in different social settings based on his/her perception of the mirrored appropriate behaviour in each social environment (Vijayan, 2008).

Social Acceptance Model

It is axiomatic that acceptance by others (including the larger sociocultural environment) is important for self-esteem (Mead, 1934). The social acceptance theory proposes that self-esteem arises from others' acceptance. Indeed, regardless of who we are, we want to be accepted by others (DeWall, Twenge, Bushman, Im & Williams, 2010). The need to belong is among the basic of all human needs (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). James (1890) delineated three dimensions of the self: the material self, spiritual self and the social self. The later, he postulated is hinged on one's relationships with significant others and groups.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Embedded in this theory is the assertion that the typical Ghanaian will value the self relative to how he/she not necessarily 'is' but rather 'feels' accepted (in terms of attitudes, behaviours and values) by the immediate and larger sociocultural environment. This sociocultural environment includes parents and significant others, the immediate community, ethnic group and even religious affiliation as well as the media. This theory thus predicts that participants will evaluate self-worth based on how well he exhibits the upheld virtues, values, behaviours and attitudes (which are the determinants of social acceptance) that are deemed relevant and appropriate in all his relevant social environments.

This theory therefore suggests some similarity (larger sociocultural environment) yet a disparity (values specific to immediate sociocultural environment) in the determinants of self-esteem among male and female adolescents and adults.

Competencies Model

Many people define themselves by their accomplishments. Success in education, business, career, excellent social skills, talents, physical attractiveness, etc. have been factored in self-worth evaluations, since time immemorial. The competencies model advocates that self-esteem is founded on one's perception of skill or proficiency in certain specific areas of life. James (1890) the original proponent of the theory held that self-esteem is the difference between ones accomplishments and expectations. He held that high self-esteem proceeds from favourable self-evaluation in definite domains of competence (Harter, 1999; James, 1890) and that high self-esteem can be maintained either by raised accomplishments or lowered expectations.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

This theory implies that Ghanaians may define their self-worth based on their accomplishments as against their expectations. The inability to accomplish much does not automatically suggest low self-worth valuation. For example, participants living in the rural locality were mostly farmers and construction workers. However, their accomplishments mattered in their self-worth determination. They recounted achievements such as their marriages, being able to support the family as well as catering for their children's educational need among others.

2.2. Review of Related Studies

Contrary to the popularity of the concept of self-esteem even within non-academic circles in the United States (Brown & Marshall, 2006; Twenge & Campbell, 2001), quite a number of Ghanaians have little knowledge about the construct. It is common knowledge that the average Ghanaian is peace loving and communal, in most cases wanting others to speak of his/her good attributes and not to blow their own horn, religious with a pinch of morality, and respect for authority. The construct of self-esteem reflects a sense of self regard, an emphasis on the individual and thus might not be in congruence with the typical Ghanaian personality. Although the review found no direct literature on the Ghanaian case, several studies relevant to the present one were identified. This section presents these reviews.

In a study titled "Deconfounding the effects of dominance and social acceptance on self-esteem", Leary, Cottrell and Phillips (2001) undertook three studies to determine the singular impact of social acceptance and dominance on self-esteem. In a laboratory setting, study one and two witnessed participants receiving false feedback concerning their acceptance and dominance.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Their state self-esteem was measured. Results from study 1 suggested that both social acceptance and dominance have significant independent effect on self-esteem, thereby giving credence to the social acceptance theory.

Findings from study 2 indicated that participant individual differences did not moderate the observed effects. That is to say, every human being regardless of unique personalities consider social acceptance as an important element in determining self-worth. In their final study, participants were made to respond to multiple measures of perceived acceptance, dominance and trait self-esteem. Both variables had unique impact on trait self-esteem albeit, perceived acceptance accounted for a greater variance. Further findings indicated that, trait self-esteem reflected participant's perception of acceptance by particular people in their lives but was not related to these individuals perception of their dominance behaviour.

This suggests that social acceptance is a primary element in self-worth assessment and that acceptance by certain individuals and groups example, church may have a greater weight on self-worth than others. Among the limitations of this study are that it employed a small sample size. Further it took place in an artificial setting and hence participant awareness may introduce some extraneous variables. Nonetheless, findings were consistent with the social acceptance theory and other researches such as that of Anthony (2007) and MacDonald, Saltzman and Leary (2003).

It has already been established that three major determinants of self-esteem in the west are attractiveness, social skills and popularity (Malanchuk & Eccles, 1999; Walster, Berschied &

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Walster, 1973). In his thesis, following the sociometer theory, Anthony (2007) conjectured that self-esteem will also be connected to upheld communal behaviours especially when an individual's social role necessitates such qualities for acceptance from others. And also that "since social role influences the traits that garner acceptance from others, social roles will determine the attunement of self-esteem to specific traits" (Anthony, 2007 p.2). These hypotheses were retained. Findings thus suggest that people evaluate their self-worth based on how well they possess or exhibit the qualities that make people accept them in their respective social roles. For example, since footballers do not need biology to perform well on the pitch, but rather speed, stamina and dexterity, they base their self-esteem on how well they exhibit these virtues which make people accept them and not just any communal quality. Predictions for the present study are that, persons or groups that have been clearly identified with certain social 'behaviours'— example, women are compassionate – will evaluate their self-worth on how well they exhibit the quality of compassion in daily interactions. This discovery suggests differences in self-worth determinants among children and adults as well as between males and females, more so, implying a detection of the qualities/behaviours that participants consider inherent and relevant in the Ghanaian culture. This finding presents an interesting twist to the understanding of self-esteem determinants.

Acceptance from others (friends, family, groups etc.) relieves one of the pains that come with social rejection, which in most cases result in aggression towards innocent people (DeWall et al., 2010). DeWall and his colleagues sought to determine how the effects of social rejection can be reduced. Following the social impact theory, they predicted that aggression will reduce as social acceptance increases. In two experiments, they observed the retention of the working hypothesis

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

above with each addition (people accepting the participant) leading to a better sense of self. This study though not directly related to self-esteem antecedents, shows that social acceptance plays a vital part of every individual's self-worth.

Thomas and SanandRaj (1985) using a multivariate design, tested the relationships between different self-esteem correlated variables (SES, Parental attitudes, home environment, home relations, acceptance-rejection, dependency-independency, autocracy-democracy, mutual trust and approval) to have a better understanding of their individual and collective predictive power on Self-esteem. In their study, 624 secondary school students composed of 314 boys and 310 girls from the Kerela State in India were sampled. Pearson r and factor analysis results indicated that self-esteem is positively related to the variables. Suggesting that SES and Acceptance among other family integration characteristics do have some influence on self-worth. Findings further suggested that some 'causal antecedents' of children's self-esteem include parental attitudes, SES, and different dimensions of family integration (including acceptance).

Findings by Josephs, Markus, and Tafarodi (1992) suggest a difference in the considerations of self-worth among males and females. In their study, false negative feedback was given to male and female subjects in relation to their social aptitude (example, interpersonal relationship) and performance (example, competence, decision making). Men and women high in self-esteem felt more confident about better future performance behaviour and successful future social behaviour respectively. Thus, suggesting that males acquire self-esteem from accomplishments while females access self-esteem through stable social relationships. Women tend to pay more attention to their body image in self evaluations than males. Findings by Heatherton (2001)

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

reveal that unlike men, women do assess specific body features against the perceived socially accepted body outlook. Further findings from an earlier study (Hebl & Heatherton, 1998) revealed that black women were more satisfied with large body sizes than white women and that, men made less body evaluations because they probably perceive the body as an action-oriented device which made strength available for accomplishments – from which they derive self-esteem.

In a study to understand the predictors of self-worth in African Americans and white girls from middle (J.H.S) to high school (S.H.S) years, Malanchuk and Eccles (1999) found out that the foundation for girls' self-esteem in general is from their assessments of their physical appearance particularly white girls; with general concerns about their physical attractiveness, feminine self-image and weight. Self-esteem for black American girls in eighth grade aside evaluations of appearance hinged on traditional gender roles and social self-consciousness. In seventh grade, academics barely influenced self-valuations for black American girls but rather for white girls. To their amazement, the self-worth of black American girls in eleventh grade was significantly influenced by academics and the influence of physical attractiveness was absent. Supportive family relationships served as self-esteem boosters for African-Americans throughout adolescence where as White girls in late adolescence shifted self-valuation to social life at school. Findings from this study suggest probable determinants of female self-esteem across the ages. Since the Ghanaian and American cultural settings vary, these evaluative factors may not apply to the same age groups but might apply to the Ghanaian female population.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Among the elderly, Borg, Hallberg and Blomqvist (2006) identified health and the challenges in meeting needs as having the strongest negative impact on life satisfaction. In the cross-sectional survey which had a sample size of 522, participants were administered with a modified form of the older Americans Resources Schedule and the Life Satisfaction Index Z. The study sought to investigate life satisfaction and how it is related to such variables as overall health, feelings of loneliness, living conditions, financial resources, self-care capacity and physical activity among persons 65 years old and above. They echoed that life satisfaction among the elderly is influenced by the combined effect of factors. That is, in caring for the elderly, particular attention should be paid on their feelings of loneliness, overall health, and adequate provision of needs among others. An earlier study in 1993 by Clark and Chair found out that “health was the strongest predictor of self-esteem” (Clark & Chair, 1993 p. 2). They observed a negative relationship between age and self-esteem in the study sample.

2.3. Operational Definitions

Locality: is a recognized settlement in the country. It is either rural or urban.

Rural: a locality with a population less than 5000, with its main source of lighting not being electricity and with a subsistence occupation.

Urban: a locality with a population size of 5000 or more with its main source of lighting being electricity.

Age Consideration: the ages are in chronological years.

Adolescents: persons thirteen (13) to twenty (20) years old.

Adults: persons twenty one (21) to sixty (60) years old.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Self-esteem: it is one's evaluation of his/her worth as an individual.

Determinants of Self-esteem: they are the factors (behaviours, attitudes etc) that one considers in the judgment of worth.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

**CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY****3.0. Study Area/Setting**

The research was conducted in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. This decision was based on the fact that Accra is cosmopolitan and thus harbours a fair representation of all the ethnic and cultural variations in the country. Ghana, formally known as Gold Coast is one of the countries located on the Atlantic Coast of West Africa. It has a total land area of 238,537 square kilometers (92,098 square miles) and a total population of 24,658,823 (Ghana Statistical Services, 2012). Ghana has a youthful population with a female majority (51.2%). The mean household size for Ghana is 4, with Upper west having the highest of 6.5 and Greater Accra the lowest of 3.4 (Ghana Living Standard Survey, 2008). The Akan, Ewe, Mole-Dagbane, Guan, and Ga-Adangbe form the major ethnic groups in Ghana. Akan, Ga-Adangbe, and Ewe constitute 75 % of the country's population. The Akan ethnic group is composed of the Fante, Kwahu, Asante, Akwamu, Akwapim, Ahanta, Bono, Akyem, Nzema and Safwi. The Ga, Ada, Adangbe and Krobos make up the Ga-Adangbe group (Ghana Web, 1994 – 2012). Ghana is divided into two hundred and sixteen (216) districts.

Ghana is formally an English speaking country however its neighbours are all French-speaking nations. The nation is largely Christian as far as religion is concerned. Islam comes next followed by traditional worship. Ghana is primarily communal in its cultural orientation, characterized by respect for authority and importance of relationships (Ghana Statistical Services, 2012; Gyekye, 2003).

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

3.1. Study Population

Greater Accra Region

The Greater Accra Region with Accra as its capital shares boundaries with four others – Eastern region to the north, Volta region to the east, the Gulf of guinea to the south and Central region to the west. The greater Accra region occupies a total land surface of 3,245 square kilometres; the smallest of the ten administrative regions in Ghana. However, the Greater Accra region is the second most populated with a population of 4,010,054 in 2010 and the most densely populated region. Its population statistic accounts for 15.4 % of the total population of Ghana. It is divided into sixteen districts and municipalities. These are the Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA), Tema Municipal Area (TMA), Ada West District, Ga central District, Ga East Municipal District, Ga West Municipal District, Ga South Municipal District, Adenta Municipal District, Ashaiman Municipal District, Kpone Katamanso District, La Dade Kotopon Municipal District, La Nkwantanang Madina District, Ledzokuku-Krowor Municipal District, Ningo Prampram District, Dangme West District and Dangme East District.

Though it harbours a fair representation of the over fifty ethnic variations in the country, the major ethnic groups are the Akan representing 39.8 %, Ga-Dangme representing 29.7% and the Ewe representing 18% of its total population. Although the Akan (Ashanti, Fante, Kwahus etc) are the largest collective ethnic group in the greater Accra region, Gas are the largest single ethnic group in the Greater Accra region (Ghana Statistical Services, 2005a). Data was collected from Madina, the capital of the La-Nkwantanang-Madina district and also from the rural community of Obo near the twin town Ashalaja – Kwame-anum in the Ga east district.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

3.2. Participants/Sample

The study population was well defined. Twenty eight (28) adolescents and adult participants from rural and urban localities in the Greater Accra region were sampled through convenience sampling. This was made up of thirteen (13) males and fifteen (15) females. The setting of each locality is briefly presented below;

Madina: Madina the capital of La-Nkwantanang-Madina district is popular for its huge active market – the Madina market. It is an urban community which harbours a myriad of businesses, educational facilities and home apartments. It is close to Ghana’s premiere university (University of Ghana, Legon). Sixteen (16) participants were sampled through convenience sampling from Madina. This sample was composed of an equal number of males and females, eight (8) each and had a fair representation of persons at the different socioeconomic ladder. Some participants expressed themselves in the English language. Others combined both English and a local dialect. The third group expressed themselves in only a local dialect.

Obo: Obo pronounced /obɔ/ is a rural settlement located near the twin town Ashalaja –Kwame-Anum. The town had no electricity and most houses were constructed with red clay bricks without plastering. It must be noted though that electric lines were being laid and some actual brick buildings were in construction. Wooden structures covered with thatch served the purpose of kitchens. And the main tool for cooking was the traditional three pointed earthen pot powered by fire wood, the main source of fuel. Roads that lead to the community are in a bad shape. Most female inhabitants did not have a specific job; some engaged in petty trading. Males on the other hand engaged themselves in either farming, construction work or driving. Obo is an indigenous Ga settlement however it has a fair representation of several ethnic variations because of

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

migrations and land sales. Twelve (12) participants were sampled from here. This was composed of five (5) males and seven (7) females.

As is the custom with most qualitative studies (Marshall, 1996; Mason, 2010; Ritchie et al., 2003), the sample size for the study was not predetermined but rather reflects the *saturation point* of the study, that is, the point at which no new themes were emerging. According to Mason (2010), in a qualitative study with a broad issue under study, a sample size of thirty (30) is ideal.

Table 1 present a summary of the study sample.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Main Study by regions (N = 28)

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Rural	12	42.90
Urban	16	57.10
Total	28	100
Age Distribution		
Adolescent	11	39.30
Adult	17	60.70
Sex Distribution		
Male	13	46.40
Female	15	53.60
RELIGION		
Christian	18	64.3
Muslim	10	35.7

3.3. Sample Size/Technique

With the sub-populations well established, participants were selected using convenience sampling. The unstructured interview format (Appendix B) was used for data collection. Three

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

(3) research assistants were trained for the data collection in the various dialects. Participants gave a verbal consent prior to the interview. There was a fair distribution of participants from rural and urban localities. In total, seven (7) People declined to participate in the study. Muslim participants totalled ten (10). Eighteen (18) Christian participated in the study. This is presented in table 1. Participants were recruited in two ways; a significant number, 20 of them were sampled through the door to door approach. Thus, these people were interviewed at home. The remaining participants were approached by the research team on the street.

3.4. Design

The aim of the study was to explore the factors on which Ghanaians evaluate their self-worth. In other words, what specific elements influence a Ghanaian to feel special and develop esteem, a sense of love and worthiness for himself/herself? The researcher thus employed the explorative research design using in-depth interviews to answer the research questions. This design is appropriate for the study because no research has paid particular attention to this issue, thus, there is no previous scientific knowledge (other than anecdotes) on the determinants of Ghanaians self-esteem. This study for that matter must seek fresh knowledge on the subject. The best means is to go in without any preconceived ideas making explorative research design the most appropriate. Similar studies by Lara-Cinisomo, Fuligni, Daugherty, Howes and Karoly (2009) employed the same design.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

3.5 Materials/Instruments

Unstructured Interviews

The unstructured interview format was employed. One primary question was posed, that is, “what makes you love yourself?” The question sought to elicit the factors (determinants) that the participant would cover in his or her response. The kind of factors identified by the research participant was considered as central to his or her evaluation of self esteem. Sometimes, for better understanding (as revealed during the pilot) of the question, it was fashioned as “what makes you feel special about yourself?” or “what are the things that make you feel that you are also ‘somebody’?” Furthermore, participants were asked to identify the factors by which they measured others in their society. The question commonly posed in this regard was “on what basis do you esteem people in the community?” The responses were considered as part of the central yardsticks for evaluating self esteem by the participants, since they were very likely to judge themselves on this same set of criteria.

Reliability

The qualitative approach has often been lashed with the question of reliability because of its subjective nature. The researcher therefore introduced an inter-rater reliability measure in the present study. In this process, two other parties (MPhil holders with a Psychology background) familiarized themselves with the raw data by listening to the interviews and helping with the transcription process. These two later assessed the results for consistency. This process has been adopted in qualitative studies among others such as triangulation.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Sony MP3 Stereo IC Voice Recorder

For fast and efficient data collection, a Sony MP3 Stereo IC Voice Recorder was used. Also a data collection guide outlining the sample interview questions and respondent tally and declines was used. Data collected on each day was transferred unto a laptop for effective categorization and also to ease up space on the IC voice recorder. The interviews had an average duration of thirty (30) minutes.

3.6 Procedure

The study made use of two data collection levels. The first was a *Pilot Study* followed by the actual data collection for the main study. Below is an overview of the procedures for both levels.

Pilot Study

The decision to pilot the study was in relation to findings by Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001) regarding the importance of piloting a study. That is to assess the difficulties or challenges the team might encounter in advancing our set objective on the real grounds. Such as, challenges with the clarity/understanding of the concept of self-esteem, difficulties with the language barriers and explanations of the concept of self-esteem across the ages –Adolescents (13-19yrs), and Adults (20-60yrs). Also, the pilot served the purpose of informing us on how long it will take the team to collect the needed data. Finally, the pilot process served as an ‘on the job training’ experience for research assistants. The unstructured interview format was employed. Interviews were recorded using a Sony MP3 Stereo IC Voice Recorder and lasted for an average duration of thirty (30) Minutes. Table 2 below presents the characteristics of the respondents in the pilot study.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Pilot Study Sample (N = 18)

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Locality (Okponglo, East Legon)	18	100
Ethnic Variations		
Ga	7	38.90
Akan	5	27.80
Ewe	4	22.20
Northerners	2	11.10
Age Distribution		
Adolescent (13-19):	8	44.40
Adult (20-60):	10	55.60
Sex Distribution		
Male:	9	50.00
Female:	9	50.00

Challenges – Pilot

- *Understanding the concept of self-esteem:*

The team encountered very little challenge with the understanding of the concept among adolescents and adults in both middle and low SES participants.

When the concept was explained as;

- A. What makes you love/like yourself?
- B. What makes you feel special about yourself?
- C. In comparing yourself to others, what are the things/factors you use?
- D. What things or attitudes make you feel that ‘you are also some body’ (literal translations)?

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

- E. What factors (qualities/attitudes etc.) do you use as criteria to judge people in your community?

When these questions were posed, participants understood and gave their opinions.

Main Study

Similar to the pilot study, data was collected through unstructured interviews. The research team collected data from the two localities. Participants were greeted and given explanation of the purpose of the study; interested respondents having given verbal consent were interviewed. The research assistants who had been trained conducted the interviews in the dialects of participants who didn't have expression in the English language. Participants were thanked at the end of the interview, no incentives were given.

3.7. Ethical Consideration

In agreement with the University of Ghana Graduate school research regulation; this research was given approval by the Department of Psychology Graduate Research Committee after a seminar presentation. The study conformed strictly to the American Psychological Associations (APA, 2009) ethical guidelines such as informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. Further, data collected were kept safe and secured under password protection.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

CHAPTER FOUR**RESULT****4.1. Introduction**

The study was a purely qualitative study. Data collection for the main study was in two folds: the first part collected demographic information and the other sought to answer the research questions. Data collected was analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic content analysis.

4.2 Thematic Content Analysis

This presents the analysis of the qualitative data in order to answer the research questions. It involved the description and break down of the data and a detailed discussion (comparisons, similarities and differences) of the data with respect to findings on the research question. The present study sought to ascertain what the determinants of Ghanaians self-esteem are and whether they differ across age, sex and locality. Specifically, Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis was followed. It presents a six step process to qualitative data analysis. First, familiarization with the data was essential for the generation of initial ideas. This was achieved through the process of transcription, reading and re-reading through the transcribed data. Initial codes were generated in a systematic fashion throughout the entire data. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the coding phase involves the organization of the data into meaningful clusters; this is essential to qualitative analysis. Codes were collated into initial themes with their respective extracts attached.

Phase four witnessed the reviewing of the themes for "*internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity*" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.91). Further analysis went on to refine the themes. This

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

resulted in distinct classifications and names for each theme. Subthemes emerged. A thematic map was created. This representation projected the themes and subthemes making it relatively easy to understand the data. The final stage of the analysis was characterised by the write up of the report. This stage witnessed the careful selection of vivid extracts and examples towards answering the research questions and comparing it with empirical literature.

This systematic framework was adopted because the present study aims at identifying the distinct evaluative factors that Christian and Muslim Ghanaian adolescent and adults consider in making judgement of their self-worth.

FINDINGS

4.3 Determination of Self-Worth

Analysis revealed three major processes by which self-worth is determined by respondents – personal evaluation, societal appraisals/perception and social comparisons.

Personal evaluation

This entails an evaluation of self based on one's own personal preference of a value irrespective of what others think. That is to say, 'i feel special about this value because I personally like it' example, "*I love the way I choose my clothes. The way I dress.*" According to the looking glass theory, personal evaluation is shaped by societal values because of one's need for acceptance.

Societal appraisals/perception

Adults and adolescents in the study also evaluate their self-esteem based on what people in the community think of them. Here is a vivid example of this self-assessment process:

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

“You know we live in a society where sometimes by our orientation as individuals we have uniqueness. But then you are charged by the societal norms and rules and regulations. Most times you follow as they perceive; they are the mirror that you look yourself into. So sometimes when ever people talk about things that I do, you know, I take it as a thing that I must... I judge myself on what people say.” (Adult male)

“The community says good thing about me. I am the quite type, I don’t disturb and I respect.” (Adolescent female)

Social Comparisons

The third means of self-worth assessment involves the result of social comparisons. It was observed that participants compare themselves with other people in their community example, friends, family members, colleagues etc. The quotes below reveal such comparisons:

“When the rich guys donate in church, we also donate in church to help God’s work. This makes me feel special” (Adult female)

“If I look at myself, I can see that I am somebody. At least I am educated; some others don’t have jobs, I have a job and my job is stationary, I am not moving about.” (Adult female)

These two excerpts are clear observations of self-worth judgment through social comparisons. This finding agrees with that of Chung and Mallery (2000) who observed a strong correlation between collectivism and social comparisons. Social comparison,

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

originally proposed by Festinger (1954) has considerably evolved. The above extracts, depict the two types of comparisons that is, upward and downward social comparisons. Though downward comparison has been the established means of enhancing self-worth, upward comparison has been observed to have similar tendencies (Collins, 1996) as illustrated in the Ghanaian case with the first extract.

4.4 Presentation of Themes

Findings from the present study show that the core determinants of self-worth in Ghana (among participants) are *character, identity, attractiveness, achievement, feelings of belonging and independence*. These considerations appear relevant to adolescents and adults in both the rural and urban localities. Predictions of the social acceptance theory have been sustained in the Ghanaian cultural context among participants in the present study. Feeling accepted by society is crucial to the self-esteem of participants in Ghana. Erickson's (1968) theory on development suggests varied considerations of self-worth among different age groups. Although some considerations appear constant for both adolescents and adults, example, education, achievement, attractiveness, social acceptance and support, identity and character— certain self-esteem determinants are peculiar to the age distributions; thus confirming this prediction in the Ghanaian case. For instance, it was observed among adolescent participants that a sense of uniqueness and autonomy matter in their self-worth. Also, similar to findings by Malanchuk and Eccles (1999) on black Americans, adolescent participants consider traditional roles in their self-worth evaluation. This section presents the meaning of these findings/themes, their contexts and processes involved in self-worth assessment.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

CHARACTER

Character emerged as the most basic criteria used in judging one's self-worth. Indeed character was pervasive in all the interviews. The measure of character as a self-worth determinant is achieved in two main ways; personal evaluation and social factors. Assessing character at the personal level involves an individual appreciation of the attitude. Social factors that influence character evaluations are social appraisals and social comparison. Below is a set of quotations that bear testimony to the importance of character in self evaluations:

“The basic factor is character. If you have money and have a stinky character, you have nothing. In all I will say my innermost character, not my appearance that makes me feel special.” (Adult female)

“Most of the people in my neighbourhood go out in the night, get pregnant and are disrespectful but I am not like that, I am proud of who I am ...” (Adolescent female)

“I also feel unique because I am described as being courteous and well mannered.”
(Adolescent male)

Participants stated several upheld attitudes, these include being friendly, having self-respect, being humble, dutiful and generous, forgiving, God fearing, polite, hardworking and patient, jovial and kind. Being respectful and obedient especially towards the elderly appears to be major character determinants. Other stated attitudes include being sympathetic, peaceful, frank, self-controlled, honest and content.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

IDENTITY

Analysis revealed that, not only is one's personal identity important in their judgment of self-worth, but also their family identity, ethnic identity and religious identity.

Personal Identity

Although names are central to personal identity, it is common to find two or more people who share the same name. However, in self-worth evaluations, some participants consider this core element of individual identity, as expressed below:

“And my name makes me feel special. Nobody has the same name that I have.”

(Adolescent male)

Gender/sex identity was observed as another concern in self-worth determination. Consider the following statements made by a female and male respondent, respectively:

“Also because I am female. Because I can do certain things that men cannot do example carrying a baby and delivering.” (Adolescent female)

“I have everything a man should have. I am also able to serve all my wives. I love myself because I am a boy (sic). Yes I am somebody.” (Adult male)

These cases were observed among Muslims. Religion, both Christianity and Islam, places some controls on women and establishes the man as her head. The Islamic religion in particular has stringent rules laid down for women to follow. Ghanaians by nature or orientation are very religious. Although males through adolescence to adulthood enjoy the support of females, a

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

probable reason for the latter extract above by an adult male may be blamed on the normative instrumental role females (wives) play in their lives at this stage. On the other hand, females expressed the joy of women obtained from an intimate biological relationship with their children through pregnancy as a source of worth.

Family Identity

To some, self-esteem has its roots in the family; foundations of self-worth could be as a result of the prestige associated with one's family name or because the family is royalty. The following are statements from research participants:

"I also feel special because my parents care very much for myself and my siblings. Even my family name alone makes me feel very proud. If you are 'asimesi's' (prominent person) son/daughter, it makes people treat you better." (Adolescent male)

"I am special because of my community. They give me good respect and my family also respects me. I am the village volunteer. There is chieftaincy in my house. My grandfather was the chief of the community" (Adult male)

Ethnic Identity

Concerns of self-worth related to ethnic identity range from being black (race) to love for cultural values among others. Having an understanding of one's heritage/lineage is something to be proud of:

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

“Also, as it is with our culture, I am very much respected because I know my father land and mother land. When you are ignorant of such knowledge, you are not always respected.”

It was also observed that racial identity and other ethnic values form part of the determinants of self-worth in the present study as expressed by these research participants:

“I am not confused about where I have been placed, I am proud to be a black person.

By grace, I am not deprived... I am proud to be an African.” (Adult male)

My language that is, I speak good wale and very good Twi too.” (Adolescent male)

“As an individual my culture (makes me special); I feel happy whenever I am speaking Fanti, my language. The food I eat, our local food, fante-fante and Kenkey. Everything about it is fresh; you can taste the freshness - fresh fish (sic). Our festival, ‘Ogwaafetuafakhye’ attracts people from all over the world to come and watch it and the way out chief’s dress and the palanquin and all makes me feel proud...” (Adult female)

These participants feel a sense of pride as a result of their ethnic and cultural affiliations. This forms part of their identity and self-worth.

Religious Identity

This subtheme captures the evaluation of self with respect to God and religion. Among participants of the study, religion is a major factor in self-esteem. Analysis revealed that the mere

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

fact of being alive and being a human being (the highest order of God's creation) as well as belief in destiny/eternity and one's religious affiliation matter in self-worth judgement. The following excerpts from the interviews conducted reveal this religion-related sense of self worth:

"I love myself because I see that I have something worthy; I worship God. I am not just roaming through the world. If I have God, I have everything. I am excited of my life because God is with me in everything I do." (Adult female)

"Ohh as a human being, if you wake up every morning you must know that you are one of the best because not everybody gets the opportunity to live each day. Also, as I am talking now, you could go to the Korle – Bu hospital and find people you think are very rich in situations that will marvel you. You might not have a lot of money but your state of health and life puts you in a situation where you have to be proud and give the glory to God." (Adult male)

"So far as I am created by God, then I am special." (Adolescent female)

In acknowledging the supreme rule of God, one adult male participant said,

"As far as I myself is concerned, I just appreciate who I am and the situation I am in, because it's destined to be like that."

However, some consider their relationship with God as the ultimate concern,

"Material things will perish; my life is worth more than material things so I don't value all these things. My relationship with God is what makes me feel special; my real value is my relationship with God." (Adult male)

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Additionally, one's religious faith (Christian/Muslim) plays a central role in the self of adults in particular;

“I am a good Christian and this makes me feel special. This is because, I rely on God and he takes care of me. I know it's because of how I am with my God. God's word even makes me proud. Now I own a whole restaurant, I never imagined I will be like this, the word of God and God is my everything.” (Adult female)

“I have a big family; Islam also gives me a big family and makes me special. I am also a mallam; I know how to treat certain diseases.” (Adult male)

ATTRACTIVENESS

Physical attractiveness is another major determinant of self-esteem in the Ghanaian context among study participants. Certain subthemes were observed including physical attributes, physical appearance (neatness and absence of deformity) and one's state of health. Females seem to place emphasis on physical attributes (concerns with certain specific body parts) than males. These related subthemes are explained below.

Physical Attractiveness

The concern of beauty and attractiveness is pervasive in the data. Although they were in the majority, this concern is not limited to females. Adolescents and adults engage themselves with the thought of how good they look with regards to their height, body size, their sense of fashion

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

as well as what people think about their looks. This was another pervasive element identified by respondents:

“I am pretty; I don’t need any body to tell me. I have beautiful legs; I am so proud of my legs so I love to expose them. I am slim I’m not fat. I love my skin colour. I am chocolate. I like my size, as an African woman I think my size is ok.” (Adult female)

“I like my physical attributes. I am quite tall and built.” (Adult male)

“I am very cute, sexy and attractive. People always praise my physical attributes: short, “coca-cola shape”, round face, big nose, big eyes, small mouth. I also have very big buttocks!! I am a good dancer and singer too. I also feel special when I am with my boyfriend.” (Adolescent female)

Physical Appearance

This is primarily in relation to concerns of neatness, physical disability and health. The following quotes capture the essence of this element to respondents’ self worth:

“I dress decently and it makes me feel special because the people respect me.”
(Adolescent male)

“Some people do not even walk, some have deformities. I have everything; hands, legs etc. I am able to do everything I want so I love my self...” (Adult female)

“I like the fact that I am in good health, actually, excellent health. Health is my foremost special concern.” (Adult female)

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Among adults in particular, health forms part of the major considerations. This could probably be because as one matures, the reality of the fleeting nature of life becomes more apparent.

ACHIEVEMENT

This is a broad theme encompassing all successes, ambitions and aspirations as well as abilities. In the Ghanaian context among participants of the present study, being married and bearing children falls in this category as well as the ability to meet needs.

General Accomplishments

*“So far as I get some to pay my children’s school fees, and my business is moving on;
So far as I have a car, Ghanaians cherish cars; this comfort makes me feel special.”*

(Adult male)

“I also feel special because of my job; not everybody can drive long distance. Since I started driving, I have not had big problems or accidents and I give the glory to God.”

(Adult males)

Aspiration and Ability

Among adolescents in particular, the concern of future aspirations and ability appear relevant to self-esteem. Most adolescent are still in school and some have engaged themselves in some form of work. At this stage as they search themselves to establishing who they really are, forecasts into the future and the skills and abilities they possess seem to play an important role in their self-esteem. The quotes below capture the way aspiration and ability matters to individuals:

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

“Where I am now does not necessarily matter rather my future aspiration and what I know I can do makes me feel special; what I want to achieve, and where I want to get to makes me feel unique and special.” (Adolescent male)

“I love studying it makes me happy; for future sake. I want to be a nurse. I want to be able to take care of my mother and father.” (Adolescent female)

“I feel special because of the talent that I have. I sing; it makes me very special; I sing in churches.” (Adolescent female)

Education

In a developing country like Ghana, the centrality of education in self-worth determination is not a surprise. However it is the levels of assessment that tickle the mind. The consideration of self-esteem on the basis of education was observed to be in three forms – one’s experience of formal education, academic performance and educational heights/attainments.

“Nobody is better than me, I feel proud that I am better than somebody... I love everything about me. You can’t do things like the way I can do it; it makes me feel special. I can both read and plate hair. The fact that one has gone to school more than me does not mean that he or she is better than me because we both rely on each other. It’s pathetic that some of my colleges who didn’t go to school behave as if those who have gone to school are better or more intelligent. Though I didn’t go far in school I

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

can read; also I can do my hair dressing and later go to school. I can do everything; nobody is better than me!” (Adolescent female)

“Sometimes if I weigh myself with respect to other friends I see that I am a little bit advanced in education and lifestyle; because lots of people who I started with, I am distinct from them now. My ability to read and make sense of the material, write and speak English makes me feel special.” (Adult male)

“I am proud of who I am, in that, I completed SHS before I turned 18 years, I was the youngest in my class.” (Adolescent female)

The concern of education matter both in rural and urban localities. However education in rural communities is seen more as a privilege as indicated by this respondent:

“My education makes me feel special because several people do not go to school in this community.” (Adolescent female)

Adult participants in the rural community identify themselves with their children’s education. They draw a sense of worth from their support of their children’s educational pursuit. Provision for children’s educational needs form part of their self-worth evaluation factors.

Marriage and Children

As aptly stated by this man, *“Ghana in context (sic), marriage and children are very important- I have them.”*In the Ghanaian culture, marriage is an extremely important milestone. Married men and women are highly esteemed by society. Married couples with children are particularly

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

regarded. These two (marriage and children) comes with respect especially for males and honour for females.

“I am some body, I have four children, I am married. These questions are serious o ... if you don’t have a husband, people do not really give you the respect you deserve, but when you are married you have a dignified place in the society. Marriage makes us honourable. My children have started taking care of me.” (Adult female)

“Most of my colleagues wish to marry and have children but they have not had the privilege. These things make me feel special. I have everything I want in life, a husband, a job, education and still moving on.” (Adult female)

Indeed being married is significant; however also of importance especially to the female is the quality of the marital relationship. Being a collectivist culture, relationship with in-laws and members of the extended family of both spouses is deemed important.

“I feel special because though my husband and I do not really have a lot of money we are very ok. We love each other, also I am in good terms with my in-laws, I have no personal troubles, I am ok.” (Adult female)

A compelling reason for the want of children by a couple and the often troubling demand for children by in-laws is candidly expressed in this elderly woman’s concern:

“I feel special because of my children and grandchildren. Seeing them makes me happy. This makes me feel special because I have descendants.” (Adult female)

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

In expressing responses to what makes them feel special or worthy as individuals, males made mention of the number of wives and children one has. Christian males pride themselves in having one while Muslim males pride themselves in having more. For example,

“As it is now, I can say I am more than anybody here. I have 50 children, and 6 wives. I have everything a man should have. I am also able to serve all my wives. I love myself because I am a boy. Yes I am somebody.” (Adult Muslim male)

“... I don't have a problem with my family; I have 7 children that I take care of. I have only one wife; these things make me feel special.” (Adult Christian male)

Meeting Needs

Most Ghanaian adults are parents or are fending for themselves. The ability to do this effectively is a concern in their self-worth evaluation. To participants in the present study, this concern includes one's ability to provide for the family and self, being a good parent and issues related to employment. These extracts form adequate descriptions of these factors:

“My family and children make me feel special because what others are able to do for their children, I also do for mine.” (Adult male)

“I also like being able to provide for my daily needs. I feel special just by being able to take care of myself, although I am not rich.” (Adult male)

Analysis showed that parental provision is crucial to the functional development of adolescent participants. Concerns of having needs met and parental protection are pervasive to the self-worth judgment of this age group. For example:

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

“I love myself because my family has money. My parents provide for me, it makes me feel special about myself.” (Adolescent male)

“I feel I am different in that my parents take care of me. I don’t take care of myself. They provide all I need so their provision prevents me from doing anything wrong.”
(Adolescent female)

FEELINGS OF BELONGINGNESS

An individual’s perception of acceptance and love appear important to self-worth among participants in the Ghanaian culture. This theme encompasses concerns of social acceptance, social support, the availability of friends and romantic relationship among others.

Social Acceptance and Support

The availability of social support and feelings of acceptance prove important in self-esteem determination. One’s concern about what society and authority think of them and the need for acceptance is real:

Love myself? I love who I am, God created me nicely I have everything I need, I have life, I have friends, people cherish me. I enjoy myself, I love everything I do; people love me so I love my self. (Adult male)

An adult male expressed his concern for social support this way:

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

“I love myself in the sense that I’ve got a family who are also very interested in me because of the way I care for them. I see my family as my friend; my wife and children. So I can say I am very special.”

Although the sentences above may seem light, the effect of their reality appears weighty. Closely related is the availability of friends. Adolescents and adults base their concern on the quality of their friendships.

“I visit my friends in my leisure times and we go to the library in our free times. My friends and I learn together.”

For the unmarried, good romantic relationships appear a relevant concern. For adolescents, this finding is not rear because at this stage in their lives they seek to know more about themselves and the opposite sex.

“I have a nice relationship. Sometimes I evaluate my value based on my relationship. If your guy values you, you feel special.” (Adult female)

“I also feel special when I am with my boyfriend.” (Adolescent female)

AUTONOMY

The role of parents to the worth of adolescents is summed up here. Adolescents make some demands; one of such demands from parents is a level of autonomy (Collins, 2000; Pickhardt, 2012). In making judgments of their self-worth adolescents consider their degree of independence and personal responsibility. For example,

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

“I think I am somebody, if I know what I am doing is the right thing; I just go on and do it regardless of what others think; also I don’t rely on people.” (Adolescent female)

Although adolescent participants in the Ghanaian case consider their level of independence, they feel special when parents show care by establishing controls. It suggests a preference for the authoritative parenting style.

“Also that my parents take good care of me, they prevent me from just wasting time roaming about like some of my friends do.” (Adolescent male)

To adolescent participants, the quality of the relationship they share with their parents is as important as parental provision is to their self-esteem. Implications of the value of parental love and attention are obvious:

“When we vacate, my father takes me to work. It makes me feel special.” (Adolescent male)

“Also my parents love me because if I do wrong things, they train me by teaching me the correct thing.” (Adolescent female)

4.5 Summary of Results

The study sought to identify what the determinants of self-esteem are in the Ghanaian cultural context. Data from twenty eight (28) adolescents and adults from a rural and urban locality in the Greater Accra region was analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) approach to thematic content analysis. Indeed, the judgment of self-esteem among participants in the Ghanaian cultural context is based on certain specific factors. The study identified seven (7) overarching

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

themes (Character, Identity, Attractiveness, Achievement, Feelings of belongingness, Autonomy and Others) composed of seventeen (17) subthemes. Analysis revealed three processes involved in self-worth determination – *personal evaluation* (one’s personal appreciation of a value), *social appraisals/perception* (people’s perception of you) and *social comparisons* (the result of comparing one’s self to another on a value). Participants engage the factors example, character through either or all of these three processes to arrive at a conclusion on their self-worth.

Character appears to have a weighty effect in the self-worth determination among participants in the Ghanaian setting. In fact it seems to be “*The basic factor...*” In particular, the study noted the quality of obedience and being respectful especially to the elderly as very important. One’s name, which is central to personal identity as well as the sex/gender, forms another important consideration. That is adult males feel proud to be male while women factor in the special biological bond they share with their children. In Ghana, it is common knowledge that children in most cases tend to speak the language of their mothers as opposed to that of their fathers in situations where spouses have different ethnic backgrounds. As home makers, adult females feel proud of the way they train their children – it forms part of their evaluative factors. Family and ethnic identity as well as one’s religious identity matter in self-worth judgement. For example, one feels proud about their family name (surname); the prestige of the family. Others have a sense of specialty stemming from their ethnic background. Yet, for others it is their relationship with God and the sense of family they have from religious affiliation that matter most. To others, the sense of worth is founded on the fact that they have life – ‘i am special to God that is why He keeps waking me up day after day’.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Thoughts about how attractive they are and what people think about their looks matter in the self-worth judgement of participants in the Ghanaian culture. Females in particular pay attention to their physical attributes. Appearance in terms of dressing and the absence of physical deformity is assessed. Of note worthy among adult participants is the consideration of their state of health. Also considerations of aspirations and ability (among adolescents), material possession, comfort and other achievements with respect to education, marriage, child birth and meeting need appear important in self-worth determination in the Ghanaian cultural context. Marriage and child birth stands as a major duo determinant of self-worth among participants in Ghana. It reflects respect for the man and honour for the woman. Also of importance is the quality of the marriage relationship and relationship with in-laws.

One's feelings of acceptance and belongingness matter to their sense of worth. Participant's perception of acceptance and the availability of social support appear relevant. This is closely related to not the mere claims of friendship but a measure of the quality of the relationship they share. Another dimension to this factor is the availability of romantic relationship for the unmarried. Adolescents assess the level of independence they have in decision making and responsibility in their self-worth judgement. However, they desire a measure of control by parents; which to them is a symbol of parental love and protection. Thirteen to twenty year old study participants in the Ghanaian culture have a sense of uniqueness which matter in their self-worth judgement. Findings from the present study show that, adolescent participants in the Ghanaian culture factor in the state of their family in their self-esteem determination. That is, the measure of love and peace at home.

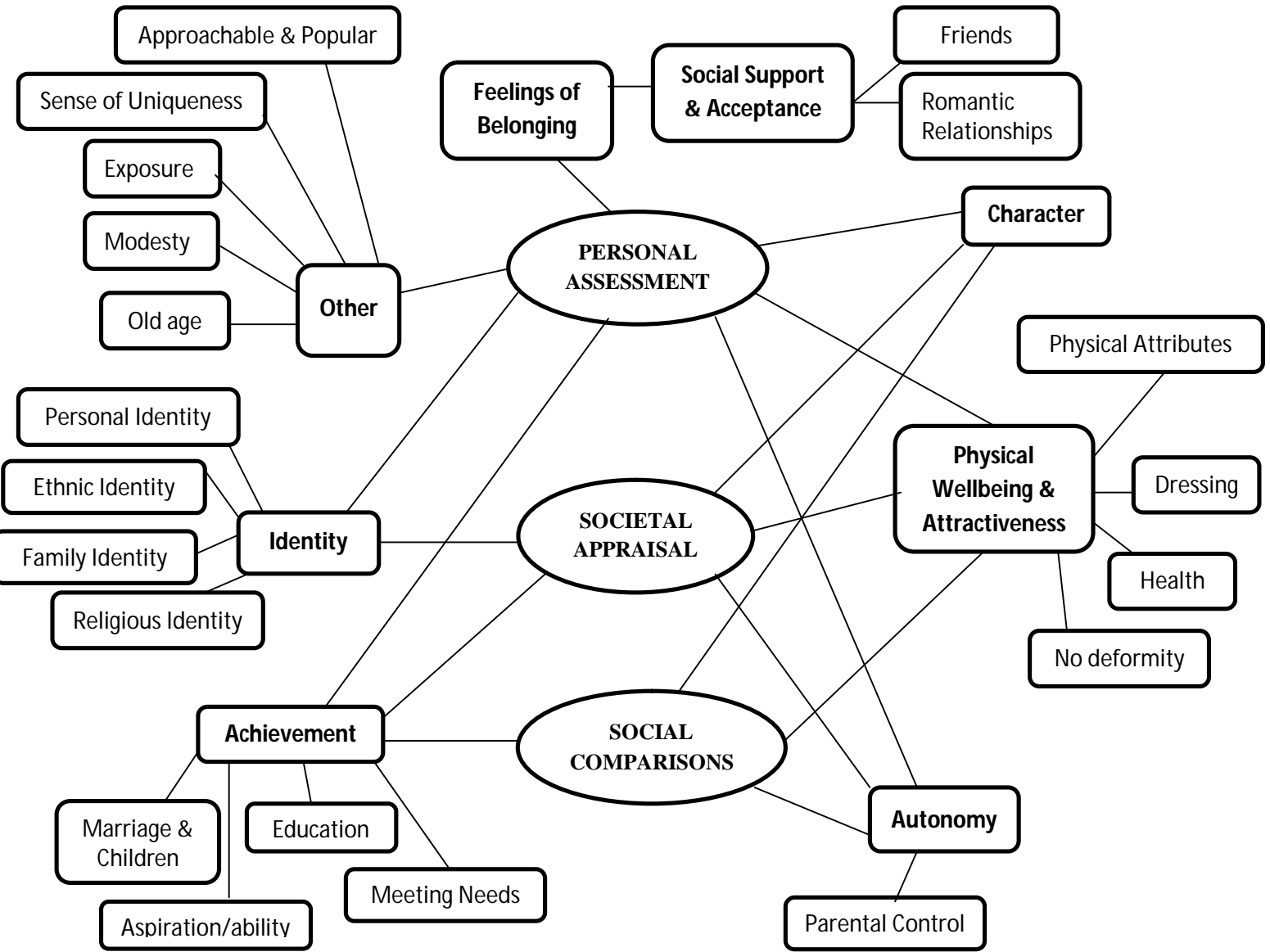
THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

To adult males, the degree of exposure and connections matter. Study findings show that among adult participants, being approachable and popular is a concern in self-worth judgement. It was observed that participants exhibit modesty in talking about their positive traits. This reticence was observed particularly among females. Old age appears to be one concern of self-worth in the Ghanaian culture. Adult participants asserted the worth they draw from the availability of elderly counsel from their old parents. Also, recent times have witnessed the frequent death of many at a relatively tender age; thus, old age is a blessing and is accorded respect in the Ghanaian culture.

The figure below presents a graphic representation of the findings. It indicates the three means of self-worth determination (personal assessment, the results of societal appraisals and social comparisons). It further shows the major themes with their related subthemes and assessment channels.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Fig 1: Thematic map showing the determinants of self-esteem in the Ghanaian setting.



THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

CHAPTER FIVE**DISCUSSION****5.1. Introduction**

Earlier studies by Hewitt (1998) discovered that every society and people have peculiar standards by which they evaluate their self-esteem. Having found no study to this effect on the Ghanaian self in the reviews, the present study sought to discover the “relevant cultural criteria” by which Ghanaian adolescent and adults evaluate their self-worth. Specifically, the study answered the research question, “what are the determinants of self esteem in Ghana?”

5.2. Discussion of Results**What are the determinants of Self-esteem in Ghana?**

Findings from the study indicate that Ghanaians draw conclusions on self-worth by considering certain factors through three processes – personal assessments, social comparisons and through social appraisals. In a collective culture where collectivism is the main worldview, the effect of social factors in self-worth judgement is crucial. The looking glass self theory (Cooley, 1922) suggests that considerations of self-worth will be affected by the individuals’ thoughts of mirrored societal values. In the Ghanaian case, this prediction was observed. According to James (1892), if one considers a value central to the self, but is rejected by society, that individual’s self-esteem will be negatively affected. That is to say, although particular values e.g. character, education etc. matter, the relationship between the centrality of a value to an individual and societies standards/reaction to that value is the actual determinant of self-worth. This phenomenon is observed in the Ghanaian culture.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Findings on the subject in western cultures revealed independence, popularity and attractiveness as important determinants of self-worth. For example, studies by Anthony, Holmes and Wood (2007) show that appearance and popularity determine acceptance in western cultures and that although some communal qualities e.g. understanding and kindness are valued, self-esteem is more connected to appearance than communal qualities. Findings from the present study give as a comprehensive explanation into the determinants of self esteem in Ghana. Character appears to be the core determinant of self-worth among participants in this study. For example, respect for the elderly and one's self (in the way you carry yourself around) were key determinants. Indeed findings have revealed certain similarities in the concerns of self-worth among these two cultures, thus both collectivist and individualist cultures, e.g. attractiveness/appearance, popularity, the need for acceptance etc. however, there are some peculiarities in the Ghanaian case.

In physical attractiveness/appearance, westerners, particularly females also pay attention to their physical attributes e.g. height, body size. However, whereas non black Americans have a preference for thinness and large body sizes by African Americans (Heatherton, 2001), the present study shows a preference for what is termed the 'average Ghanaian size' which is described as being "... *neither slim nor fat, I have an average weight.*" Findings also show a real concern for the absence of physical deformity in self-worth judgment among participants. Ntibe (2011) in her study found out that in the Ghanaian setting, persons with disability endure social stigmatization and are discriminated against. She identified an underlying pessimistic perception; being, people equate disability to incapability. That is, in her words, "disability means incapability" (Ntibe, 2011 p.6). Also, people tend to perceive a deformity as a recompense for

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

one's evil doing or wickedness by one's family. This includes perceptions that persons with disability are subhuman. In Ghana, traditionally families conducted an investigation on other families (to check whether they had a case of disability including mental illness) before going into marriage. Marriage proposal is normally refused if anything of the sort was found out. Thus, in the Ghanaian cultural context, having any physical deformity can have a debilitating effect on one's self-esteem.

The issue of health appears crucial to the self-esteem of adults in particular. It may be said that growing old is a blessing but undeniably, it comes with its own deficits; most of which are related to health. The transient nature of life seems to loom at the elderly. At this stage, they tend to value their state of health. Health was thus considered by a significant number of adults interviewed as pertinent to feelings of self worth. That is, in the Ghanaian cultural setting, adults with chronic or high cases of ailment are more likely to experience negative affect about their self-worth. Clark and Chair (1993) and Borg, Hallberg and Blomqvist (2006) also found similar prominence of health in self esteem evaluations.

Concerns of popularity and exposure are observed more in males than in females in the present study. This finding reinforces that of Chambliss, Muller, Hulnick and Wood (1978) who discovered that males are more concerned about their level of connection and exposure as well as the degree of influence they command. In the Ghanaian culture, it is observed that being respected by family and society is crucial for the self-esteem of adult males in particular. It is common knowledge in Ghana as in most African countries that the man is the head of the home. This truth is intricately woven into the Ghanaian culture and religiosity intensifies the impact of

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

this fact. Hence a male, particularly an adult male who is not regarded may have an issue with his self-esteem. Respect for the elderly in the Ghanaian culture cannot be overemphasized. Maxims such as ‘wisdom is found in the grey hair’ speaks volumes about the place of old age in this culture. As already iterated, in this age where life expectancy is ever decreasing, growing old is considered a blessing and thus is accorded respect. It is held that the elderly have learnt from their countless experiences in life. And thus are better positioned to give a comprehensive and composed counsel. A Ghanaian proverb says ‘panyin na obi nnyee bi da, abofra ba di3, obiaa aye bi p3n’ (meaning, everybody has been a child before but not all enjoy the luxury of growing old). Old age is thus regarded as an achievement that ought to be revered.

The concept of autonomy in the culture under study is more bent toward a degree of freedom to hang out with friends, exhibit a level of responsibility and not necessarily to be wholly independent and self reliant as seen in the American case. The understanding of independence in the west is different from that observed in the present study. Adolescents indeed want to have autonomy in decision making and responsibility. However, it was observed that they desire a measure of control from parents which to them represents a mark of love, care and concern. Opposed to the 18 years (some US states e.g. Texas allow 17 years) time line where most westerners assert their freedom and try to fend for themselves, in Ghana, to a large extent, you would find the 25 year old still living with his or her parents.

Parenting the adolescent comes with its challenges. The Ghanaian case presents its own twist. Study findings indicate that the state of the home (with respect to peace, love and family stability) is crucial to the self-esteem of adolescents as is the quality of the parent-child

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

relationship. This finding is in agreement with that of Trzesniewski, Donnellan, Moffitt, Robins, Poulton, and Caspi (2006). A feeling of uniqueness was also observed among adolescents in the Ghanaian case. This feeling of uniqueness is a feature of 'personal fable' which is characteristic in adolescence (Alberts, Elkind, & Ginsberg, 2007). According to Alberts et al., (2007) aside feeling invulnerable, adolescents have an exaggerated aura of importance which may have its roots in their fascination of their thoughts and experiences as novel and different from that of others.

In the twenty first century, all humanity seems to be on a quest for achievement, although everybody may be on a different adventure. Living a comfortable life enhanced by material possessions (e.g. a car, decent accommodation etc.) appear important in Ghana as in other cultures. Also of concern is the ability to meet basic needs including an adequate provision of children's educational needs. Finding thus suggests that adults who are unable to adequately sustain their family will more likely have issues with their self-esteem. This finding agrees with that of Bengtson, Biblarz, and Roberts (2002). Adolescents seem to draw a sense of worth from their prospects of a bright future i.e. to them, what they could become in future (aspirations) and their abilities (skills and talents) are crucial to self-worth. Ashby and Schoon (2012) observed that adolescent aspirations are related to satisfaction and fulfilment with life as adults. Findings from their study revealed that adolescents with higher levels of aspiration had a stronger determination and thus achieved their desired careers/goals.

In Ghana, you could identify one's ethnic identity to a degree by hearing the person's name. Key pointers could be the middle name and surname. Names are given with meaning; some people

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

are 'Juniors'; they are named directly after their fathers. Sometimes these names establish some responsibility on the person. Findings in this study reveal that one's name plays a central role in a person's identity. Gyekye (2003) established names as one of the values in the African and by deduction the Ghanaian culture. The myriad ethnic groups in Ghana are known for certain peculiar positive attributes. Members of such ethnic groups are proud to be affiliated with the particular group as a result of this. Some people draw a sense of worth from not only their ethnic affiliation but also their family identity. It could be because the family is respected by reason of wealth or royalty etc. For instance, Ashanti's generally refer to themselves as 'Ɔtikɔkɔɔ so nana' (meaning 'children/descendants of royalty') and thus are noted for their ethnic pride.

Gyekye (2003) explained that marriage in the Ghanaian culture transcends the two individuals; it represents the union of two families and as such, it is esteemed. Marriage bestows honour on the woman and respect on the man. Among participants, it was observed that the marital relationship is of high importance to women in particular. Although marriages/families in recent times are getting more nuclear, spouses are expected to be in good terms with in-laws (particularly mothers in-law) if they are to enjoy a peaceful relationship. Bearing children came up as one of the determinants of self-esteem. Mothers in-laws desire to handle grandsons as mothers (wives) long to suckle their babies on their breasts. Studies carried out by Watkins, Akande and Mpofu (1995) also reveal the importance of marriage and children in self esteem considerations.

5.3 Summary of findings

This section presents a summary of the findings of the present study

1. The study identified three processes of self-worth determination among participants. These are through personal assessment, societal appraisal/perception and social comparisons.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

2. Seven determinants of self-esteem among participants were noted. These are Character, Identity, Attractiveness, Achievement, Feelings of belongingness, Autonomy and “Other” composed of seventeen (17) subthemes.
3. Character emerged as the most basic criteria used in judging one’s self-worth.
4. Findings from the study reveal that among participants in the Ghanaian cultural context, not only is one’s personal identity important in self-worth determination, but also their sex/gender, family identity, ethnic identity and religious identity.
5. Similar to studies in western cultures, attractiveness was identified as one of the determinants of self-worth among participants; also females paid attention to their physical attributes. However in the Ghanaian case, the preferred body size was neither thin nor fat but what participants described as the ‘average Ghanaian size’.
6. The absence of disability was also observed as a vital factor in self-esteem determination. 7. Adult participants consider health central to their self-worth.
8. Achievement indeed was observed as a factor. However among adolescents, aspirations and abilities were observed to be important in self-worth determination.
9. Experience of formal education, academic performance and educational heights were observed as other key considerations.
10. In the Ghanaian case, among participants, being married and having children were identified as major determinants. Closely related to this is the quality of the marital relationship and ones relationship with in-laws.
11. The availability of social support and acceptance by family and community were also noted. Among male participants, the need to be respected was observed as a determinant.
12. Although adolescents consider the level of autonomy they possess, parental love and concern in the form of controls were identified as other determinants among this age group.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

13. In the Ghanaian cultural context, old age is another consideration. Also a sense of uniqueness among adolescents was observed.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The study is open to the obvious criticisms associated with explorative studies. In that, the subjectivity of its procedures might create difficulties in establishing the reliability and validity of its findings. Also, the qualitative approach adopted by the study creates problems for generalization. Had the scope of the study been expanded just a little more, the study could have adopted the mixed method approach (such as the Exploratory Sequential Design, the Embedded Design, the Explanatory Sequential Design or the Convergent Parallel Design). This would have made analysis more structured and thus enhance its validity and reliability via its less subjective nature.

Also, had the researcher further divided the adult sample into ranges consistent with Erickson's psychosocial stages or into more appropriate developmental transitions peculiar to the Ghanaian culture, a better understanding of the construct with respect to these age categories would have been achieved. Further, the study could have been strengthened if enough participants across a broader array of demographic and developmental profiles were recruited and the data further analyzed as it presents itself within each of these demographic/developmental profiles.

Having elaborated these limitations, the present study with its robust design and approach has made available a real, rich and deep understanding into the phenomenon of the self in the Ghanaian cultural context.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

5.5 Theoretical and practical implications of study

The present study adopted a generative approach as opposed to the causation approach (Maxwell, 2012); thus, providing an understanding into the phenomenon of self-esteem in Ghana. Its findings present a dynamic insider perspective of the Ghanaian self from study participants. In that, it presents a realistic picture of the upheld Ghanaian values, identifying those that are peculiar to the age distributions and sex. Findings from the present study provide in-depth empirical understanding into the Ghanaian self with respect to its meanings, contexts of assessment and processes involved in self-evaluation. It presents researchers with explanations to causal claims in future quantitative studies on the Ghanaian self.

The pragmatic value of findings of the present study cuts across educational, professional and strategic policy building/intervention circles. For instance, understanding the self-worth determinants of Ghanaians means that we can explain the probable causes of social and psychological anomalies such as suicide and suicide ideations, cult and gang participation etc. and design culturally tailored interventions for correction and control. Also, in recognition of the necessary existence of self-esteem for holistic development, findings of this study will result in the generation of appropriate interventions tailored to fit the different ages, sex/gender and localities toward the realization of this goal in Ghana and the West African sub-region.

5.6 Suggestions for future studies

Future studies could focus on theorizing; engaging themselves in hypotheses generations and testing to validate these findings. In order to get a broader picture and detail into the Ghanaian self, future quantitative studies should seek to determine the dynamics that socioeconomic status,

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

ethnic affiliation and other important variables play in the self-esteem of Ghanaians. Also, studies should go a step further to explain how the themes uncovered in the Ghanaian cultural context differed from the “western” orientations of self-esteem.

For a more engaging analysis and discussion, detailed demographic data on participants must be collected at all levels e.g. ethnicity, length of residence in their current localities, employment status and/or income, marriage or relationship status among others. Also, prospective studies in this area should consider whether it matters if the urban/rural designation is more relevant for where the person currently lives verses from where they originated – bearing in mind most urban dwellers and those who live in communities immediately outside urban areas have migrated from more rural area. How these demographics add to the dynamics of the Ghanaian self may be important to know.

Although the inter-rater reliability strategy was the correct procedure to use, future studies may want to consider employing a more participatory strategy that allows the participants to participate in the interpreting of the data. This would extend the power of the research in three ways: 1) participants would gain greater ownership of the process 2) the targeted communities would potentially become less a laboratory for university research and more a location that would seem to benefit from the research resources of the university and most importantly, 3) the meaning and interpretations of the data would be further validated directly through the people who provided it.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Finally, future studies should recruit enough participants to fill a broader collection of demographic and developmental profiles; this will give a more detailed understanding as further analysis could be done on data from each of these demographic/developmental categories.

Summary and Conclusion

The study adopted the qualitative approach in seeking answers to the question what are the determinants of self-esteem in Ghana? The bulk of studies on the self have dwelt on the Euro-American culture. It was thus worth undertaking this study to see if any peculiar determinants could be found. Erickson's psychosocial development theory, the social acceptance and competency theories as well as the looking glass theory served as the frame work for the study. Findings reveal that Ghanaians assess their self-worth through personal evaluations, social comparisons and social appraisals. The determinants of self-esteem of Ghanaians to a large extent are similar among adolescents and adults and the sexes albeit, some peculiarities were observed.

The study identified seven (7) major determinants namely, Character, Identity, Attractiveness, Achievement, Feelings of belongingness, Autonomy and "Others" composed of seventeen (17) subthemes. Findings from the present study show that the determinants of self esteem in Ghana are quite unique. Ghanaians consider character, especially that of respect and obedience, as the most central to self-worth.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

REFERENCES

- Alberts, A., Elkind, D., & Ginsberg, S. (2007). The Personal Fable and Risk-Taking in Early Adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 36(1), 71-76.
- Anthony, D. B (2007). Social Acceptance and Self Esteem: Turning the Sociometer to Interpersonal Value. Unpublished study, University of Waterloo Library, Ontario, Canada.
- Anthony, D. B., Holmes, J. G., Wood, J. V. (2007). Social acceptance and self-esteem: Tuning the sociometer to interpersonal value. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 92 (6), 1024-1039.
- APA Format for Citations, 6th. Edition (2009).
- Ashby, J. S., Schoon, I. (2012, February 13). Living the Dream? A Qualitative Retrospective Study Exploring the Role of Adolescent Aspirations Across the Life Span. *Developmental Psychology*. Advance online publication.
- Baafi A. B (2013). Mass unemployment is contributing to Armed Robbery [Online]. <http://thechronicle.com.gh/?p=31162> [2013, April 16].
- Baumeister, R. F., Campbell, J. D., Krueger, J. I., & Vohs K. D (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological science in the public interest*, [Online], 4(1), 1-44. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3033641>
- Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 497-529.

Bengtson V. L., Biblarz T. J., & Roberts R. E. L (2002). How families still matter: a longitudinal study of youth in two generations. Cambridge University Press. The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge.

Bird, C.M. (2005). How I stopped dreading and learned to love transcription. *Qualitative Inquiry* 11, 226-248.

Blalock H.S. (2011). Walking on Eggshell: A qualitative study on the effects of trauma and deployment in military couples. Kansas State University Libraries [Online]. <http://krex.k-state.edu/dspace/handle/2097/9157>

Borg C., Hallberg I. R., & Blomqvist K (2006). Life Satisfaction among older people (65+) with reduced self-care capacity: the relationship to Social, health and financial aspects. *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 15, 607-618. Blackwell Publishing Limited.

Branden, N. (1994). *The six pillars of self-esteem*. New York: Bantam Books.

Braun V., & Clarke V (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3:2, 77-101. Obtained on 26th February 2012 from (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>)

Brown D. (2012). A literature review of Erikson's Psychosocial Development theory. Unpublished. Obtained on March 14, 2013 from http://themightylifeofme.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/erikson_theory.pdf

Brown J. D. & Cai H. (2010). Self-Esteem and Trait Importance Moderate Cultural

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Differences in Self-Evaluations. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*. [Online], 41(116), 116-123. Obtained on [2010, October 26] from <http://jcc.sagepub.com/content/41/1/116>.

Brown J.D., Cai H., Oakes M. A., & Deng C. (2009). Cultural similarities in self-esteem functioning: east is east and west is west, but sometimes the twain do meet. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology*. [Online], 40 (1), <http://online.sagepub.com> [2011, July 20].

Brown J. D. & Marshall M. A. (2006). The three faces of self-esteem. In M. H. Kernis, *Self Esteem Issues and Answers, A source book of current perspectives* (Pp 289-295). New York: Psychology Press.

Brown, J.D. (1993). Self-esteem and self-evaluation: feeling is believing. In J. Suls (Ed.), *psychological perspectives on the self* (Vol. 4, pp. 27-58). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Chambliss J, Muller D, Hulnick R, Wood M. (1978). Relationships between self-concept, self esteem, popularity, and social judgments of junior high school students. *Journal of Psychology*. Jan; 98(1st Half):91-8

Chung, T. & Mallery P (2000). Social Comparison, Individualism-Collectivism, and Self-esteem In China and the United States. *Current Psychology*, 18 (4), 340 - 352

Collins H. (2000). *Your Adolescent: What every parent needs to know: what's normal, what's not and when to seek help*. HarperCollins Publishers Inc. 10 East 53rd Street, NY, 10022.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Collins, R. L (1996). For Better or Worse: The impact of upward social comparison on self-evaluations. *Psychological Bulletin*, 119 (1), 51 -69

Cooley C.H. (1922). *Human Nature and the Social Order*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons.

Cooley C.H (1909). *Social Organization: a Study of the Larger Mind*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons

Clark W. G., & Chair J. A. M (1993). Parental Role Behaviour, Psychological Centrality and Self-esteem among the elderly. Unpublished. Sourced online, from www.scholar.lib.vt.edu.

Crocker J. & Nuer N (2004). Do People Need Self-Esteem? Comment on Pyszczynski, et al. (2004). *Psychological Bulletin*. [Online], 130(3), 1-7. <http://www.apa.org>

De Cremer D., Knippenberg B. V., Knippenberg D. V., Mullenders D. & Stinglhamber F. (2005). Rewarding Leadership and Fair Procedures as Determinants of Self-Esteem. *Journal of Applied Psychology* Vol. 90, No. 1, 3–12. American Psychological Association.

DePaulo, P (2011). Sample size for qualitative research. [Online], [<http://www.quirks.com/articles/a2000/20001202.aspx?searchID=215035&sort=5&pg=1>], Accessed on 17 June 2011.

DeWall C. N., Twenge J. M., Bushman B., Im C. & Williams K. (2010). A Little Acceptance

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Goes a Long Way: Applying Social Impact Theory to the Rejection–Aggression Link. *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 1(2) 168-174. Retrieved from <http://spps.sagepub.com>

Edelstein M. R. (2011). The Trouble With Self-Esteem. [Online].

<http://www.threeminutetherapy.com/self-esteem.html> [2012, July 12].

Erikson, E. H. (1968). Identity: Youth and crisis. New York: Norton.

Erol, R. Y., & Orth, U. (2011, July 4). Self-Esteem Development From Age 14 to 30 Years:

A Longitudinal Study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Advance online publication.

Ferrer, E. & McArdle, J.J. (2003). Alternative structural models for multivariate

longitudinal data analysis. *Structural Equation Modelling*, 10, 493-524.

Festinger, L (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations*, 7, 117 -140.

Gary R. Collins. *Can You Trust Psychology?* Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988, p.139.

Ghana Statistical Services (2005a). Ghana 2000 Population and Housing Census: Greater Accra

Region; Analysis of District Data and Implications for planning.

Ghana Statistical Services (2010). Ghana 2010 population and Housing Census; Provisional results.

Ghana Living Standard Survey (2008). Ghana Living Standard Survey; Report of the fifth round (GLSS 5). Ghana statistical Service. September, 2008.

Ghana Web (1994 – 2012). Ethnic Groups [Online] [2012, January 15].

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

- Gordon, A., A., & Gordon, D., L., (Eds.). (1992) *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Greenwald, A. G., & Banaji, M. R. (1995). Implicit Social Cognition: Attitudes, Self-esteem and Stereotypes. *Psychological Review*, 102, 4 -27.
- Gyekye K. (2003). *African Cultural Values: An introduction*. Accra: Sankofa Publishing company.
- Hare, B. R. & Castenell, L.A., Jr. (1985). No place to run, no place to hide: Comparative status and future prospects of black boys. In M.B. Spencer, G. K. Brookings, and W.R. Allen(eds.), *Begginings: The social and affective development of black children*. Hillsdale,N.J.:Erlbaum.
- Harter, S. (1999). *The construction of the self: a developmental perspective*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Heatherton, T. F. (2001). Body image and gender. In N. J. Smelser & P. B. Baltes (Eds.), *International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences* (Vol. 2, pp. 1282–1285). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
- Heatherton, T. F., & Polivy, J. (1991). Development and validation of a scale for measuring state self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 60, 895–910.
- Heatherton, T.E. & Wyland, C.L. (2005), Assessing Self-Esteem, *Psychological Bulletin*, 110 (1), 219-231
- Hebl, M., & Heatherton, T. F. (1998). The stigma of obesity in women: The difference is black and white. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 24, 417–426.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

- Heine, S.H., Lehman, D.R., Markus, H.R., & Kitayama, S. (1999). Is there a universal need for positive self-regard? *Psychological Review*, 106, 766–794.
- Hewitt, J. P. (1998). *The myth of self–esteem: Finding happiness and solving problems in America*. New York: St. Martin’s Press.
- Hollan D. (1992). Cross-Cultural Differences in the Self. *Journal of Anthropological Research*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Winter, 1992), pp. 283-300; University of New Mexico Stable, Accessed: 26/04/2012 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3630440>.
- Huitt, W. (2011). Self and self-views. *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved [date], from <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/self/self.html>
- Jahoda, G. (1969) Geometric Illusions and Environment: A Study in Ghana. Cross-Cultural Studies, Edited by D.R. Price-Williams, Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books Ltd.
- James, W. (1892). *Psychology: The briefer course*. New York: Henry Holt.
- James, W. (1890). *Principles of psychology*, Henry Holt, New York
- Jordan C. H., Logel C., Spencer S. J., & Zanna M. P. (2006). Non-conscious Self – Esteem: Is There Something You’re Not Telling Yourself? In M. H. Kernis, *Self-Esteem Issues and Answers, A source book of current perspectives* (PP 289-295). New York: Psychology Press.
- Josephs, R. A., Markus, H. R., & Tafarodi, R. W. (1992). Gender and self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63, 391–402.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

- Karpinski A., & Steinberg J. A. (2006). Implicit and Explicit Self-Esteem: Theoretical and Methodological Refinements. In M. H. Kernis, *Self-Esteem Issues and Answers, A source book of current perspectives* (Pp 289-295). New York: Psychology Press.
- Kernis M. H. *Self-Esteem Issues and Answers; A source book of current perspectives*. New York: Psychology Press, 2006.
- Kitayama S. (2006). Does Self Esteem Matter Equally Across Cultures? In M. H. Kernis, *Self Esteem Issues and Answers, A source book of current perspectives* (Pp 289-295). New York: Psychology Press.
- Kohlberg, L., & Gilligan, C. (1971). The adolescent as a philosopher: The discovery of the self in a post-conventional world. *Daedalus*, 100, 1050 – 1086.
- Kroger, J. (1996). *Adolescence as identity synthesis: Erikson's psychosocial approach*. Identity in Adolescence – The balance between self and other (pp.13 – 47). NewYork. Routledge.
- Lapadat, J.C. and Lindsay, A.C. 1999: Transcription in research and practice: from standardization of technique to interpretive positioning. *Qualitative Inquiry* 5, 64_/86.
- Lara-Cinisomo S., Fuligni A. S., Daugherty L., Howes C., Karoly L (2009). A Qualitative Study of Early Childhood Educators' Beliefs about Key Preschool Classroom Experiences. *Journal of early childhood research and practice*, 11(1).
- Leary, M. R., Cottrell, C. A., Phillips, M (2001). Deconfounding the effects of dominance

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

and social acceptance on self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 81(5), Nov 2001,898-909. from <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/psp/81/5/898/>

Leary, M. R. (1999). The social and psychological importance of self-esteem. In R.

M.Kowalski & M. R. Leary (EDs.). *The social psychology of emotional and behavioural problems*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Leo, J. (1998, May 18). *Damn, I'm good!* U.S. News and World Report. P. 21.

MacDonald G., Saltzman J.L., & Leary M.R. (2003). Social approval and trait self-esteem.

Journal of Research in Personality, 37,23-40

Malanchuk O. & Eccles J. (1999). Determinants of self-esteem in African-American and

White Adolescent Girls. Poster presented at the biennial meeting of the society of Research on Child Development, Albuquerque, N. M., April 1999.

Maltz M. (2008). *The magic Power of Self Image Psychology*. Jaico Publishing House.

Marshall, M. N. (1996) Sampling For Qualitative Research. *Family Practice* [Online] 13 (6).

<http://spa.hust.edu.cn/2008/uploadfile/2009-9/20090916221539453.pdf>

Martin, D. & Bobgan (1987). *Psycho Heresy: The Psychological Seduction of Christianity*. Santa Barbara, CA: East Gate Publishers.

Mason, M. (2010). Sample Size and Saturation in PhD Studies Using Qualitative Interviews

[63 paragraphs]. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 11(3), Art. 8, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs100387>.

Maxwell J.A (2012). The Importance of Qualitative Research for Causal Explanation in

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 18 (8).pp. 655 -661 from www.sagepub.com

McCrae, R., & Costa, P. (1997). Personality trait structures as a human universal.

American Psychologist, 52, 509-516

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mecca, A. M. Smelser, N. J. & Vasconcellos J. (1989). The social importance of self-esteem

(pp.294-326). Berkeley, C A: University of California Press.

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis* (2nd ed.). Thousand

Oaks, C.A: Sage Publications

Mwizenge S. T. (1993). The Witchdoctors are not Wrong: The Future Role and Impact of

African Psychology on Individual Well-Being, Paper Presented at the Annual

Meeting of the African Studies Association held in Boston, December 4 - 7, 1993.

Ntibe J. (2011). Barriers Facing Disables in Getting Jobs in Ghana: Quality of life situation.

Unpublished. Retrieved online from <http://www.duo.uio.no/>;

Orth U., Trzesniewski K. H., & Robins R. W. (2010). Self-esteem Development from young

adulthood to old age: A cohort-sequential longitudinal study. *Journal of*

Personality and Social Psychology. [Online], 98 (4), Pp 645-658

Pelham, B. W. (1995). Self-investment and self-esteem: Evidence for a Jamesian model of

selfworth. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 1141–1150.

Pickhardt C. (2012). Surviving (your child's) adolescence: How letting go can be the hardest

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

part of parenting [Online]. <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/surviving-your-childs-adolescence/201204/parenting-adolescents-and-the-problems-letting-go> [2013, January 19].

Polit, D.F., Beck, C.T. & Hungler B.T. (2001). *Essentials of Nursing Research: Methods, Appraisal, and Utilization*. ISBN: 0781746264 / 0-7817-4626-4

Purkey, W. (1988). An overview of self-concept theory for counselors. ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services, Ann Arbor, Mich. (An ERIC/CAPS Digest: ED304630). Retrieved December 2009, from <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/files/selfconc.html>

Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., & Elam, G (2003). Designing and selecting samples. In Jane Ritchie & Jane Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice. A guide for social science students and researchers* (pp.77-108) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Robins R.W, Trzesniewski K. H. (2005). Self-esteem development across the life span. *American Psychological Society* 2005; 14 (3): 158 -161

Robins, R. W., Trzwsniewski, K.H., Tracy J. L., Gosling, S. D., & Potter, J. (2002). Global self- esteem across the life span. *Psychology and Aging*, 17,423-434.

Ryan, G.W. & Bernard, H.R. (2000). Data management and analysis methods. In Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S., editors, *Handbook of qualitative research*, second edition. Sage, 769_/802.

Sedikides, C., Gaertner, L., & Toguchi, Y. (2003). Pancultural Self – enhancement. *Journal of Personality and social psychology*, 84, 60 – 79.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

- Smelser, N. J. (1989). Self-esteem and social problems: an introduction. In A. M. Mecca, N. J. Smelser, & J. Vasconcellos (Eds.), *the social importance of self-esteem* (pp. 294- 326). Berkeley, C A: University of California Press.
- Solomon, S.(2006). The three faces of self-esteem. In M. Kernis (Ed.), *Self-esteem: Issues and answers* (pp. 4-9). New York: Psychology Press.
- Straus, R. A. (2002). *Using Sociology: An introduction from the Applied and Clinical perspectives*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Swann, W. B. Jr., Rentfroe, P. J., & Guinn, J. S. (2003). Self-verification: the search for coherence. In M. R. Leary & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of self and Identity* (pp. 367-383). New York: Guilford.
- Terrell, H. P. (1987). Part Three Comments. In Martin and Deidre Bobgan. *PsychoHeresy: The Psychological Seduction of Christianity*. Santa Barbara, CA: EastGate Publishers, 1987.
- Thomas I. & SanandeRaj H.S. (1985). A Factor Analytical Study on the Antecedents of Self Esteem. *Psychological Studies*, 1985, Vol. 30, No. 2. p. 21-24.
- Trzesniewski, K.H., Donnellan, M. B., & Robins, R. W. (2003). Stability of Self-Esteem across the Life Span. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 205-220.
- Trzesniewski, K. H., Donnellan, M. B., Moffitt, T. E., Robins, R. W., Poulton, R., & Caspi, A. (2006). Low self-esteem during adolescence predicts poor health, criminal behaviour, and limited economic prospects during adulthood. *Developmental Psychology*, 42(2), 381-390.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

- Twenge J. M. (2006). What is the interface between culture and self-esteem? In M. H. Kernis, *Self-Esteem Issues and Answers, A source book of current perspectives* (Pp 289- 295). New York: Psychology Press.
- Twenge J. M. & Campbell W. K (2001). Age and Birth Cohort Differences in Self-Esteem: A Cross-Temporal Meta-Analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 5: 321, (2001). Retrieved from <http://psr.sagepub.com/content/5/4/321>
- United For Sight Inc. (2012). The Importance of Quality Sample Size [Online]. <http://www.uniteforsight.org/global-health-university/importance-of-quality-sample-size> [20March, 2012].
- Vijayan A (2008). Philosophy of Looking Glass Self: a theory of Socialization. [Online]. Accessed on August 5, 2012.
- Wade, T.J., Thompson, V., Tashakkori, A. and Valente, E. (1989). A longitudinal analysis of sex by race differences in predictors of adolescent self-esteem. *Personality and individual differences*, 10:717-729
- Walster, E., Berscheid, E., &Walster, G.W. (1973). New directions in equity research. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 25 (2),151-176.
- Watkins D., Akande A., & Mpofo E. (1995). Assessing Self Esteem: An African Perspective. Department Of Psychology, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, SA. Retrieved On August 27, 2010 from: <Http://www.Sciencedirect.Com>
- Wikipedia (2012). Volta Region. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc
- Wood J. V (1996). What is social comparison and how should we study it? *Personality and*

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Social Psychology Bulletin, 22, 520 – 537

Wood J. V (1989). Theory and research concerning social comparisons of personal attributes.

Psychology Bulletin, 106 (2), 231 – 248.

Young-Hyman D., Schlundt D. G., Herman-Wenderoth L., & Bozylinski K. (2003). Obesity

Appearance and Psychosocial Adaptation in young African American Children.

Journal of Pediatric Psychology, Vol. 28 No. 7. (2003). Society of Pediatric

Psychology

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

APPENDICES**APPENDIX A****SAMPLE INTERVIEW**

Good afternoon. I am Nii Noi.

I am a student at the University of Ghana, Legon (I show him my student ID). I am conducting a study on the determinants of self-esteem among Ghanaians. The study seeks to determine the factors that Ghanaians consider when making judgement of their self-worth. I would like to interview you within thirty minutes with regard to this. Our discussion will be recorded so that we would not lose anything you say. Hope you would not have any problem with it? Please do you consent to participate in the study?

Ok. So you are from Legon? You can ask me.

Please what is your name?

My name is Mr. Mintah

Please, have you ever gone through formal education?

Yes.

What is your highest qualification (At what level did you stop)?

I have an HND, tertiary.

Please, where do you come from?

I am an Akyem, from Kokrantumi.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Where do you stay now?

I stay at Obo.

What religion do you practice?

I am a Christian

Are you married?

Yes I am married

Do you have any children?

Yes. I have one wife and four children, and they are all doing very well.

Please what work do you do?

I am a building contractor.

So like we were talking about, what are the things that make you feel special about yourself?

Things that you consider when making judgment about your worth, the things that make you feel that you are also “somebody.”

Oh... as a human being, if you wake up every morning you have to know that you are “one of the best.” Because not everybody gets the opportunity to live each day. Also, as I am talking now, you could go to Korle – Bu and find people you think are very rich in situations that will marvel you. You might not have a lot of money but your state of health and life puts you in a situation where you have to be proud and give the glory to God.

I want to be sure I understand you very well; you are saying that being alive is one of the things that make you feel that you are worthy?

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

Yes, because several people die every day; I must be special to still be alive. Also, my state of health is one thing that makes me feel special.

So aside what you just spoke about, what other things do you consider in judging your worth?

Ehhhh... I have my own apartment/property. I have my children and a wife. So besides this, I am ok. As at now, if my creator calls me into eternity, I will be thankful. Besides, man can only stay a few years on this earth, the Bible says after seventy (70) what is left of life is woes and trouble.

So are you taking care of your children?

Oh... yeah, my first and second born are in the senior high school.

Ok, so aside these things you have mentioned (life, health, a sense of responsibility, accomplishments) what else makes you feel that you are also “somebody?”

Hmm..... I have acres of land that I could sell but I want to in the near future turn it into an estate. I am working towards that.

Now let me ask it this way, what things about you make you love yourself?

Hmmm, what makes me love myself? Ahhh.... My father named me after his own self. And my father really loved me. He was once a building inspector at VRA. My father educated me, so I also have to educate my children so they can go beyond where I have.

So are you trying to create a legacy or to please your father?

I don't want to dishonour my father, that is, I must do more than he did. As at now I have done what he couldn't do – I have my own house.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

So what makes you like/love yourself as a person?

Ok, I am the eldest among my mother's children. I am able to help my younger siblings when they need help. So it makes me feel proud that bearing my father's name was not dishonoured. I feel proud of myself having been created like this by God.

Created like how?

Being the first born of my parents and my ability to do the things I do. It is by Gods grace.

Please is there any other thing you will want to add that makes you feel worthy as an individual?

No, thank you.

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

APENDIX B**INTERVEIW GUIDE**

The study adopted the unstructured interview format in data collection. This made detailed explanations available on the subject under study. Below are the questions which guided the interviews. The study collected demographic information before proceeding to actual data collection towards answering the research question. It must be noted that the items stated in the latter regard were not asked in any specific order.

SECTION ONE**1. Introduction**

- a. Name of interviewer
- b. Explain the purpose of the study

I am a student at the University of Ghana, Legon (I show him my student ID). I am conducting a study on the determinants of self-esteem among Ghanaians. The study seeks to determine the factors that Ghanaians consider when making judgement of their self-worth. I would like to interview you within thirty minutes with regard to this. Our discussion will be recorded so that we would not lose anything you say. Hope you would not have any problem with it? Please do you consent to participate in the study?

Demographic Data

- i. Name of respondent
- ii. Highest educational qualification/level

THE DETERMINANTS OF SELF ESTEEM

- iii. Ethnic affiliation (home town of respondent)
- iv. Where the person stays
- v. Religious affiliation
- vi. Sex/Gender
- vii. Marital Status
- viii. Number of Children
- ix. Occupation

SECTION TWO

These items guided the interviews. They were not asked in any specific order rather they were asked more than once and responses by participant were probed for a better understanding of their experiences/explanations.

- a. What are the things that make you feel special about yourself?
- b. What things do you consider when making judgment about your worth?
- c. What are the things that make you feel that you are also “somebody”?
- d. What things about you make you love yourself?
- e. So what makes you like/love yourself as a person?
- f. On what basis do you esteem people in the community?
- g. Please is there any other thing you will want to add that makes you feel worthy as an individual?

THANK YOU.