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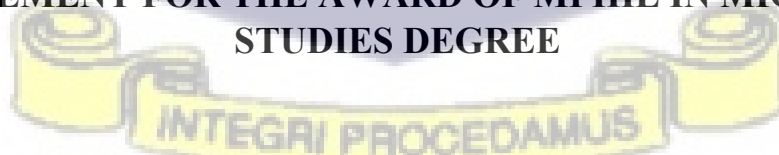
**LIVED EXPERIENCES OF REINTEGRATED RETURNED
DOMESTIC WORKERS FROM THE GULF REGION IN GHANA.**

BY

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(10938668)

**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
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STUDIES DEGREE**



CENTER FOR MIGRATION STUDIES

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DECLARATION

I, Sylvia Kafue Dickson, hereby declare that, apart from any references to the work of others which I formally acknowledge, this thesis is the result of independent research conducted by me at the Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, under the supervision of Dr. Sylvia Esther Gyan and Professor Mary Boatemaa Setrana. All sources of information, ideas, and content obtained from the works of others have been appropriately cited and referenced in accordance with academic standards. I also declare that, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis has not been published in whole or in part or submitted to any other institution for an academic award.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to God Almighty for ordering my steps throughout this journey, my parents Mr. Charles Kwesi Dickson and Miss Vida Metsosi and my uncle Mr. Edem Abba for their prayers, words of encouragement and along every path of my education.



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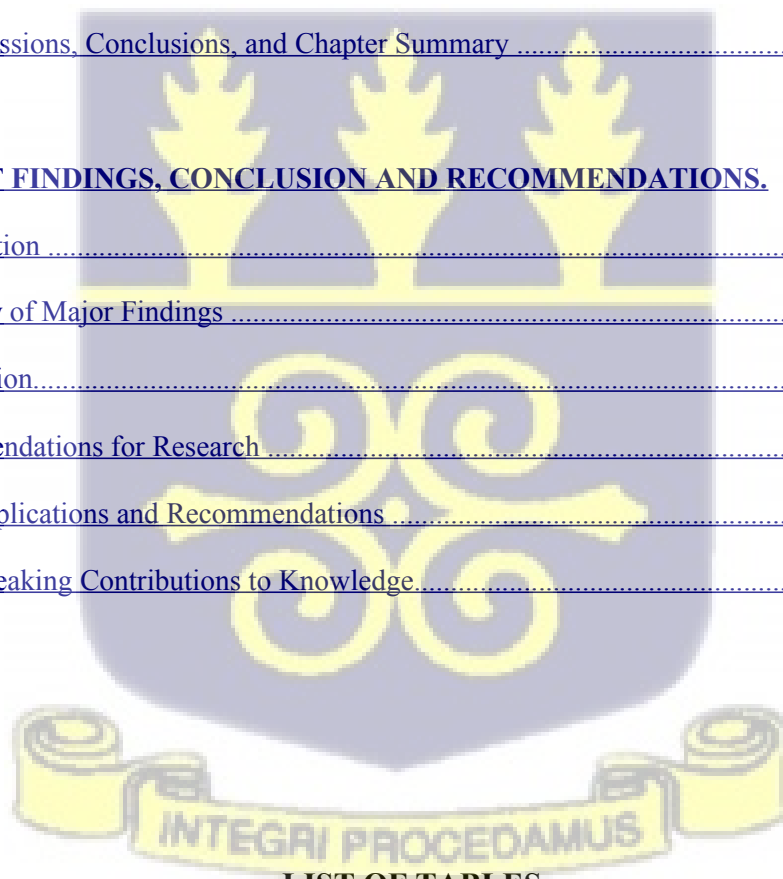
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Figure 1. Map of Accra, showing the geographical location and landscape of Madina.
(Sources: adapted from Gough, Tipple, & Napier, 2003)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GAATW	Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women
GCC	Gulf Co-operation Council
GoG	Government of Ghana
ILO	International Labour Organisation

IOM	International Organisation for Migration
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
RCO	Receiving Countries
SCO	Sending Countries
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
WMR	World Migration Report



ABSTRACT

The migration and reintegration experiences of Ghanaian domestic workers returning from the Gulf Region remain underexplored. This qualitative study addresses this gap by investigating the factors contributing to return migration, the role of families in reintegration, livelihood strategies adopted by returnees, and their future migration aspirations. In-depth interviews with 24 purposively chosen return migrants in the Madina community revealed diverse demographic profiles and shifts in occupational landscapes towards entrepreneurship. Economic hardships,

social influences, and personal aspirations emerged as key factors motivating initial migration, while adverse living conditions, legal status concerns, and health issues prompted return. Reintegration challenges included financial struggles, heightened societal expectations, and paradoxical feelings of isolation. Family support and entrepreneurship facilitated smoother transitions, but returnees also grappled with employment difficulties and emotional adjustment. Theoretical perspectives such as the push-pull framework, transnationalism, social networks, and structuralism provided valuable lenses for grasping the manifold nature of return migration and reintegration. The study concludes that comprehensive support mechanisms adopting the social, economic, and psychological magnitudes of reintegration are crucial. Key recommendations include strengthening the regulation of recruitment agencies, fostering supportive social networks, facilitating access to mental health services, and promoting entrepreneurship among returnees.



CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background of the Study

The World Migration Report 2022 by the International Organization for Migration present a detailed scrutiny of worldwide migration drifts and inclinations, highlighting that the volume of international migrants reached about 281 million in the fiscal year of 2020, accounting for 3.6% of the global populace. This figure represented a substantial increase from previous decades, underscoring the growing significance of migration worldwide. The well-being and welfare of both migrant and host populations are increasingly impacted by unsteady labour movement, which is a worldwide problem (Tam et al., 2016). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2021), 169 million labour migrants constituted 5% of the worldwide labour pool in 2019 and were therefore a major engine of the worldwide economic system. Numerous migrant labourers work in unregulated industries, where they are subjected to hazardous housing and job circumstances (ILO, 2021; Weine, 2012). As posited by Turner-Moss et al., (2014), participating in minimal or sub-standard wage work has significant dangers for one's well-being and security, especially if one is subjected to violations involving human exploitation and wage slavery. The United Nations with their championed 2030 Sustainable Development Goals stresses the significance of guaranteeing humane flow of migrants and safeguarding the entitlement to a fair wage for all labourers, with special emphasis on female migrants (United Nations, 2015).

According to global statistics, the number of migrants who are domestic workers amounts to about 11.5 million of which the majority of them are female (Galloti, 2015). Female migrants from developing economies in Africa and Southeast (Asia) who are looking for household employment frequently end up in the region of Middle East or the Gulf Region (Dessiye et al., 2018; Zewdu, 2018; Fernandez, 2020; Bisong, 2021; Schewel, 2022). Kodoth (2020) stated

that labour migrants to the Gulf Region are more susceptible to be subjected to different types of wage slavery, such as low remuneration, lengthy regular work hours, and either psychological or physical abuse, due to their inadequate skill sets, low education, and frequent ignorance of working/operational circumstances.

However, “the proportion of migrated domestic labourers in the Gulf Region, approximately 14.3%, and the Asia-Pacific, a little over 14%, are nearly equal, with the former region’s non-native employees accounting for about 41.5% of the manpower” (Tsujita, 2018). Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar, the six countries of the Gulf Region, together accommodate most of the 23 million non-native workers in the region (Rajan, 2018). Also, the populace in Gulf nations in 2019, close to 50% of migrants represented a significant proportion of the demographic, making up 87% of the residents of the UAE, Qatar (79%), and Kuwait (72%) (UN, 2020).

Given the prominence of the oil industry, wealth, and ensuing growth initiatives, the Gulf Region experienced an increase in labour mobility well into the 1970s, according to the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW, 2022). People from other Gulf states were preferred in the initial stage of the influx. “The migrant labourers in the Gulf Region now primarily consist of immigrants from Southeast Asian countries and Sub-Saharan Africa, with a small percentage employed in mid to high wage offer positions” (Ness, 2023). According to Edyburn and Meek (2021), nations often do not provide immigrants with choices for indefinite leave to remain (permanent residence) or chances to vacate with family or relatives. Even though many employees devote their whole professional years there, contract terms are momentary and periodic (Baruch, 2023). Furthermore, “domestic employees are obliged to reside in the housing that is allocated for them by their recruiters, which is sometimes quite inadequate and devoid of any freedom and confidentiality” (Jureidini, 2019).

Martius von (2017) (cited in Bisong, 2021) posits that African nations are recent actors with respect to providing local migrant workers or labourers to the Gulf Region as opposed to Asian nations. Somalia and Ethiopia, two nations in the Horn of Africa, were the first Sub-Saharan African nations to deploy migrant labourers to the Gulf Region. Consequently, these nations continue to account for a sizable share of the labour pool migrated, together with a growing percentage of Western and Eastern African nations (Atong et al. 2018). The increase in African migrant labourers in the Gulf Region is caused by a number of variables. They consist of the presence of employment opportunities as well as comparatively decent salaries when matched to earnings in host countries. The recruiting sector/agencies could additionally have an impact on migrants' decisions, partly through deceit and misleading facts or falsehood (ILO, 2019).

It is challenging for the governments of Africa to identify which of its compatriots are in dire need of security or what can be done to help them in these nations due to general scarcity of data or exact evidence regarding African labourers in the Gulf Region. According to the African Union, over three million Africans are working in the Gulf nations (Bisong, 2021). Africans made up 12% of the 28.1 million labourers in the Gulf nations in 2017 (Atong et al. 2018). Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, and other African countries are the most common origins for migrant labourers in the Gulf Region. Furthermore, undocumented travel takes place by land routes across Somalia or Djibouti to Yemen and then onward by land to the Gulf Region from the east coast of Africa (IOM, 2018). It has also been reported that rebel factions in Yemen have abducted migrants and held them hostage for compensation (IOM, 2018). Nevertheless, these challenges do not stop illegal immigrants from pursuing same routes. A driving force behind starting the voyage is the potential for recruitment in the Gulf Region. Upon returning to their home country, having experienced the harsh and hard moments, they struggle to reintegrate (Frouws & Akumu 2016).

Recent data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2024) Ghana shows that in 2024, over 2,170 Ghanaian returnees received reintegration support, many of whom had previously worked in the Gulf Region under precarious conditions. These returnees often face significant challenges upon arrival, including lack of assets, limited family support, and difficulty accessing mental health and psychosocial services. The 2024 Return and Reintegration Overview highlights that a majority of returnees were female domestic workers, with Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar being the most common host countries. Reintegration efforts include vocational training, psychosocial support, and small business grants, but obstacles such as stigma, unemployment, and lack of legal identity documents persist. Additionally, Ghana's Migration Brief 2025 emphasizes the need for improved data systems and bilateral labour agreements with Gulf States to better protect migrant workers and facilitate sustainable reintegration.

However, in response to the growing number of returnees, including those from the Gulf Region, Ghana has taken steps to strengthen its migration governance framework. The National Migration Policy (NMP), first adopted in 2015 and currently under review, outlines strategic objectives for managing return migration, including reintegration support, data systems, and protection of migrant rights. In 2023, the government launched the National Coordination Mechanism (NCM) to oversee migration-related activities and ensure coherence across ministries and agencies. This mechanism plays a central role in implementing the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and coordinating reintegration efforts. Additionally, the 2024 National Implementation Plan for the GCM includes targeted actions such as updating the NMP, enhancing migration data systems, and developing bilateral labour agreements with Gulf States to improve migrant protections. These policy interventions reflect Ghana's commitment to creating a structured and humane approach to return migration, though challenges remain in execution and resource allocation (Ministry of the Interior, 2016; IOM, 2025a; IOM, 2025b).

Scholarly research has increasingly highlighted the multifaceted reintegration challenges faced by Ghanaian returnees, particularly those returning from the Gulf Region. Agyekum et al. (2025) conducted an ethnographic study in Ghana's Birim Central Municipality, revealing that returnees often grapple with unemployment, mental health issues, societal stigma, and broken family relationships. These challenges are compounded by unmet migratory expectations and exploitation by recruitment intermediaries. Similarly, Nartey (2022) emphasizes that reintegration difficulties in Ghana are shaped by unfavourable socio-economic and institutional conditions and calls for a comprehensive migration policy that reflects the sociocultural realities of returnees. Gender also plays a critical role in reintegration outcomes. Rahman and Salisu (2023) argue that female returnees, especially domestic workers, face unique vulnerabilities due to their working conditions abroad and limited autonomy over remittances and reintegration decisions. These studies underscore the need for gender-sensitive, community-based reintegration programs that address both economic and psychosocial dimensions of return migration.

In Ghana, the top and primary Gulf States for its migrant domestic labourers are Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar (IOM 2019). Male migrants totally love to reside in Qatar whereas their counterparts (females) choose Saudi Arabia, often as a result of recommendations from fellow migrants. The mobility of migrant domestic labourers from Ghana to the Gulf Region is heavily gendered. Women make up over 80% of the overall Ghanaian immigrant labourers in the Gulf states (IOM, 2019). The primary motivation for migration among individuals from developing countries is often economic. However, many people relocate seeking better job prospects, higher compensations, and enhanced living standards. Economic factors such as poverty, dearth of available job positions, and lower wages within their native countries drive individuals to seek better prospects abroad. Studies have shown that economic migration is a significant trend, with individuals moving to countries where they perceive better economic

opportunities (Awumbila et al. 2018). Many domestic workers face exploitation and harsh working conditions in their host countries. The challenges include excessively long working hours, insufficient pay, inadequate housing, and even physical or emotional abuse. These adverse conditions significantly impact their well-being and can prompt a resolution to go back to their native countries. As reported by ILO (2018), these factors are prevalent among domestic workers who migrate for better opportunities but end up facing severe hardships. While economic factors often drive initial migration, the reality for many migrant workers, especially domestic workers, can be far from the prosperity they seek. The International Labour Organization (ILO) reports that domestic migrant workers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse in their host countries (ILO, 2018). This vulnerability can establish a routine of migrating and repatriation, as workers face difficult choices between economic opportunity and personal safety.

The process of reintegration into society can be challenging for returned domestic workers, as specific experiences of victims returning from the Gulf Region remain understudied, despite existing research on general issues faced by returned migrants. Previous studies have identified broad challenges such as prejudice, social stigma, and limited job opportunities (Awumbila, Teye and Badasu, 2017), but an in-depth exploration of these issues within the Ghanaian context is lacking. However, despite the fact that most external migratory motions from the borders of Ghana to the Gulf Region are largely transient and typically end in return migration, matters pertaining return migrants and reintegration of migrants are broadly not taken into consideration in numerous studies or works of literature that have been conducted in the nation regarding Ghanaian migrants to the Gulf Region or the Middle East States (Awumbila et al., 2018; IOM, 2018). Notwithstanding, the IOM (2015) acknowledges that return migration is a painstaking issue, and that increased knowledge is required regarding the elements that contribute to sustainable development, effective reintegration, and indicators that can be used

to ascertain the sustainable growth of return migrants. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the encounters and happenings of returnees from the Gulf Region in the Greater Accra Area of Ghana, with a focus on their reintegration into society.

1.2 Problem Statement

African nations and the Gulf States have recently signed intergovernmental labour migration treaties to send workers abroad. As a result, there is a surge in the number of African labourers, primarily female domestic workers, traveling to the Gulf Region. While these actions benefit the migrants and both emigrant and immigrant countries, the difficulties and barriers encountered by African domestic or household workers in their new nations reduce the advantages of migrating to the Middle East or Gulf Region. Reports of infringements of human rights, such as assault and various forms of gendered violence and hostility, continue to surface through firsthand testimonies and media outlets (GAATW, 2022). Despite efforts by African governments, the African Union, and organizations like ECOWAS and the Government of Ghana to address these issues, there exist a scarcity of statistics on the proportion of migrants, especially labourers from the continent of Africa, and their respective contextual factors in the Gulf Region (GAATW, 2022).

On June 6, 2017, the Ghanaian government temporarily banned hiring new migrant employees for the Gulf Region to stop injustices and potential security concerns (Imerion, 2017). However, the rate of return migration among Ghanaian immigrants is increasing. Data shows a rise in the percentage of Ghanaian immigrants assisted by IOM who return, with an increase from about 2.8% in 2017 to 3.0% in 2018. Moreover, between 2000 and 2007, 1,090,972 Ghanaians left the country, and only 153,632 did not return. Annually, only 10% of Ghanaian migrants travel back to Ghana (Nartey, 2022).

According to Setrana (2014), a significant proportion of Ghanaians who migrated to the Gulf Region are returning home while new migrants continue to leave Ghana seeking better opportunities. Little focus and limited literature are available on how these domestic migrant workers cope or reintegrate upon their return. Despite the potential for empowerment in women's transnational migration experiences, they are often exposed to exploitation at diverse phases of the migration process (Nisrane, Ossewaarde & Need, 2020).

In Ghana, the government temporarily banned the recruitment of domestic workers to the Gulf Region in 2017 due to rising concerns over abuse and exploitation (Imerion, 2017). However, return migration continues to increase, with IOM data showing a steady rise in assisted returnees. While some migrants return voluntarily, others are repatriated under distressing circumstances. The reintegration process for these returnees is complex and multidimensional. Economically, many struggle to find stable employment or rebuild livelihoods. Socially, returnees often face stigma, fractured family relationships, and limited community support. Psychologically, the trauma endured abroad combined with unmet expectations can lead to mental health challenges and feelings of isolation (Nartey, 2022; Agyekum et al., 2025). These challenges not only hinder reintegration but also increase the likelihood of re-migration, often under more precarious conditions. A study in Northern Ghana found that some returnees, unable to reintegrate successfully, opted to migrate again despite the risks involved (Adu-Okoree et al., 2023).

Existing literature on migration in Ghana shows that returnees are characterized by diverse resources and motivations. Labour migrants and influential experts invest socio-economic capital upon their return, while others, both skilled and unskilled, are involuntarily repatriated (Kleist, 2015). The grounds or excuses for returning migrants are varied, and thus the return migration literature lacks a standard theory or consensus. This weak knowledge of returnees' motivations and reintegration explains the failure of many Ghanaian policies targeting the

phenomenon (Setrana, 2017). Achieving successful, sustainable reintegration is crucial for Ghana's economic and social development. However, structural hurdles and insufficient investigation into the long-term survival of returnees remain significant barriers (Nartey, 2022).

The current literature does not adequately address the experiences and struggles encountered by returned domestic (household) workers, especially those from the Gulf Region. Although literature acknowledges the diversity of returnee experiences, there is limited empirical research on how domestic workers from Ghana reintegrate after returning from the Gulf Region. In fact, most research focuses on general migration trends or quantitative reintegration outcomes, leaving a gap in understanding the varied, personal dimensions of return. This study addresses that gap by offering an empirical contribution through firsthand narratives of returnees, highlighting their economic, social, and psychological reintegration challenges. Methodologically, it employs a qualitative approach to capture the complexity of reintegration beyond statistical indicators. Theoretically, it contributes to migration and reintegration discourse by contextualizing return migration within gendered and transnational frameworks. By doing so, the study not only informs policy and practice but also enriches academic understanding of migration experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa.

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1. Main Objective

The main objective of the research is to explore the migration trajectories and reintegration outcomes of Ghanaian domestic workers returning from the Gulf Region, examining how pre-migration factors, return circumstances, and post-return support systems collectively influence their socio-economic adaptation, livelihood strategies, and future migration decisions in Ghana

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

1. To understand the migration process of reintegrated domestic migrants prior to and during their migration to Gulf State.
2. To explore the various variables contributing to the return of these domestic workers to their home country.
3. To investigate the role of families in the lived experiences of the returned domestic workers.
4. To analyse the livelihood tactics deployed by the returned domestic workers after their reintegration.
5. To examine the future migration aspirations of returned domestic workers.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the migration processes of reintegrated domestic migrants prior to and during their migration to Gulf State.
2. Did the factors that pushed migrants to return to their country of origin influenced experiences after reintegration?
3. In what ways did migrants' relationship with their families influenced their lived experiences after reintegration?
4. What are the livelihood strategies employed by the returned domestic workers after their reintegration?
5. Are there future migration aspirations for returned domestic workers?

1.5 Rationale of the Study

The study and its implications for academics and practitioners alike are highly vital. Ghana struggles with the process of reintegrating its domestic migrants who have returned from the

Gulf Region, a situation that has not been thoroughly investigated. Because of this, the dissertation is necessary.

Future Researchers, Subscribers, Policymakers, and the Government will be better acquainted with the social, emotional and cognitive perturbations and experiences prevalent among returned migrants in their process of reintegration and even life after reintegration into their homeland attributable to the discoveries of the study in the Greater Accra Region. Also, this paper further fills in the knowledge vacuum about the subject of reintegrating domestic migrant workers who have come back to their homeland, Ghana specifically the Greater Accra Region. Additionally, the study will help these NGOs and other related bodies with the situation on the ground and how they can help these domestic migrants to successfully reintegrate into their home country to prevent further check irregular migration. In general, it will provide guidance to international key parties, like IOM (International Organization for Migration), regarding the use of policies aimed at preventing external migration to the Gulf Region in search for greener pastures, as well as its related concerns.

Moreover, the study will serve as an addition to existing publications and can also be used as a springboard for further investigation into every facet of human nature, which will be extremely helpful to Ghanaian and international social workers, health care professionals, academics, mental health workers, and other experts in these domains. The residents of Greater Accra Region will be made aware of how they can better integrate with their ascertained culture from the Gulf Region into their native cultures in order to develop.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

The present research would ideally have included respondents spanning the entire nation, but due to time and budgetary constraints, it was conducted solely in Greater Accra, the capital of Ghana. However, acknowledging the limitations of this study is crucial. The sample size of 24

participants, while appropriate for qualitative research, might not be indicative of the broader demographic of Ghanaian domestic workers in the Gulf region. Additionally, the dependence on self-reported accounts from the participants and the possible risk of recall bias should be considered when interpreting the findings. Nonetheless, the insights gained from this study have important repercussions for policy and practice. The results stress the need for targeted measures to mitigate the root factors leading to migration, such as economic hardships and limited opportunities in origin communities.

It is paramount to point out that conducting some interviews in Twi and then translating them to English might have introduced minor inaccuracies. The researcher took steps to minimize this by consulting a Twi language expert (professional translator) to review the data within the context of the study.

Obtaining the requisite feedback from the returned domestic employees proved to be a significant threat for the research. This is because many respondents think their secrets is going to be published or the issue of stigmatization is an influence. In order to overcome these obstacles, the researcher reassured the participants that the investigation was strictly scholastic and had no nefarious intentions such as determining their achievement or otherwise after migrating to the Gulf Region.

Some respondents may feel reticent to respond to the study because they do not recognize the insights the study offers them.

1.7. Study Setting

The Greater Accra Region is situated on the Gulf of Guinea coast in southern Ghana. The Eastern Region, the Central Region, and the Volta Region are its northern, western, and eastern neighbors, respectively. According to Yamoah. (2021), the Greater Accra Region is home to about 4 million people and occupies an area of roughly 3,245 square kilometers (1,253 square

miles). In terms of land area, it is the smallest region in Ghana, yet it has substantial economic, cultural, and social significance both within Ghana and abroad. It is a vibrant and dynamic region. The region is home to Accra, the capital of Ghana and a significant center for trade, culture, and education. Accra is renowned for its bustling markets, historic colonial buildings, and diverse cultural history. Several global firms, NGOs, and international organizations are also based in the city.

The region is also a popular destination for migrant laborers, notably domestic workers who have relocated from the Gulf Region (Wickramasekara, 2016). Research and advocacy activities have focused on the experiences of these returnees, and requests for better support systems and policy frameworks to aid in their reintegration into Ghanaian society have been made. Studying the experiences of returned domestic workers in this setting will help shed light on the social experiences, livelihood strategies and prospect migration aspirations of returnees who are domestic workers associated with labor migration and reintegration given the substantial contribution of the Greater Accra Region to Ghana's economic and social growth.

1.8 Operational Definitions

Domestic worker: An individual who is hired by private households to carry out responsibilities like cleaning, cooking, laundry, caring for children and the elderly, and other household chores (Halidu et al., 2020). According to Parreñas (2015), domestic workers are usually employed by individuals or families. They can work either full- or part-time, live in or out of the home, and are frequently linked to low pay, long hours, and unfavourable working conditions. Consequently, an individual who works inside a home's boundaries. Also known as Domestic Servant at times.

Migration: The term "migration" describes the movement of individuals from one location/site to a new, usually having the goal of relocating there for a protracted period

(Tronquet, 2015). Many variables, including economic, social, political, and environmental ones, might cause migration. Migration can take place both within a country (internal migration) and internationally (external/transnational migration). Depending on the motivation for the relocation, transnational migration can be subdivided or segmented into voluntary and forced migration.

Returned Migrant: According to Wyman. (2017), returned migrant is the movement of migrant workers to their homeland /origin after leaving their country of destination; “individuals returning to their nation of nationality after renouncing been international migrants (whether short-term or long-term) in another nation and who are intending to stay in their own country for at least a year” as defined by the UNDESA, Statistics Division, (1998).

Voluntary Return: refers to a choice made independently or of one's own free will (Frankfurt, 2018). Thus, a freely selected return, to use the usual phrase.

Forced Return: The act of forcibly returning someone to their country of origin, a country of transit, or a third nation that consents to accept them, usually following an administrative or judicial ruling (IOM, 2019). When rejected workers do not return voluntarily, destination countries frequently deport them while they are in an irregular status.

Returnee: Any “domestic migrant worker” going back to his/her homeland or origin after migrating to the Gulf Region (Shah, 2018). Return may be temporary or permanent.

Reintegration: According to Kuschminder. (2022), reintegration is an individual's re-adaptation or re-assimilation into a society or a practice of his or her place of origin or home country. Thus, the capacity of a returned domestic migrant works to conform to the cultural and societal norms of the immediate environment. According to Cassarino (2014), it is the mechanism through which a migrant returns home and engages in the civic, social, and ethnic dynamics of their homeland. Reintegration, in contrast, to return migration, is a sophisticated

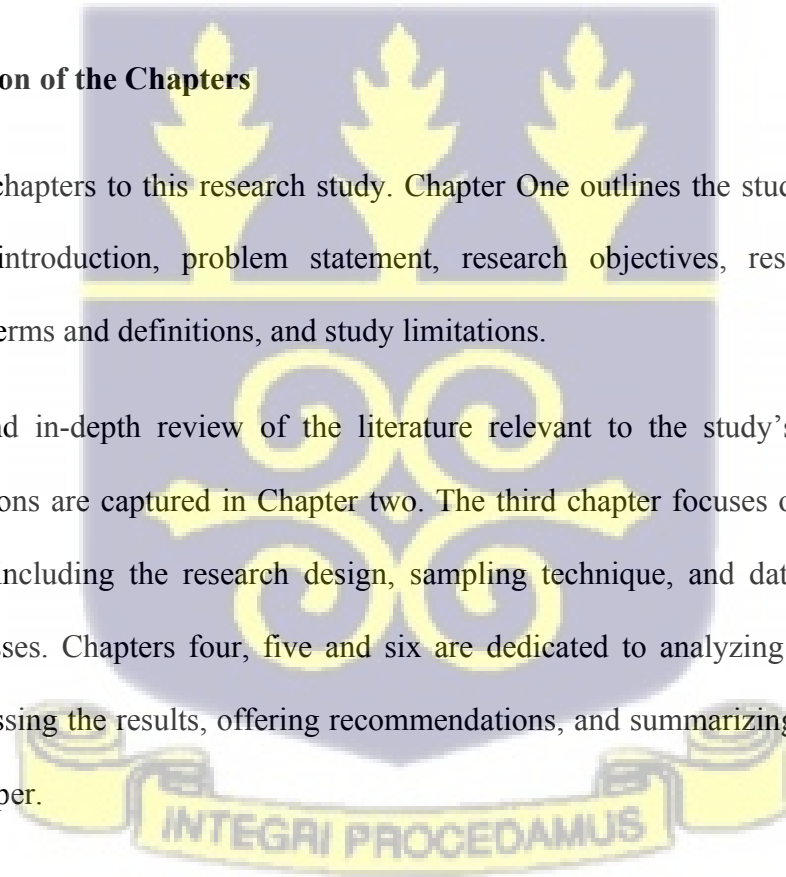
notion that is not easily measurable. It can be seen on many different scales, including the individual, family, community, economy, and society as large.

Gulf Region: According to Beni et al. (2021), Gulf Region is a region surrounding the Persian Gulf, an Asian body of water. The Gulf Region is home to several nations, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These nations are generally designated as members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). It is renowned for its enormous oil reserves and substantial wealth, which have sparked recent decades' rapid economic growth and modernization (Morrison, 2019). Particularly in industries like construction, household work, and hospitality, the region has emerged as a popular destination for migrant workers.

1.9 Organization of the Chapters

There are Six chapters to this research study. Chapter One outlines the study's background, covering the introduction, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, rationale, key terms and definitions, and study limitations.

A thorough and in-depth review of the literature relevant to the study's objectives and research questions are captured in Chapter two. The third chapter focuses on describing the methodology, including the research design, sampling technique, and data collection and analysis processes. Chapters four, five and six are dedicated to analyzing data, presenting findings, discussing the results, offering recommendations, and summarizing and concluding the research paper.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The migration of domestic workers from African countries, such as Ghana, to the Gulf Region, and the reintegration of returnees, is a subject marked by a multitude of reasons both in favour of and against this undertaking. To thoroughly investigate this subject and achieve the study's objectives, which encompass understanding the motivations or reasons behind the return of domestic workers to their homeland or native country, exploring the social dynamics experienced by returnees within their families and society post-reintegration, analysing the livelihood strategies adopted by them after reintegration, and examining their future migration aspirations, a comprehensive literature review was conducted. This chapter reviews existing literature on reintegration of returned migrants. The discussion of the literature chapter goes beyond the reasons for and opposing domestic workers migration from the African continent such as Ghana to the Gulf Regions and the reintegration of returnees. The process of reviewing the literature was completed regarding the topic under investigation and its objectives, which include the social experiences of the returned domestic workers with their families and the society as a whole after reintegration, the livelihood strategies employed by them after their reintegration, and the future migration aspirations of returned domestic workers. This chapter further discusses the theoretical bedrocks and proposes a conceptual frame for the investigation.

2.2 Migration of Ghanaians to the Gulf Regions

In Ghana, mobility of migrants to international soil climbed from 1% in the year 2000 to 1.4% in the fiscal year of 2017, as estimated by the 2017 migration report (cited in Teming-Amoako, 2018). There approximates about 1.5 million migrants from Ghana residing outside

of their homeland or native country (Molini et al., 2018). As noted by Darkwah (2019), with the majority of Ghanaian migrants residing in the ECOWAS area (approximately 70%), as well as the United State of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), Italy and Germany.

According to Teming-Amoako (2018), data shows that a considerable number of Ghanaians, particularly labor migrants, are relocating to the Gulf Regions. According to the Ghanaian labor department, 1,606 people relocated to Saudi Arabia in 2016, making it the most sought-after destination for labor migrants. Comparing this to the 822 migrants reported in 2015, there has been an increase (Awumbila et al. 2019). However, Qatar and United Arab Emirates are also on an upsurge (Balawi, 2021). The following presents a breakdown of the new destinations for Ghanaian workers for the years 2015 and 2016.

Table 1. Destinations in the Gulf Region for Ghanaian Migrants

Growing Areas	2015			2016		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Jordan	0	0	0	0	25	25
Kuwait	0	31	31	18	2	20
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	219	86	305	265	0	265
Qatar	292	0	292	441	15	456
Saudi Arabia	746	76	822	345	1261	1,606
Total	1,357	193	1,550	1,069	1,303	2,372

2.3 Return Migration

According to Teming-Amoako (2018), IOM is the decision of returning to one's original location, either within a specific territory or from a host country to the country of origin. It includes returning to one's native country, a transitory country, or another destination (Cassarino, 2008).

Migration back home can be deemed voluntary or involuntary. IOM's operations, which help migrants frustrated in the host nations, are indications of assisted voluntary return. Hart et al. (2015) postulate that they aid immigrants who want to return willingly to their homeland but do not want to stay in the host nation. The research conducted by Shuangshuang Tang and Pu Hao (2019) provides an exploration of return migration within the backdrop of China's rural-urban migration dynamics. Their study, centered around local migrants in the region of Nanjing and Suzhou, identifies and compares the socio-economic attributes and intentions of three distinct groups: prospective rural returnees, urban returnees, and urban floaters. This approach broadens the understanding of return migration beyond the conventional focus on migrants returning to their rural origins. I have altered de Haas' typology to delineate the following types of return migrants:

Involuntary return migrants: These are often individuals without legal residency status who are deported after failing to integrate economically or socially in their host countries, face numerous challenges upon repatriation. These returnees frequently struggle to mobilize essential resources such as social networks, specialized knowledge, or cultural capital in their homeland. Their reintegration is heavily influenced by personal circumstances, including unstable economic conditions, limited access to employment opportunities, and difficulties in getting foreign qualifications recognized. The forced nature of their return can lead to psychological distress, conflicting with their personal aspirations. Having potentially experienced marginalization in their host countries due to their irregular status, these individuals ironically often encounter similar stigma and social exclusion in their countries of origin post-return.

Return migrants whose return is “voluntary but unavoidable”: A distinct category of return migration exists that, while superficially appearing voluntary, is often the culmination of unsuccessful integration and migration experiences in host countries. These migrants

typically face impending expiration of their residency status or are influenced by policies that impede family reunification in their destination country. Unlike fully involuntary returnees, this group may have access to certain resources, such as repatriation incentives from host nations or, occasionally, personal savings. However, their reintegration prospects often parallel those of forced returnees. Many individuals in this category grapple with significant initial challenges upon return, including personal and emotional difficulties, psychological adjustment issues, and a lack of motivation to reintegrate. Despite having some resources at their disposal, these semi-voluntary returnees frequently encounter substantial obstacles in re-establishing themselves in their home countries, emphasizing the complexity and subtlety of return migration processes and the varied sufferings encountered by different categories of returnees.

Voluntary return migrants: This intentional return migrants represent a distinct category characterized by a clear and premeditated plan to repatriate. These individuals often set specific objectives for their time abroad, such as accumulating savings, gaining advanced education, acquiring specialized skills, or establishing business connections. Their return is typically timed to coincide with the achievement of these goals, with the direct purpose of leveraging their newly acquired resources and experiences in their home country. The reintegration of these migrants can potentially yield significant economic benefits, including stimulating entrepreneurial activities and creating employment opportunities through strategic investments. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that their successful reintegration is not guaranteed. These returnees may encounter obstacles in the form of unfavorable business environments or cumbersome governmental bureaucracies in their nature countries, which can obstruct their capacity to fully utilize their acquired assets and skills. Thus, while intentional return migration holds promise for positive economic impact, the realization of this potential is contingent upon conducive conditions in the country of origin.

Second-generation “quasi-returnees”: Another distinctive group within the realm of return migration consists of second or third-generation diaspora members who seek to invest in their ancestral homeland. These individuals, though not returnees in the traditional sense, are drawn to the countries of their parents or grandparents with the intention of contributing economically. The experiences and capabilities of these quasi-returnees can vary significantly. Some may find themselves at a disadvantage, lacking crucial local knowledge such as familiarity with the indigenous business practices or proficiency in the local language. This unfamiliarity can pose challenges to their integration and business success. Conversely, others within this group manage to achieve notable success. These more accomplished quasi-returnees often excel in providing specialized assistance, particularly in areas like business plan development. Their unique position, combining external perspectives with ancestral ties, allows them to offer valuable insights and guidance, potentially bridging international business practices with local contexts.

2.4 Factors that Push Migrants to Return to their Country of Origin

Economic difficulties in the destination country are an important factor that could explain the motivation of returnees in their native country. This economic difficulty could be a downturn or joblessness, causing migrants to consider being obligated to repatriate to their homeland (Wong, 2014 cited in Teming-Amoako, 2018). Thus, as shown by Harris and Todaro, cited by Hirvonen and Lilleør (2015), the scale of return migration is an expression of the destination region's altering labor market conditions. In contrast to this economic viewpoint, the literary criticism on return migration has looked at non-monetary factors as predictors of return by migrants (Balawi, 2021). Wang and Fan (2006) postulates that the monetary/fiscal "success-failure" dichotomy is a key component; nonetheless, it is unsatisfactory for comprehending return migration and must thus be comprehended as part of the family's wider institutional environment.

Having followed this previous route of investigation, observations on the choice to return home contain an amalgamation of professional and personal influences in both beginning and end locations (Yendaw et al., 2017). Hirvonen and Liller (2015), for example, found that social and familial variables continue to be relevant for certain prospective return migrants in their research of returnees moving back within rural Tanzania. In similar research conducted in rural Thailand by scholars, Piotrowski and Tong (2010), they revealed that variables such as marital relationship, parenting, and responsibilities to their old folks substantially inspire returnees to reconsider moving from their hosting region.

In numerous low- and middle-income settings or regions, potential migrants encounter the tough decision of migrating to a faraway geographical location or territory to leverage greater economic security, primarily due to the absence of rigorous day-care possibilities and caregivers' incapacity to afford to bring their children along to another destination (Schoder-Butterfill, 2004 cited in Yendaw et al., 2017). In such cases, migratory guardians are frequently compelled to abandon their youngsters with other relatives, which presents a dilemma because displacement of parenthood and their youngsters may negatively impact the bond or connection between parent and child (Dreby, 2007). Could be a major impetus for migrant parents to return to their place of origin (Piotrowski & Tong, 2010). Additional aspects are connected to returnees' life stages, since time of life or maturity level brings with it new demands and desires (Knodel et al., 2007; Baldock, 2000). According to Mitchell and Wister (2015), revealed that family-related factors strongly influenced, particularly the necessity to return home to look after aging parents

Tiemoko (2004), who conducted thorough conversations with returnees in both Paris and London, reiterated that family proved to be among the main significant variables motivating repatriation. According to current return migrants, family-related difficulties rank among the

most prevalent problems they encounter, foreseeing these issues may have resulted in postponements for some returnees (Tiemoko, 2004).

A study analysis of return migrant demographics revealed that the majority comprise unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Their return is primarily driven by job losses resulting from ongoing economic downturns and the implementation of nationalization policies in Gulf countries. These returnees face significant reintegration challenges, exacerbated by two key factors: their limited savings and the paucity of employment prospects in their home state. The combination of these elements—low skill levels, inadequate financial resources, and a constrained job market—creates a scenario where successful reintegration appears unlikely without substantial government intervention (Rajan & Akhil, 2019). Deportation, Rajulton (1991) (cited in Teming-Amoako, 2018) claims to be another factor that encourages return migration, particularly in transnational migration. Every country has policies, legislations and regulations that control the mobility of individuals both inland and beyond the borders of the country. They have the authority to prohibit entrance into the nation or expel migrants. As a result, how a host nation behaves to migrants might impact migrants' decisions to stay or return to their homeland.

2.5 Reintegration of Returned Migrants

Reintegration involves various dimensions that cannot be fully represented by a single indicator (IOM, 2019). According to the IOM (2019), reintegration is the process of re-integrating a migrant into the political, communal, cultural, and economic aspects of their country of origin. This concept highlights how complex reintegration is and how crucial it is to take care of each element separately. It also emphasises how important it is to take a holistic approach to reintegration, taking into account every facet of a returnee's life. With this strategy, returnees

can address the causes of their migration, difficulties to their (re)integration and the decision to go further voluntarily rather than out of need or of a requirement.

Economic reintegration, which is often referred to as livelihood strategies within the framework of return migration, is a crucial aspect of the reintegration process (Setrana & Tonah, 2014). It involves the ability of returnees to secure employment or engage in income-generating activities upon their coming back into their homeland or native country. Setrana and Tonah (2014) emphasizes the importance of exploring the types of jobs returnees undertake, as well as the support they receive from various wells, such as relatives, acquaintances, or public and non-governmental organizations. Understanding the economic dimension of reintegration is essential for assessing the sustainability of return and the overall well-being of returnees (Koser & Kuschminder, 2015).

Coupling, rebuilding social networks and relationships within the returnee's society is referred to as social reintegration (Setrana & Tonah, 2014). Finding acceptable housing in the metropolitan was a chief concern for all returnees after they arrived, as they all believed it was improper to live with extended family or to fulfil the expectation of building a house for relatives (Smith, 2007; Setrana & Tonah, 2014). The effective adaptation and integration of returnees into their home society depend on this component of reintegration. Reestablishing connections with friends, family, and the larger society are all part of social reintegration, as is adapting to any shifts in social dynamics that have taken place while the returnee has been gone (Cassarino, 2014). Returnees' overall reintegration experience can be significantly impacted by the degree of social acceptance and encouragement they receive from their social networks.

However, the final aspect of the reintegration triangle, Psychosocial reintegration, deals with the psychological and emotional adjustment of returnees as they acclimate back to life in their homeland (IOM, 2019). This part of reintegration is often neglected but is equally vital for the

successful reintegration of returnees. Psychosocial challenges may involve coping with the psychological effects of migration, such as trauma, stress, or feelings of isolation and estrangement (Setrana & Tonah, 2014). Providing support services to attend to the psychological needs of returnees are essential for promoting their psychosocial well-being and overall reintegration (Arowolo, 2000).

The findings of a study indicate that the effectiveness of return assistance programs in supporting reintegration could be enhanced by (i) focusing, beforehand, on returnees intending to start their own businesses, and afterward, on the most vulnerable groups (such as women, older returnees, and the unemployed), and (ii) aiding the labour market integration of returnees with foreign education (Mercier et al., 2016). The magnitude and measure of reintegration of returnees are influenced by the kind of return migration. The realities faced by domestic migrant workers in the Gulf Region, whether positive or negative, have an influence on the progress or failure of the return. This study is interested in investigating the factors of their migratory experiences of Ghanaian returnees from the Gulf, social experiences, coping mechanisms or livelihood strategies, and long-term migration goals after reintegrating into their home country.

According to Rajan and Akhil (2019), the majority of returning migrants are laborers with limited or moderate skills who have been compelled to come back due to unemployment resulting from economic downturns and localization initiatives in Gulf nations. The research indicates that these returnees generally have minimal savings and face scarce job prospects in their native regions, implying that their successful reintegration would likely require governmental assistance.

2.6 Experiences of the Returnees after Reintegration

Manuh (2005) postulates that depending on the situation, a migrant's homecoming may have different effects that might be favorable or harmful. Without adequate planning, an uninvited return by a migrant might have adversely affect that person's competence to integrate back into their home country. Hence, influencing their social experience. On the other hand, reintegration is more likely to go well for migrants who return to a friendly environment (Cassarino, 2008).

A social experience mentioned in the research by Setrana and Tonah (2014) on returnees and associated phases of re-adaptation to life in Ghana is the pressure to live up to the lofty standards of family and neighbors. Migrants are welcomed back with open arms grounded in their previous support and payments provided to relatives or family members. However, it gets difficult when they are asked to continue contributing financially but do not have the resources to do so. The embarrassment of returning without cash on hand, according to Kleist and Bob-Milliar (2013) can be overpowering in communities where there are considerable assumptions about migrants' economic assistance for homes, prompting some migrants to choose deciding against returning to their nation, Ghana. The number of barriers that returnees in Ghana are confronted with while seeking to start enterprises is a big hurdle that might deter people from returning (Setrana & Tonah, 2014).

Relatives' dynamics' may have changed as a result of the protracted absence, making it challenging for returns to reestablish relationships with their spouse, kids, and extended relatives (Van Hook & Glick, 2020). According to research by Shrestha and Dhungana (2018), many Nepalese who had previously lived in the Gulf reported having trouble getting along with their children after they had grown up without them. In addition, some returnees could experience disagreements with their spouse as a result of shifting gender roles or altered financial expectations (Sahoo et al., 2018). Returnees could encounter adjustments in family

roles and obligations in addition to difficulties reestablishing connections with family members after their return.

According to research by Zimring and Serok (2019), migrant women from the Gulf area who were returning to Ukraine encountered substantial difficulties in re-establishing their roles as moms and spouses. Some of them even reported losing their autonomy and authority within the family structure. Similar to this, Sahoo et al.'s (2018) study discovered that men returning to India from the Gulf may have trouble readjusting to household duties since they may have relied on domestic workers while abroad.

Returning citizens from the Gulf may also have trouble getting access to medical treatment in their own nations (Lori, 2019). According to research by Al-Sabri et al. (2020), linguistic hurdles and a lack of experience with Yemen's healthcare system made it difficult for Yemenis who had just returned from Saudi Arabia to seek healthcare services. Also, returnees could also run into difficulties getting access to social services like housing and schooling (Potocky & Naseh, 2020). According to a UN Women report from 2019, it was particularly difficult for migrant women who were fleeing gender-based violence and exploitation to get legal safeguards while they were returning to Nepal from the Gulf area.

Many immigrants from Gulf nations who have returned home may have had high-profile positions or employment while they were overseas, but they may struggle to obtain equivalent possibilities or may experience stigma and prejudice because of their immigrant status. According to Taha and Ahmed (2020), Sudanese returning from the Gulf felt a loss of identity and social position upon their return, with some of them believing they had failed to reach their aims.

A sense of displacement and cultural estrangement are two other social experiences that returnees could have. Returnees may find it difficult to acclimatize to the traditional customs

and standards of their homeland since they may have become used to those of their host nation. According to research by El-Sherbiny et al. (2020), Egyptians returning from the Gulf reported feeling disoriented and culturally alienated, especially in light of gender norms and expectations.

2.7 Livelihood Strategies Employed by Returnees after their Reintegration

Domestic returnee workers must overcome the difficult task of reintegrating into their home societies and reconstructing their livelihoods when they return. Investigating the various adoption strategies helps to establish sustainable means of subsistence. Reintegration and return migration have a big impact on the migrant population as well as their home communities. The degree to which reintegration is successful has a significant influence pertaining to lifestyle quality, standards and financial security of returning citizens. In addition, because returnees bring with them significant skills, information, and prospective investments, their reintegration is vital to the growth and development of their home nations. For policymakers, academics, and practitioners, understanding the livelihood strategies used by returnees is crucial because it may guide the creation of supportive systems and initiatives that will help them successfully reintegrate.

To begin with, diversifying their revenue sources is a popular tactic used by returnees. To lessen reliance on a single source of income and improve their financial security, returnees may engage in a variety of money-generating activities. According to Adepoju, (2017); Mbaye et al., (2020), return migrants participate in a variety of livelihood activities, including self-employment, wage labor, agriculture, and entrepreneurship. For instance, it has been noted that Senegalese who have immigrated from the Gulf area participate in a variety of income-generating activities, including small-scale commerce, agriculture, and services (Mbaye et al., 2020).

Also, returnees frequently bring important abilities and information they earned throughout their migratory experience back with them. Utilizing these abilities can help them reintegrate and support themselves. Return migrants might use the skills they have learned to launch enterprises, offer specialized services, or impart information to others. Ali (2018) postulates that Filipinos who have immigrated from Gulf nations have used their newly acquired talents in fields including construction, agriculture, and service-oriented fields.

As detailed by Mbaye et al., (2020), returned migrants typically rely on social networks and remittances as sources of income. Access to information, resources, and opportunities is made possible via social networks. In order to find employment, get financial help, or start enterprises, returnees frequently use their relationships with family, friends, and other migrants. Remittances are considered as an important part of returnees' livelihood strategy, both during their journey and after they go home. Remittances are money transfers made by migrant workers to their relatives back home. Remittances are financial contributions made by migrants to their family while they are away from home that help their community and household prosper (Adepoju, 2017). Returnees have two options once they return: they may either keep sending remittances or use their money to invest in sources of income. These funds can assist returnees build self-employment prospects by acting as startup financing for agricultural or small company operations (Ali, 2018).

Lastly, the ability to access financial services and assistance programs is crucial to helping returnees develop their livelihood options. To launch or grow their enterprises, returnees may need support in the shape of loans and grants, or microfinance services. Additionally, returnees can be given the skills and information they need to improve their possibilities for a living through training programs and capacity-building efforts (Ali, 2018).

2.8 Future Migration Aspirations of Returnees

Upon their return, migrants may have various experiences that shape their future migration aspirations. Economic considerations are fundamental in shaping the future migration aspirations of returnees. Many returnees initially migrated in pursuit of better job opportunities and improved earning potential. Consequently, upon their return, their decisions regarding future migration often revolve around economic factors (Crescenzi et al., 2017). According to Filimonau and Mika (2019), some returnees may opt to re-migrate if they perceive more lucrative job opportunities or higher income potential in host countries or alternative destinations. These economic motivations can be driven by the aspiration to deliver better financial support for their relatives or to secure a more comfortable life. On the contrary, returnees who find satisfying economic prospects and opportunities in their home countries may choose to stay and invest in their reintegration. This is corroborated by research indicating that return migrants can benefit from collaboration with state governments, which includes the optimal management of competencies acquired abroad and the provision of long-term financial support for reintegration (Rajan & Akhil, 2019). Key factors influencing successful reintegration include access to stable employment, opportunities for income generation, and supportive business environments significantly influence their decisions regarding future migration (IOM, 2020).

However, according to De Hass (2010), Social and family dynamics exert a significant influence on returnees' future migration aspirations. The desire to reunite with family members who may still be abroad or to join new family formations can drive returnees to consider re-migration. Family ties often hold immense importance, and the prospect of being with loved ones can be a compelling reason to embark on another migration journey (Falicov, 2016). Conversely, returnees who have successfully reintegrated into their home communities and have nurtured strong social networks may find a feeling of acceptance and support in their

homeland or native country. These positive social ties can counterbalance the pull of migration, making them more inclined to stay (Bachtiar & Prasetyo, 2017). The quality of family connections, the strength of social groups, community networks and the feeling of belonging in the homeland all play pivotal roles in shaping returnees' choices regarding future migration.

Personal aspirations and cultural values are deeply intertwined with returnees' decisions regarding future migration. According to Czaika et al. (2021), examines four key aspects of the intricate migration decision-making process. These include how individuals develop desires to migrate, the mental frameworks used to seek and assess information about potential migration choices, the timeframes and planning stages involved in preparing for and executing migration decisions, and the extent to which individuals feel they have control and autonomy in making these choices. On the other hand, returnees who prioritize their cultural identity and ties to their homeland may be more inclined to settle in their home countries (Tezcan, 2019). Cultural values and a feeling of affinity for one's place of birth can form a powerful anchor that discourages re-migration (Dzięglewski, 2021). These returnees find fulfilment and identity in their cultural roots, making them more likely to stay and contribute to their home communities (De Haas, 2010; IOM, 2020).

The regulatory and legislative landscape in both the countries of origin and destination significantly influences the future migration intentions of those who have returned. Restrictive immigration policies or limited opportunities for legal migration in host countries can act as significant deterrents to re-migration, making it challenging for returnees to contemplate another international move. Conversely, favourable policies that support reintegration and offer incentives for staying in the home country can encourage returnees to settle and invest in their communities. Legal frameworks that facilitate access to education, employment, and social services significantly influence returnees' decisions to remain in their home country (De Haas, 2010; Maniraguha, 2011). Simultaneously, the socio-political context of the home country

holds sway over returnees' future migration aspirations. Political instability, conflict, and insecurity can drive returnees to consider re-migration as a means of seeking safety elsewhere. Conversely, those perceiving positive changes in the socio-political landscape, such as improved governance and security, may be more optimistic about staying and fostering the development of their native land. These factors, intertwined within the legal, policy, and socio-political contexts, are instrumental in influencing returnees' migration choices (IOM, 2020). Key findings from Shuangshuang Tang and Pu Hao (2019), study indicated a significant ratio of the populace that are rural migrants (48.9%) intend to become rural returnees, primarily motivated by dissatisfaction with urban life and lower socio-economic status in urban areas. These prospective rural returnees often have lower human capital and social resources compared to their peers. In contrast, prospective urban returnees, comprising 22.8% of the surveyed population, and urban floaters (28.3%) are more inclined to seek a better life in urban settings, albeit near their rural homes, driven by family ties and a sense of affinity and attachment to their region of origin.

2.9 Theoretical Review on Reintegration of Return Domestic Workers

Despite the fact that intellectual responses to return migration date to the 1960s era, it is undeniable that the 1980s saw a flurry of scientific discussion among academics about the return migration and its effects on emerging economies (Benson, 2016). Additionally, they made significant contributions to the existing research on return mobility, as well as the development of intergovernmental readmittance agreements between origin and destination economies or nations, the rise of "co-development," (Wihtol de Wenden, 2023).

2.9.1. The Pull-Push Framework

This study draws on Lee's (1966) migration model to understand the factors influencing people's decisions to move. Lee argues that migration is not solely driven by push factors

(negative aspects of the origin) or pull factors (positive aspects of the destination). His framework emphasizes the import of considering prime obstacles particularly immigration policies and psychological costs associated with migration. Additionally, Lee highlights the role of personal factors, including an individual's economic situation and personality, in shaping migration choices. In Lee's model, detrimental conditions at the native country, like low wages and joblessness, can push people to leave, while appealing conditions at the destination, such as greater income, available jobs, and more robust social welfare services, can pull people towards a new location. In short, people migrate when the desire to move, driven by positive factors in new locations (pull) and negative factors in their current location (push), outweighs the challenges of migration itself (Lee 1966). While De Haas (2008) argue this framework does not account for the varying strengths of these motivations, it remains a valuable tool. The difficulty of migration goes beyond the pros and cons of origin and destination. Factors like the emotional toll and a person's natural disposition also play a big role in determining whether someone will ultimately make the move. In essence, a person's outlook can influence their decision to migrate. Optimists are more likely to take the leap, while pessimists might be discouraged. This framework goes beyond just demographics. It acknowledges that internal factors, like a determined spirit, and external forces all play a role in a migrant's experience. This broader perspective allows researchers to explore the complex reasons behind why people migrate.

2.9.2. Transnationalism Approach

Globalization has drastically reshaped international migration patterns (De Haas, 2003). Modern communication technologies, like email and affordable phone calls, coupled with globalized banking systems, have made it easier for migrants to maintain ties with their families and communities in their native land. They can now send money more readily and interact with loved ones in real-time. Additionally, cheaper and faster travel allows for more frequent visits,

both for planned trips and emergencies. This newfound ease of connection fosters closer and more personal ties to their homeland than ever before. As a result, migrants are able to live a more transnational life, forming identities that encompass both their new and original societies. This challenges traditional classifications of migration, such as clear distinctions between "origin" and "destination" or categories like "permanent," "temporary," and "return" migrants. In today's world, where migrants can easily circulate and maintain commitments to multiple societies, these classifications become increasingly difficult to maintain (De Haas, 2003).

Reinforcing this model of transnationalism, Portes et al. (1999) define transnational activities as those built on "regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders." Cassarino (2004) further emphasizes this perspective, suggesting that transnational migrants view returning home not as a definitive ending, but rather as part of an ongoing cycle of social and economic connections. This cyclical nature, with its regular back-and-forth movement, allows for a smoother reintegration upon return. Migrants within this framework are seen as actively maintaining ties by regularly visiting their home countries, fostering a continued exchange of knowledge, information, and a sense of belonging.

As further explained by Constant and Massey (2002), these subjects who have relatives in their homeland, as well as good job prospects, are more inclined to come back home. According to Constant. (2020), the emerging trend of collective family decision-making in migration processes and emphasizes the significance of non-financial factors influencing return migration. The study also notes that individuals engaging in return, repeated, or circular migration are diverse and self-selecting, making it challenging to encompass their experiences within a single theoretical framework or empirical investigation.

2.9.3. The Social Network Theory

In a way analogous to the transnational model, social network theory, as explained by Cassarino (2004), views returning migrants as individuals who retain strong connections to their former homes abroad. This perspective highlights how these ongoing linkages, forged through the migration experience, can be a significant asset upon returning home. Social networks established during migration can be a source of essential resources needed to facilitate a smooth reintegration. The very structure of these networks increases not only access to resources and information but also the potential success of the returnee's endeavours back in their home country.

Cassarino (2004) argues that strong social networks are key to a successful return migration process. These networks, built on long-lasting relationships and ongoing exchanges, are cyclical in nature, ensuring a steady flow of support. Social capital accumulated before migration, such as resources provided by family or household back home, also plays a crucial role. Both financial and social support from family can significantly impact the returnee's reintegration efforts. Ultimately, Cassarino emphasizes the agency of returning migrants. They actively gather information, assess opportunities within their native countries, and leverage their circle of acquaintances (encompassing both migrants and non-migrants) to ensure their return. The choice to return to one's home country is a sophisticated process, influenced by a combination of societal, economic, and organizational elements within the country of origin, along with the returnee's own resources and capabilities (Cassarino, 2004).

2.9.4 The Structural Theory

According to this Structural theoretical model, return is not only examined in light of the migrant's thrilling adventure but also in light of both social and institutional backdrops in their homeland (Teming-Amoako, 2018). In truth, return is a context-dependent issue. According

to Dako-Gyeke. (2016), the legislative, socioeconomic, and subcultural in the migrants' home countries have a big impact on their ability to reintegrate. The capacity of returnees to employ the resources they accumulated during their mobility is what this theory is irrationally obsessed with (De Haas, 2021). According to structuralists, the function of covariates peculiar to the regions and nations to which returnees return greatly influences their propensity to utilize their talents and assets upon their return (Cassarino, 2004). Structuralism claims that if there is a "difference" between the returned migrant's personal customs and values and those back home, they may not be able to reintegrate as well and return home (Kalir, 2017). However, returned migrants can squander their earnings on luxury or unsuccessful investments in response to preconceptions at homeland, which would be detrimental to the process of reintegration as posited by Thomas (2008).

According to Cassarino (2004), comparing the "reality" of both the homeland economy and its social environment with the ambitions of returned migrants, the positive or negative impact of returnees is examined. Numerous illustrative evidence of how intricate the interactions between the ambitions of returned migrants and the social and fiscal realities at homeland are can be found in Francesco Cerase's classic paper on immigrants returning from the United States back to Italy. Cerase distinguishes four sorts of returnees, emphasizing their goals, wants, and expectations:

Return of failure

The phrase "return of failure" mentions returnees who struggled to reintegrate in their new destinations as a result of biases and preconceptions they confronted while traveling. Their struggles assimilating into destination areas or participating actively in the host cultures were notable and sufficient to induce their return.

Return of Conservatism

"Return of conservatism" comprises migrants who, prior to their actual departure, had intended to come back home with just sufficient income to acquire property with the purpose of "freeing themselves from repulsive slavery to the landlords". Due to such goals and tactics, conservative returnees primarily focus on meeting their own necessities together with their family members. Those who go back to their native country work to maintain the social environment they left behind rather than trying to change it.

Return of Retirement

The term alludes to pensioned off immigrants who opt to come back to one's homelands and buy a property or plot of land and build a house in which they can live out their golden years.

Return of Innovation

Under Cerase's categorization, this group of returnees is the most dynamic. In order to accomplish their objective in their homelands, which, in their opinion, provide more opportunities to meet their objectives, individuals who are "eager to employ all the techniques and acquiring competencies they have learned during their transitory adventures" are regarded. Cerase argues that these returned migrants envision themselves as pioneers or have innovative prowess, for they feel that the abilities obtained overseas coupled with their finances will have converted these returnees into "agents of change". Nevertheless, Cerase further acknowledges that it is highly improbable that these returned migrants will act as transformational leaders in their homeland due to the persistence of solid power dynamics and hidden agendas, which discourage creatives from engaging in activities that might potentially ruin the present predicament and the traditional system of governance.

Structuralists on returnees examine the degree to which returnees are likely to have an influence on their homelands after return occurs. As previously stated, the structural theoretical approach brings attention to two variables (time and space), and discusses the effects that returnees may have on homelands. Concerning the position of returnees and their native countries, time is concerned with the period they spent abroad together with the changes that occurred in the lead-up to and following emigration. The reintegration process of returnees depends on both cultural shifts and growth in native countries. On the other side, space according to structuralists indicates that the type of settlement either rural or urban can be a determining factor to how well returnees integrate and modify their expectations. Generally, Return is not considered to be solely impacted by the returnee's transition experience in host nations due to the structural theory.

2.10 Theoretical Synthesis

The adoption of a multi-theoretical framework in this study; comprising the Push-Pull Framework (Lee, 1966), Transnationalism Approach (Portes et al., 1999; De Haas, 2003), Social Network Theory (Cassarino, 2004), and Structural Theory (Cassarino, 2004; Teming-Amoako, 2018) was a deliberate methodological choice driven by the complex, multidimensional nature of return migration and reintegration experiences. Rather than relying on a single theoretical lens, which would have provided only a partial understanding of the phenomenon, this integrative approach enables a comprehensive examination of the diverse factors shaping the migration cycle of Ghanaian domestic workers.

The necessity for multiple theories stems from the inherent limitations of each individual framework. The Push-Pull Framework, while effective in explaining initial migration decisions through economic and social factors, fails to account for the ongoing transnational connections migrants maintain or the structural constraints they face upon return. Similarly, while

Transnationalism captures the fluid nature of contemporary migration and persistent cross-border ties, it inadequately addresses the economic motivations driving migration or the institutional barriers affecting reintegration. Social Network Theory illuminates the crucial role of social capital in facilitating both migration and return, yet it cannot fully explain macro-level structural factors or individual agency in migration decisions. Finally, Structural Theory effectively highlights institutional and societal constraints but may overlook the agency of migrants and their transnational practices.

These four theories function as complementary rather than competing frameworks, each addressing specific dimensions of the migration-return-reintegration continuum. The Push-Pull Framework provides the foundational understanding of migration motivations, examining both the adverse conditions in Ghana (push factors) and the perceived opportunities in Gulf countries (pull factors) (Lee, 1966). This is complemented by the Transnationalism Approach, which explains how migrants maintain dual orientations and ongoing connections between home and host societies, facilitated by modern communication technologies and financial systems (Portes et al., 1999; De Haas, 2003). Social Network Theory then elucidates how these transnational connections translate into tangible resources for migration facilitation and reintegration support (Cassarino, 2004), while Structural Theory grounds these experiences within the broader socio-economic and institutional contexts of both sending and receiving countries (Cassarino, 2004; Teming-Amoako, 2018).

The theoretical synthesis reveals several points of convergence and divergence. All four theories acknowledge the importance of economic factors in migration decisions, though they conceptualize these differently: from individual cost-benefit calculations in Push-Pull theory to structural inequalities in Structural Theory. Similarly, while Social Network Theory and Transnationalism both emphasize the importance of social connections, they differ in their

focus: the former on resource mobilization through networks, the latter on sustained cross-border engagement and identity formation.

This multi-theoretical approach is particularly suited to examining the experiences of Ghanaian domestic workers in the Gulf Region for several reasons. First, it captures the full migration cycle; from initial decision-making through the migration experience to return and reintegration, which no single theory adequately addresses. Second, it accommodates both individual agency and structural constraints, recognizing that returnees navigate personal aspirations within limiting institutional frameworks. Third, it accounts for the gendered dimensions of domestic work migration, where social networks play crucial roles in recruitment while structural vulnerabilities shape exploitation experiences. The synthesis of these theories enables a varied analysis that reveals how pre-migration conditions (Push-Pull) influence the development of transnational practices (Transnationalism), which in turn shape the social capital available for reintegration (Social Network Theory), all within specific structural contexts that enable or constrain successful return (Structural Theory). This integrated framework thus provides a more complete understanding of why some returnees successfully reintegrate while others struggle, how entrepreneurship emerges as a dominant livelihood strategy, and why most respondents express no desire to re-migrate to the Gulf Region.

In essence, this theoretical plurality reflects the empirical complexity of return migration, where economic, social, cultural, and structural factors intersect to shape individual experiences and outcomes. By employing this synthesized framework, the study moves beyond simplistic explanations to capture the multifaceted reality of return migration and reintegration in the Ghanaian context.

2.11 Critical Literature Synthesis and Study Positioning

The reviewed literature reveals critical debates and gaps that this study addresses. Key tensions emerge between scholars emphasizing returnee agency (Cassarino, 2004) versus structural constraints (Setrana & Tonah, 2014), conflicting findings on entrepreneurial success rates with some celebrating returnee ventures (Ammassari, 2004) while others document high failure rates, and contradictory gender perspectives ranging from empowerment (Nisrane et al., 2020) to increased vulnerability (Rahman & Salisu, 2023). Comparative analysis with other African countries reveals similar exploitation patterns among Ethiopian returnees (Mehari & Kaneko, 2022), higher entrepreneurial success in Nigeria possibly due to stronger diaspora networks (Ughulu, 2024), and better governmental support for Kenyan returnees (Gikuru, 2013), suggesting that while Gulf migration experiences share commonalities, reintegration outcomes vary by home country support systems. Recent Ghanaian scholarship has shifted toward more critical analysis, with Agyekum et al. (2025) documenting severe mental health impacts, Rahman and Salisu (2023) introducing gender as an analytical lens, and Adu-Okoree et al. (2023) revealing high re-migration intentions that contradict permanent return assumptions. This study systematically addresses three gaps: an empirical gap through gender-balanced perspectives on the full migration cycle, a methodological gap via comprehensive qualitative approach capturing interconnected dimensions, and a theoretical gap through novel four-theory integration, thereby positioning itself as a critical contribution to understanding Gulf return migration in the Ghanaian context.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

A research paper relies heavily on its methodology for credibility. This chapter's goal is to make the methodology utilized to carry out this investigation more understandable. This section explains the research design, sampling techniques, sampling procedures and sample count for this investigation. The data collection and data analyses discussed as well as the ethical matters that the research study assumed.

3.2 Research Approach and Design

This investigation implemented a qualitative research strategy (Creswell & Poth, 2016) due to its strengths in capturing the lived experiences of participants within a specific context (Rahman, 2017). As highlighted by Teye (2012), qualitative methods like detailed interviews and group discussions enable researchers to gather rich data on respondents' experiences, opinions, feelings, and behaviors. In keeping with this methodology, the research involved both detailed interviews and focus group discussions to delve into narratives, perspectives, resilience, challenges, coping mechanisms, and even potential variations in viewpoints among the participants.

While mixed methods and quantitative designs offer valuable insights through statistical generalization and broader trend analysis, they are less effective in capturing the depth and complexity of individual lived experiences. Mixed-methods research, though comprehensive, often requires extensive resources and may dilute the depth of qualitative insights when not carefully balanced (Gamage, 2025). Quantitative approaches, while useful for measuring prevalence and correlations, may overlook the nuanced social and emotional realities of returnees (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This study prioritizes understanding the personal

reintegration journeys of returned domestic workers including their emotional, social, and psychological challenges, which are best explored through open-ended, narrative-driven inquiry. A qualitative approach aligns with the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasizes context, meaning-making, and the subjective realities of participants (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Therefore, qualitative research was chosen not only for its methodological fit but also for its capacity to generate rich, context-specific insights essential for informing policy and support mechanisms.

3.3 Study Profile

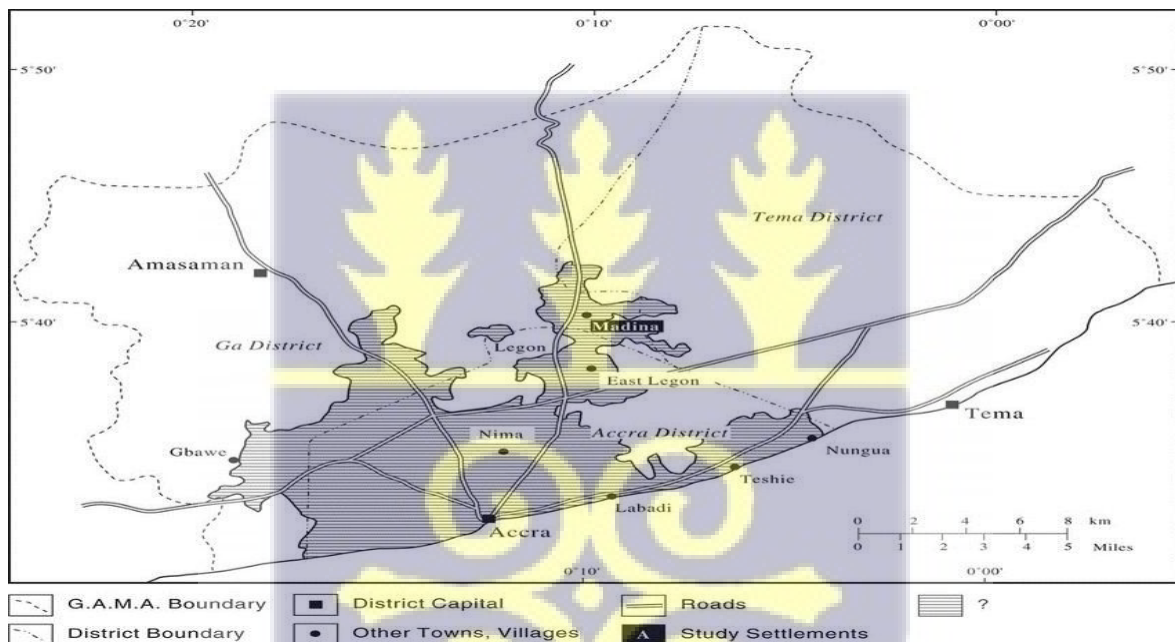


Figure 1. Map of Accra, showing the geographical location and landscape of Madina. (Sources: adapted from Gough, Tipple, & Napier, 2003)

This study focuses specifically on the Madina community, a suburb of Accra located within the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipality zone in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. Madina serves as the focal area for investigating the narratives of returned domestic workers from the Gulf Region. Positioned about 15 kilometres northeast of Ghana's capital, Madina is a hub of urban dynamism with coordinates at approximately 5.6881° N latitude and 0.1543° W

longitude. The area is known for its dense and culturally diverse population, hosting approximately 244,676 inhabitants which is a growth from 2012, according to the 2021 Ghana Statistical Service.

According to Prempeh. (2022), demographic composition of Madina is a tapestry of various ethnicities and cultural backgrounds, including both indigenous Ghanaians and migrants from other Ghanaian regions and bordering countries.

Historically, Madina emerged as a melting pot of diverse ethnic groups and foreigners, led by Alhaji Seidu Kardo. This rich historical backdrop has shaped Madina into a bustling urban centre with significant urbanization and population growth over the years (Hamza, 2022).

Economically, the area thrives on a blend of trade, commerce, small-scale industries, and service provision. The local markets are vibrant centres of economic activity, reflecting the dynamic nature of Madina's economy (Bosiakoh & Tetteh, 2019). Furthermore, the community's proximity to Accra contributes to its economic vibrancy and offers opportunities for residents to engage in various occupations both within and outside Madina (Kwarteng, 2020).

According to Mboup et al. (2019), infrastructure in Madina has seen considerable development, with a network of roads and public transportation systems, including buses and shared taxis, facilitating connectivity and mobility. The region is also equipped with essential services like healthcare, education, and sanitation, which have been instrumental in improving residents' quality of life. Culturally, Madina's diverse population celebrates an array of festivals and traditions, reflecting a rich cultural heritage and strong community bonds (Thibdeau, 2020).

Despite its growth, Madina faces challenges common to urban areas, such as urbanization-related issues, infrastructure development needs, waste management, and access to quality education and healthcare (Agbosu et al., 2023). These challenges present a unique opportunity

for research and development initiatives, particularly in urban planning, community development, and socio-economic studies.

Madina's unique urban and cultural setting, coupled with its socio-economic diversity, makes it an ideal location for studying the reintegration experiences of returnees (Rahman & Salisu, 2023). According to Ehwi (2020), suburb's characteristics provide a rich backdrop for investigating various aspects of urban life and community integration, offering valuable perspectives on the lived experiences of these individuals including both returnees from Gulf Regions and the local community. This research adds up significantly to the understanding of migration, reintegration, and urban community dynamics in the context of Ghana and the broader West African region. This selection permits a meticulous analysis of the reintegration encounters and livelihood strategies of returnees within the scope of the research objective.

3.4. Study Population

The population of the research investigation encompassed Ghanaian nationals who have returned from employment as domestic workers in the Gulf Region. The research population centered on Ghanaian nationals of both genders who have previously worked as domestic workers in the Gulf Region. This specific group was chosen to yield a comprehensive knowing of the varied experiences and challenges faced during their employment abroad and upon their return to Ghana.

3.5. Sampling and Sampling Procedure

The sampling method employed in this study was non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling encompasses various techniques that enable researchers to choose specific units from a population for study (Laerd, 2018). Purposive sampling, also referred to as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, encloses a set of sampling methodologies that depend on the researcher's discretion in choosing the subjects for study. These subjects may include

individuals, organizations, events, or specific data points (Annum, 2019). This study utilized purposive sampling, a technique where 24-participants were selected due to their specific characteristics relevant to the study questions (Tongco, 2007; Etikan & Bala, 2017). In this case, the researcher employed their judgment to choose respondents who could deliver valuable narratives and understandings into the study's objectives. To identify suitable participants, the researcher collaborated with a key informant, the local assemblyman. This individual's familiarity with the community and trusted position facilitated recruitment. The assemblyman's involvement likely contributed to a higher response rate due to the trust and respect he holds within the community, especially considering the potentially sensitive nature of the research topic. The rationale behind using purposive sampling stemmed from the specific needs of the study. The targeted recruitment approach was particularly appropriate given the challenges that might have arisen in identifying and recruiting participants on this topic without the assistance of a trusted local contact.

In addition to working with the local assemblyman, the researcher also reached out to community-based organizations and local NGOs that support migrant returnees. These organizations provided referrals and helped verify participants' eligibility based on the inclusion criteria. Informal networks, such as migrant returnee associations and religious groups, were also leveraged to identify individuals who had returned from the Gulf Region within the past five years. This multi-channel recruitment strategy ensured a diverse and representative sample of returnees while maintaining trust and confidentiality throughout the process.

The criteria for inclusion were carefully designed to ensure a rich and diverse set of perspectives, thereby enriching the study's findings. Participants in this study were required to have spent a minimum of one year working in the Gulf Region, ensuring they had sufficient time to experience the unique working conditions and cultural environment there. Moreover,

only those who had returned to Ghana within the last five years were included. This timeframe was chosen to focus on recent reintegration experiences, reflecting current societal and economic conditions in Ghana. An essential aspect of the study was to include returnees who had experienced either abuse or exploitation during their tenure in the Gulf. This inclusion was pivotal to understanding the range of challenges faced abroad and how these experiences influenced their reintegration process back in Ghana. Additionally, the study considered individuals who had received any form of support during their reintegration, such as vocational training or financial assistance. This helped assess the effectiveness and impact of these support mechanisms on their resettlement and adaptation to life back in Ghana.

The study also aimed to capture a diverse range of reintegration experiences among returned domestic workers from the Gulf Region. While we did not employ specific quantitative indicators to measure "successful" reintegration, we sought to include participants who self-reported positive outcomes after their return. These outcomes included finding stable employment, starting their own businesses, rebuilding family relationships, and feeling generally satisfied with their decision to return. Out of the 24 total participants, approximately 10 fell into this category of reporting generally positive reintegration experiences. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that reintegration is a complex and ongoing process, and even these participants often faced some continuing challenges.

Additionally, we included 3 participants who were involved in advocacy or activism related to migrant worker rights. Their insights helped provide a broader perspective on policy issues and community-level impacts of return migration. By incorporating this range of experiences - from those struggling with reintegration to those reporting more positive outcomes - we aimed to capture a holistic picture of the reintegration process. This approach allowed us to identify both challenges and potential best practices to inform future policy and support programs for returned domestic workers. Conversely, the study excluded non-Ghanaian nationals,

individuals who did not work as domestic workers in the Gulf, and those who had come back to Ghana more than five years ago. Additionally, returnees currently employed in the Gulf or planning to return there for work were excluded, as their perspectives might differ significantly from those who had completed their reintegration process. Individuals engaged in ongoing legal proceedings related to their Gulf employment or suffering from severe mental health issues were also excluded, as these factors could influence their ability to participate fully in the study. Lastly, individuals under 18 years of age and those unwilling to participate were not included, ensuring that the study focused on adult experiences and respected personal consent.

Selecting a study population with direct experience of reintegration after returning from domestic work in the Gulf is essential for an in-depth exploration of the topic. The diverse backgrounds and experiences of the participants offered valuable insights into the reintegration process, the hurdles confronted, and the tactics adopted to life in Ghana post-migration. The purposive sampling strategy ensured the inclusion of diverse array of narratives and perspectives, enriching the research's outcomes and contributing significantly to the understanding of the reintegration dynamics for returned domestic workers in Ghana.

3.6 Sample Size

The research involves a sample size of 24 participants, with an equal distribution of 12 male and 12 female returnees from the Gulf Regions who have reintegrated into the Madina community. This gender-balanced approach was chosen to ensure representation of both male and female experiences in the reintegration process. The selection of the sample size was influenced by the study's qualitative nature and the depth of information sought from each participant. The sample size of 24 participants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which refers to the point at which no new themes or insights emerge from additional interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). During the data collection process, recurring

patterns and narratives began to surface by the 18th interview, and by the 24th participant, the researcher observed that further interviews were yielding minimal new information. This confirmed that saturation had been reached. Given the depth and sensitivity of the topic, a smaller, focused sample was appropriate for capturing rich, qualitative data while ensuring manageable analysis and ethical oversight.

While gathering data, the researcher remained attentive to emerging themes and continued interviewing until no substantially new information emerged, indicating a level of thematic saturation appropriate for the study's scope and objectives. This approach allowed for a thorough exploration of the varied nuances of the reintegration process across different gender experiences, while acknowledging that experiences may vary beyond this sample. Participants were identified and recruited through community associations, local organizations, and social networks within Madina. This strategy is advantageous as it taps into existing community structures and networks, facilitating the identification of individuals who conform to the study's inclusion criteria and are willing to participate.

3.7 Data Collection Instrument

Research instrumentation refers to the tool utilized to amass the requisite data from research subjects for the investigation in question. Its goal is to increase the research's plausibility. Relevantly, the research's instrumentation needs to be efficient and tailored to the subject. An interview guide is the main tool used in this investigation (open – ended questions). Claimed Tashakkori and Creswel (2007), this enables the interviewees to express their ideas and collect significant data on the subject under study. These guides ensured participants could share key information pertinent to the study. The investigator could then ask follow-up questions to thoroughly grasp their responses (more details on the interview guide can be found

in the appendices). This strategy assists in putting respondents at ease, establishing trust and rapport, and typically yields valuable data that enriches the interview (Rosenthal, 2016).

The interview guide covered a broad range of topics. This included demographics, the participants' experiences before migrating, the driving elements that impacted their choice to come back home, their social experiences upon returning, the strategies they employed to make a living, and their thoughts on future migration. This comprehensive approach aimed to gain a well-rounded perspective from the participants themselves on the issue under study. It is important to note that while the interview guide was initially drafted in English, some interviews were conducted in Twi, a language both the interviewer and respondents understand, ensuring clear communication and accurate data collection.

Before participating, all respondents freely agreed to be part of the study. Researchers explained the study's purpose thoroughly to ensure informed consent. Additionally, respondents were guaranteed both anonymity and confidentiality concerning their personal information and the details they provided. Interview times, dates, and locations were chosen at the convenience of each participant. Also, the interviews were recorded using an audio recording device and transcribed onto paper. However, audios in Twi were also translated as well as some observational and key points jotted down in the researcher's notebook.

3.8 Data Collection

The study's data collection occurred between the period of October 2nd and November 17th, 2024. Following the careful selection and confirmation of the data collection tools, the investigator personally conducted a visit to the designated study area (Madina) to gather the required information. During this phase, the investigator engaged in comprehensive discussions with each respondent, explicitly seeking their permission before proceeding with data collection. The initial stage involved building a positive rapport with each participant to

create a comfortable environment, ensuring that they felt at ease and could conscientiously respond to the questions during the proposed interviews.

As postulated by Sanjari et al. (2014), semi-structured interviews are recognized as a highly effective approach for gaining insights into a participant's perspective. Engaging in a conversation that delves into sensitive life experiences can be highly emotional for both the interviewer and the respondents. Nonetheless, it remains the responsibility of the interviewer to create a welcoming environment. In qualitative research design, interviews represent a mutually beneficial collaboration between the interviewer and interviewee, fostering direct and focused interactions to prevent monotony (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Employing detailed interviews allowed the researcher to observe respondents' body language, speech patterns, and intonation as they responded to the study questions.

Detailed interviews (semi-structured) were carried out utilizing interview guides. Semi-structured interviews utilize a combination of closed- and open-ended questions, frequently supplemented by follow-up queries such as 'why' or 'how' and to explore participants perspectives, attitudes and experiences (Sandall, 2016). The interview sessions took place at diverse, participant-selected locations and times, typically scheduled on weekends and after regular working hours. Also, these interviews were conducted in-person or one-on-one. Each interview session with a respondent extended for a duration of one and a half hours.

At the beginning of each interview, we secured consent from all respondents to record specific sessions for transcription purposes. For participants who were unable to read or write, a thorough explanation of each question in the interview guide was provided. The interview schedule incorporated probing techniques for instances where certain explanations were not clear to the respondents. Conducted in both English and the local language like Twi, Ga, etc., the interviews accommodated the educational background of the participants. English was

predominantly chosen as it proved to be the more comfortable language for most interviewees. However, some were conducted in Twi. Every interview session concluded with expressing gratitude to the interviewees and a provision for participants experiencing distress or in need of psychological support during or after their involvement in the study to reach out to a trained counselor for assistance.

3.9 Data Analysis

First, to ensure the security of the data, every recorded interview was transcribed and archived on a computer that is protected by a password. While the translation of a small number of Twi interviews presented potential challenges, the researcher took steps to mitigate these concerns. Recognizing the importance of accurate representation, a professional Twi translator familiar with the study's context was consulted to review the translated data.

Following transcription, the data underwent a thematic analysis process chosen for its effectiveness in identifying recurring themes and patterns of meaning within qualitative research (Braun & Clark, 2006). This method aligned well with the study's objective, as outlined by Attride-Stirling (2001), to better grasp the participants' narratives and experiences upon returning home.

To ensure a systematic and rigorous analysis, the researcher adhered to the six-step process for qualitative data analysis as detailed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process involved a series of steps: first, immersing oneself in the data through a thorough review of all transcribed interviews (familiarization). Then, assigning preliminary codes to capture key concepts and ideas within the data (initial coding). Next, identifying persistent subjects and trends across the coded data segments (searching for themes). Following that, refining the identified themes to ensure clarity and coherence (reviewing subjects). This was followed by providing clear and concise labels for each identified theme (defining and naming themes). Finally, the process

culminated in presenting the conclusions drawn from the final set of identified themes (reporting the findings).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

In the research scope of social sciences, ethical consideration is a key methodological issue. This investigation examines the lived narratives of reintegrated domestic workers (migrants) from the Gulf Region in the Greater Accra Region, which is relevant given that migration studies can be sentimental. Human rights concerns, mistreatment and exploitation, as well as fragile and vivid memories, may be mitigated in research subjects. These vulnerabilities were pivot to why this study is ethically burdened. As a result, the following research ethics guidelines were implemented in this research.

The informed agreement form was utilized to obtain the respondents' consent, and it clearly stated the study's purpose and relevance to the intended participants. The participants were free to decide whether or not to take part in the study.

Anonymity was ensured throughout the study by not collecting or recording participants' names or other directly identifying information in the data collection tools. Instead, pseudonyms or codes were used to refer to participants, ensuring that their identities remained unknown.

Confidentiality was maintained by carefully protecting all data collected during the study. Interview recordings, transcripts, and any other research materials were stored securely, with access limited only to the primary researcher and authorized team members. Any potentially identifying details mentioned during interviews were removed or altered during the transcription process to further protect participants' privacy.

The study also prioritized the ethical treatment of participants, taking measures to prevent any physical or psychological harm during or after the research process. This was achieved by

conducting interviews in a respectful manner, using language that was sensitive and non-judgmental, and avoiding derogatory, intolerant, or offensive words. Respondents were notified of their right to pause or stop the interview at any moment, should they wish or if they felt uncomfortable. Additionally, resources for psychological support were made available to participants if needed following their participation in the research.

3.11 Methodological Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

While the qualitative approach was most appropriate for this study's objectives, several methodological limitations warrant acknowledgment. First, the subjective nature of qualitative data interpretation may introduce researcher bias, despite efforts to maintain objectivity. To mitigate this, the researcher employed reflexive practices, maintaining a research journal to document assumptions and reactions throughout the data collection and analysis process. Second, the findings from 24 participants in Madina cannot be statistically generalized to all Ghanaian returnees from the Gulf Region. However, the goal was analytical generalization rather than statistical representation, generating theoretical insights applicable to similar contexts. Third, the reliance on self-reported narratives may be subject to recall bias or selective memory, particularly regarding traumatic experiences. To address this, the researcher triangulated participants' accounts with available secondary sources, including IOM reports and government statistics on return migration, to contextualize individual experiences within broader patterns. Finally, the single-interview design, while respecting participants' time and emotional well-being, may have limited the depth of certain narratives. The extended 1.5-hour sessions and skilled probing techniques helped maximize data richness within this constraint.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter covered comprehensive information on the methodology of the investigation. It proceeded with a profile and framework of the research philosophy and approach, unit of analysis, research sampling, data collection and analysis, ethical consideration and other steps

taken to carry out the study by the researcher. Also, it described the instrumentation utilized to meet the study's objectives; investigation of the social experiences, livelihood strategies and prospect migration aspirations of returnees who are domestic workers from the Gulf Region in the Greater Accra area. The findings and outcomes of the investigation are further described in Chapter 4.



CHAPTER FOUR

MIGRATION PREPARATIONS AND TRAJECTORIES

4.1 Introduction

This section delivers a comprehensive analysis of the outcomes. The research sought to investigate the reintegration narratives and livelihood strategies of Ghanaian domestic workers returning from the Gulf Region, with attention given to the Madina society or landmass. The interview guide used in this study facilitated the gathering of in-depth insights from returnees, covering a range of aspects related to their pre-migration conditions, factors influencing their return, social experiences post-reintegration, livelihood strategies, and future migration aspirations. The structured interview guide, divided into two parts, meticulously captured personal and demographic data in Part A, while Part B delved into the views of respondents on the research topic.

As we navigate through this chapter of data presentation and analysis, the findings focus on pre-migration and migration narratives of Ghanaian household workers who migrated to the Gulf Region. This chapter is segmented into two main units: the first pillar emphasizes on the socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewees, providing a detailed overview of the respondents' backgrounds, including their age, sexual identity, education, conjugal standing, and other relevant factors. The other pillar of the study delves into the pre-migration conditions and factors that facilitated the exodus of domestic workforce to the Gulf Region. It examines the influences behind their choice to voyage, including financial hardships, social pressures, and personal aspirations. Additionally, it explores the roles of recruitment agencies and social connections in the migration narrative, as well as the financing methods and transportation modes used. This section also investigates the living conditions and struggles encountered by the household workers in the Gulf Region, shedding light on issues like exploitation and abuse.

The analysis is framed within the brackets of the research questions and objectives, aiming to understand the complexities of the migration procedure and its impression on the workers' lives. Through descriptive statistics, thematic analysis, and direct quotes from interviewees, a comprehensive understanding of their experiences is provided. This groundwork sets the stage for the subsequent chapter's exploration of return, reintegration, and re-migration experiences, contributing valuable insights to the field of migration studies and informing policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in the field.

4.2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Interviewees

This segment poses a comprehensive overview of the demographic and social attributes of the 24 returnees from the Gulf Regions who were involved as subjects in the study. The purpose is to deliver a detailed understanding of the background profiles of the participants, facilitating a contextualization of the subsequent analysis of their reintegration experiences. The demographic variables examined include sex, age, length of stay in the Gulf Region, educational level, occupation, religion, ethnicity, and marital status. Each of these elements plays a primary function in shaping the experiences and perspectives of the returnees, thereby influencing their reintegration journey. This information is valuable in putting the investigation into perspective.

4.2.1 Sex Characteristics of Interviewees

The impact of a respondent's gender or sex on their migration narrative and reintegration has been extensively explored in migration literature, as highlighted by De Haan (2000). In this study, an equal distribution of male and female participants was intentionally sought, with 12 males and 12 females included. This deliberate and purposive sampling approach aimed to ensure gender equity and representativeness, aligning with principles of inclusivity and diversity. By incorporating diverse gender perspectives, the research was designed to yield a

comprehensive overview of the reintegration process. The sample size of 24 returnees was deemed suitable for qualitative research, emphasizing depth and enabling rich data collection and analysis. Through purposive sampling, the investigation pointed to uncover the unique sufferings and opportunities confronted by returnees from the Gulf Regions within the Madina community, offering valuable insights into their reintegration experiences. This approach reflects the researcher's commitment to achieving gender balance and capturing diverse perspectives, while also underscoring that migration affects individuals of all genders, each with distinct motivations, challenges, and outcomes.

4.2.2 Age Characteristics of Interviewees Prior and After Migration

The age characteristics of interviewees beforehand and after migration reveal important insights into the exodus patterns of Ghanaian household workers to the Gulf Region. The current ages of returnees ranged from 30 to 50 years, indicating that most participants embarked on their migration journeys in their twenties or early thirties. This aligns with existing literature on labour migration, which often highlights the commonness of young adults in transnational migration flows (Constant and Zimmermann, 2009; Milasi, 2020). The age range of our participants supports evidence from investigations like Awumbila et al. (2019), which noted that migrants of Ghanaian status to the Gulf are typically in their prime working years.

The variation in current ages and time spent abroad suggests different migration trajectories and experiences. Younger returnees may have faced unique challenges in terms of adaptation and skill development, while older returnees might have encountered age-related impediments in the labour market upon coming back. This diversity in age and experience is significant because it influences reintegration processes and outcomes, as noted by Setrana and Tonah (2014) in one of their many Ghanaian returnees' investigations. Also, a support literature revealed that migrants' life stages, since time of life or maturity level brings with it new

demands and desires (Knodel et al., 2007; Baldock, 2000). According to Mitchell and Wister. (2015), revealed that family-related factors strongly influenced, particularly the necessity of returning home to provide care for elderly or ageing family members.

Furthermore, the fact that some participants spent significant portions of their adult lives in the Gulf Region before returning to Ghana highlights the potential for substantial personal and professional development during migration. This extended period abroad may have implications for their social networks, skill acquisition, and cultural adaptation both in the Gulf and upon return, factors that Cassarino (2004) identified as crucial in shaping reintegration experiences. This nuanced understanding of the participants' current ages provides valuable insights into the long-term nature of their migration narratives and their subsequent acclimatization into the Madina community.

4.2.3 Ethnic Background of Interviewees

The respondents belonged to various ethnic groups, showcasing the multicultural nature of the sample. The ethnicities reported include Akan (13 respondents), comprising Fante (3), Akuapem (4), Akyem (1), and Asante Twi (5). The Ewe ethnic group was represented by 3 respondents, while 4 individuals identified as Ga-Adangbe (2 Ga and 2 Krobo). Additionally, there was 1 respondent from the Nzema ethnic group and 1 individual of mixed Ghanaian/Nigerian heritage. The sample also included 2 respondents who identified as being from northern Ghana and speaking Hausa. This diversity in ethnic backgrounds offer added perspective to the study, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the narratives of returned domestic workers across different cultural contexts. Understanding the varied perspectives stemming from diverse ethnic backgrounds contributes to a more nuanced interpretation of the subsequent findings. Research findings indicate that countries with diverse cultures may not always exhibit greater acceptance of further diversity through immigration. Surveys have

revealed that some ethnically diverse African nations demonstrate notably higher levels of resistance to immigration, as highlighted by Whitaker and Giersch (2015) may have dire consequences on reintegration. However, it can also be implied, one's ethnicity may influence his/her migration and reintegration upon return by understanding the complex dynamics of migration. Thus, this nuanced approach allows us to identify any ethnicity-specific factors that may influence successful reintegration, such as community reception, access to local resources, or cultural expectations upon return. Understanding these ethnic dimensions contributes to a more comprehensive analysis of the reintegration experiences of Ghanaian returnees from the Gulf Region.

4.2.4 Religious Background of Interviewees Prior and After Migration

The analysis of the religious background of interviewees before and after migration reveals a diverse range of experiences. Out of the total (24) respondents, eighteen (18) returnees maintained their Christian faith both before and after migration, indicating a consistent religious identity. However, there are notable cases (the remaining 6 returnees) where individuals experienced a change in religious affiliation after migration, particularly converting from Christianity to Islam. The reasons for religious conversion vary among respondents. Some cited work-related factors, such as the need to conform to the predominant religion in their host country. In contrast, others changed their religion as a form of disguise to navigate challenges in the host country. Additionally, there are instances where individuals converted to Islam upon arriving in the host country. This is what a respondent recounted:

Yes, my religion changed from Christian to Islam because of work. I need this job so badly to make means (In-depth interview, Mary, 35-year-old)

Other respondents also said:

Yes, I converted to Islam when I travelled. In fact, it was a personal decision I made to join the majority (In-depth interview, Mabel, 43-year-old)

... some individuals experience profound changes in their religious beliefs due to external influences such as exposure to different cultures and ideologies. Thus, you can easily secure a job when your prospect employee share the same religion with you... (In-depth interview, Brown, 47-year-old)

This aligns with the findings of Khashan (2016), who identifies Islam as the predominant religion in the Gulf States. Statistically, out of the 24 respondents, 6 individuals experienced a change in their religious affiliation after migration, representing lesser percentage of the sample. The majority, comprising 18 individuals (the larger percentage), did not undergo any change in their religious identity and maintained their faith before and after migration (of which only 2 out of the 18 were Muslims). In terms of their religious affiliation, Christians formed the majority before and after migration. This diversity in religious experiences underscores the complexity of the relationship between migration and religious identity. While some individuals undergo significant shifts in their religious affiliations due to external factors, others maintain continuity in their faith. The findings highlight the intersectionality of migration experiences, where religious identity interacts with various factors in the migration trajectory.

4.2.5 Educational Standing of Interviewees Prior and After Migration

The analysis of respondents' educational qualifications before and after migration reveals a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences. Before migration, respondents exhibited a variety of educational levels, including O level (form 3), H.N.D, Upper primary, S.H.S, Degree, and even those without any formal education. Out of the total, 19 respondents reported no change in their educational qualifications after migration, while the remaining five (5) returnees engaged in short courses. The current educational levels post-migration maintains the diversity observed before migration. Remarkably, their educational standing remained largely unaltered post-migration, indicating that the act of migration did not significantly impact their formal education. The overall educational attainment of the participants prior to migration was low,

potentially serving as a motivation for the migration of some returnees (Wassink and Viera, 2021). This could be attributed to the challenging prospect of securing well-paying jobs in Ghana without adequate qualifications (Antman, 2012; Wassink and Viera, 2021).

Additionally, the notable small number of respondents (5) that engaged in short courses or skill development activities after migration while maintaining their original qualifications, demonstrated a commitment to continuous learning and adaptability to new environments. This trend may signify a strategic effort to enhance employability and navigate the challenges associated with migration by acquiring supplementary skills. As indicated above, this is what one of the respondents narrated:

I realized that in order to improve my job prospects and adapt to the new environment, I needed to upgrade my skills. So, I enrolled in a short course on computer programming to complement my existing qualifications," explained one respondent. (In-depth interview, Paschal, 37-year-old)

4.2.6 Destinations in the Gulf Countries

Despite the labour market demand for workforces in nations like Jordan, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, respondents harboured individual concerns and reservations regarding their chosen countries of interest. The respondents in this study exhibited a diverse range of destination choices among various Gulf countries with Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE emerging as the primary choices, each driven by unique factors that shaped their migration decisions. The reasons cited by the respondents vary, reflecting a combination of economic opportunities, perceived job availability, and personal connections.

Economic considerations, such as job opportunities and the perceived wealth of the country, were pivotal factors, particularly evident in Kuwait (4 out of 24 respondents). Qatar (9 individuals) emerged as the most favoured destination out of the sampled population, with an influence from social networks and economic prospects. Saudi Arabia (8 respondents) attracted

respondents seeking financial support for their families, emphasizing familial responsibilities. According to Roland Berger (2023), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), despite attracting a smaller number of returnees (3 respondents) in the study, represented a destination for those seeking better economic opportunities. This appeal can be attributed to the UAE's rapid economic development, driven by elements like oil, tourism, and finance, which has conceived numerous work prospects.

4.2.7 Marital Status of Interviewees Prior and After Migration

The status of marriage of interviewees was considered due to its potential impact on the propensity to migrate. Before migration, the majority, comprising 14 of the total respondents, were single, while 5 respondents were dating, 3 returnees were already married, and the remaining 2 returnees did not have any applicable relationship status. After migration, there was a notable shift, with the majority, 14 respondents transitioning to a married status. Still, a considerable proportion (6 respondents) remained single, indicating diverse relationship trajectories. Three returnees reported being in a relationship or dating post-migration. The "Not Applicable" category (1 respondent) represents instances where respondents did not have a spouse or partner, underlining the varied marital experiences within the context of migration. Existing research, such as the work by Jacoben and Levin (2000), has indicated that unmarried individuals are more inclined to migrate compared to their married counterparts. The outcomes of this study align with such findings, reinforcing the correlation between marital status and the likelihood of migration among the returnees.

4.2.8 Types of Returnees and Years of Stay Associated with Interviewees

The assessment of the statistics on the type of returnees reveals distinct patterns among the respondents, providing insights into their migration experiences and motivations. Among the 24 participants, the majority (23 respondents) were categorized as voluntary returnees,

comprising individuals who returned to Ghana willingly after completing their work contracts or due to visa expirations. These voluntary returns were often driven by personal choices, such as family obligations or the desire to pursue other opportunities back home. For instance, some respondents expressed a preference for returning to Ghana to be closer to their families or to explore new career prospects. Below are the words of some respondents:

I decided to return to Ghana after my work contract expired in the Gulf Region. I had completed my assignment there, and I felt it was time to reunite with my family back home. While the experience abroad was valuable, I missed my loved ones and wanted to be closer to them. (In-depth interview, Seth, 46-year-old)

After I had work for some time and completed my studies abroad, I returned to Ghana voluntarily. While I had the option to stay and pursue further education or secure a more better employment opportunities, I felt a strong sense of attachment to my homeland and wanted to contribute to its development. Above all, I had saved some cash for a while. Returning also allowed me to reconnect with my cultural roots and family. (In-depth interview, Becca, 36-year-old)

I chose to return voluntarily after spending several years in the Gulf Region. My contract had ended, and while I could have sought another job there, I decided to come back to Ghana to explore opportunities closer to home. Family considerations also played a significant role in my decision. (In-depth interview, Kofi, 40-year-old)

In contrast, the analysis also identified one notable case of a forced returnee within the sample.

This forced returnee represents an individual who was compelled to return to Ghana due to circumstances beyond their control, specifically the expiration of their visa or work permit.

Forced returns underscore the complexities involved in migration and highlight the vulnerability of migrants to changes in legal and regulatory frameworks in host countries. For this particular respondent, the expiration of their stay necessitated their return to Ghana, regardless of their original intentions or plans. Specifically, below is what the respondent recounted:

I was forced to return to Ghana because my visa expired, and I couldn't renew it due to changes in immigration policies in the host country. It was a difficult situation because I had planned to stay longer and continue working, but the circumstances forced me to return earlier than anticipated. (In-depth interview, Robert, 35-year-old)

4.2.9 Interviewees' Occupational Status Prior and After Migration

Regarding the respondents' pre- and post-migration economic activities, out of the 24 respondents, 18 individuals reported a change in their occupation after migration, reflecting a substantial level of occupational mobility connected with the migration experience. The most common transformation observed was the establishment of personal businesses, with 12 respondents now owning their own shops or engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Before migration, diverse occupations such as spare parts seller, trader, hairdressing apprentice, and shop attendant were prevalent among the respondents. Noteworthy transitions include the establishment of personal businesses, such as owning shops for selling spare parts, shoes, second-hand clothes, and provisions. Additionally, some respondents shifted from employment to entrepreneurship, highlighting the entrepreneurial opportunities and upward mobility associated with migration. One respondent shared:

After migrating, my husband transitioned from being a shop attendant to owning his own spare parts shop. The move allowed us to have more control over our income and provided better financial stability for our family. (In-depth interview, Rose, 39-year-old)

Another respondent mentioned:

Before migrating, I worked as a hairdressing apprentice, but after moving back to Madina, I decided to start my own salon. Migration gave me the opportunity to pursue my entrepreneurial dreams and create a thriving business for myself. (In-depth interview, Claire, 42-year-old)

This variety suggests that migration has not only led to changes in occupation but has also facilitated entrepreneurship and the pursuit of diverse economic opportunities. While the majority experienced positive occupational shifts, some respondents (6 individuals) reported no change in their occupation after migration. This revelation suggests that migration doesn't always lead to occupational shifts, and for some, it might bring stability in their professional lives. Overall, the data underscores the dynamic nature of occupational trajectories influenced by migration experiences.

4.2.10 Family Dynamics Prior to Migration on Gulf Regions (Interviewees' Children and Welfare)

Migration has influenced and is also influenced by the family dynamics of the respondents, leading to changes in the number and well-being of their children. Therefore, information on the status of their children was ascertained. The analysis of the children's status before and after migration reveals diverse circumstances and outcomes among the respondents. Before migration, half of the surveyed population did not have children (12 individuals), while the other half had varying numbers of children. After migration, there was a noticeable growth in the count of children among the respondents, with some individuals having more children than before. Several respondents (12 individuals) reported an improvement in the well-being and living conditions of their children after migration. This positive change is reflected in statements such as:

....after migration, the children I currently have are all living well" and "after migration, things became a little better. (In-depth interview, Mary, 35-year-old)

After migrating, my children now have access to better educational opportunities and healthcare services. We were able to enroll them in a good school, and they are thriving academically and socially. (In-depth interview, Chris, 42-year-old)

Aside from the above-quoted narratives, similar sentiments were shared by another 12 respondents, highlighting the widespread positive impression of migration on the health and prospects of progenies, encompassing various dimensions of their lives, including education, healthcare, and overall welfare.

Conversely, a few respondents (4 individuals) mentioned challenges and hardships associated with their children's state before migration. However, these individuals indicated that the situation improved after migration. For instance, one respondent mentioned that:

Before migration, the state of my child was very bad, he barely had two square meals a day, but after migration, things became a little better. (In-depth interview, Jane, 39-year-old)

This also indicates that migration, for some, has led to an amelioration of socio-economic conditions affecting their children.

4.3 Pre-Migration Condition

The pre-migration conditions form a crucial dimension in understanding the intricate dynamics that led individuals to set out on trips to the Gulf Region. This section delves into the circumstances surrounding respondents' personal status, family/household conditions, and community context before their migration. Analysing the variables that impacted their decisions to journey, the financial mechanisms employed for the trip, and the means of transportation to the host country provides valuable insights into the nature of pre-migration experiences. Additionally, examining whether respondents sought assistance or support for their travels unveils the network of resources and connections that played a role in shaping their migration trajectories. Through a detailed analysis of the gathered data, this exploration unravels the diverse pre-migration conditions that set the stage for the respondents' journeys to the Gulf Region.

4.3.1 Information Streams Prior to Migration on Gulf Regions

The examination of information streams preceding migration to the Gulf Region showcases a wide array of sources that informed individuals about migration opportunities. Notably, a number of respondents (16 individuals) pointed to friends as their primary source of information. Peer networks proved instrumental in conveying details about migration prospects, underscoring the influence of social circles in shaping individuals' migration decisions. Furthermore, family connections, including siblings and relatives, were identified by a smaller subset of respondents (2 individuals) as influential sources. This highlights the role of familial ties in disseminating information and potentially influencing migration choices within close-knit social networks.

In addition to interpersonal relationships, advertisements emerged as noteworthy sources of information on Gulf Region migration. Both traditional forms of advertising and promotions through recruitment agencies were identified by a notable proportion of respondents (6 individuals). These advertisements likely served as informative channels, offering insights into job opportunities, potential earnings, and conditions of living in the Gulf countries. Their prominence suggests the effectiveness of promotional strategies in reaching prospective migrants and shaping their perceptions of migration opportunities. Some respondents said:

.....through friends ('boyz boyz' as they will call it). Yeah, it was more like casual conversations. They mentioned that going abroad could lead to better prospects. We didn't delve deep into details, but their enthusiasm and success stories influenced my decision to explore migration. (In-depth interview, Kweku, 39-year-old)

My brother had previously migrated to the Gulf Region for employment, and he encouraged me to consider it as well. He provided valuable insights into the application process, the working conditions, and the potential earnings. His guidance and encouragement played a significant role in my decision to pursue migration. (In-depth interview, Jude, 38-year-old)

Another also opined:

I came across advertisements in local newspapers and online platforms promoting job opportunities in the Gulf Region. These advertisements highlighted the potential for higher wages and better living conditions, which sparked my interest in exploring migration as an option for employment. (In-depth interview, Chris, 42-year-old)

I attended a seminar organized by a recruitment agency that specialized in overseas employment. The seminar provided comprehensive information about the migration process, including visa procedures, job prospects, and living arrangements in the Gulf countries. The insights gained from the seminar influenced my decision to pursue migration. (In-depth interview, Becca, 36-year-old)

4.3.2 Agency-Agent Migration Assistance Before Departure to Gulf Regions

In their pursuit of migration, respondents actively seek support, encompassing elements such as prayers, financial aid, and advice from individuals they perceive as significant in their lives.

Before embarking on the migration journey, among the entire pool of participants in this research study, individuals actively engage with various forms of assistance and guidance. The evaluation of the gathered data regarding the facilitators of migration reveals a varied set of

influencers. The predominant facilitator identified is recruitment agencies, with 13 respondents of the total respondents relying on these agencies to navigate the migration process. This reliance suggests a trend of individuals seeking professional assistance and guidance in pursuing opportunities abroad. The boyfriend, self-initiation, friends, and family members, such as a sister's husband, also emerge as influencers in the migration process. Notably, the involvement of recruitment agencies underscores the role of organized channels in facilitating migration, providing a structured pathway for individuals. However, the inclusion of self-facilitation and influence from personal connections highlights the diverse and sometimes informal nature of migration decision-making. This is what some returnees opined:

I am that someone who was determined to migrate to UAE, and faced with challenges in obtaining legal means, he resorted to stowaway. I secretly hid himself on a cargo ship, navigating the risks of illegal entry. This desperate attempt reflected the lengths individuals might go to in order to seek opportunities in the Gulf, even resorting to unconventional and unauthorized methods. (In-depth interview, James, 39-year-old)

I relied on a recruitment agency to help me navigate the process of finding employment in the Gulf Region. They provided valuable guidance and assistance throughout the entire process. (In-depth interview, Kofi, 40-year-old)

My sister's husband works in the Gulf Region, and he helped me connect with potential employers and navigate the logistical aspects of migration. His guidance was invaluable in making the transition smoother. (In-depth interview, Jude, 38-year-old)

4.3.3 Conditions that Motivated Participants to Migrate to Host Country (The Gulf)

The analysis of respondents' accounts regarding the conditions of their personal status, family/household, and community before migration unveils a spectrum of challenges and motivations that influenced their decision to seek opportunities in the Gulf Region. Sixteen out of the overall respondents expressed dire economic situations within their families. Financial constraints, difficulty in affording basic necessities, and the impact on education were recurrent themes. For instance, one respondent highlighted the financial struggles, stating;

The conditions at home were very bad, things weren't that easy for my family and me. My sisters had to drop out of school because we could no longer afford their fees..... (In-depth interview, Kofi, 40-year-old)

This narrative emphasizes the profound economic hardships that compelled individuals to explore migration as a means to alleviate financial burdens.

The data also reveals variations in community contexts, with mentions of limited job opportunities for the youth and challenging living conditions. This underscores the lack of viable options in the local community, prompting individuals to seek better prospects abroad.

Evidence is what a respondent noted;

I came from a community where the youth didn't have anything better to do, you will have to fight for yourself to make things work for you. (In-depth interview, Ato, 41-year-old)

While some individuals described their situations as "manageable" or "moderate," others faced severe hardships, living hand-to-mouth. The disparities in economic conditions highlight the complex factors that contribute to migration decisions, encompassing both push and pull factors. To further illustrate, another respondent explained as this highlights the intersectionality of familial responsibilities and the impact of personal tragedies, driving individuals to seek opportunities abroad, recounted;

Errmm Hmhhh the conditions at home weren't that good. Things became very tough after the death of my father, and since I was the only male child, a lot of burden was on me, especially to take care of my little sisters. (In-depth interview, Gideon, 38-year-old)

Transitioning from the conditions that motivated participants to migrate, the analysis now delves into the circumstances that influenced respondents to drift to Gulf countries. The analysis of factors that influenced respondents to voyage to Gulf regions reveals an interplay of economic hardships, social influences, and individual aspirations. The qualitative data provides rich insights into the motivations behind the choice to drift to the Gulf Region, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of these influences. A common theme emerges from their accounts, with several individuals attributing their migration to the dire economic conditions they faced at home. One respondent succinctly captured this sentiment, stating;

Financial challenges, there was no money. I was also the one who had to take care of the home, and my job was not generating enough income. Desperate to turn the situation of the family, I began the search for a greener pasture. Recommended by some friends in the Qatar and Kuwait, I had a enough reason to migrate to make good money to provide for the family back home here in Ghana. And I must say, all my natives I met here while in Qatar did mention, they needed to take this advantage to meet ends for the family... (In-depth interview, Chairty, 40-year-old)

This quote underscores the pivotal role of economic struggles in propelling individuals to seek opportunities abroad. By expressing the financial hardships, they experienced and the inadequacy of their income to sustain their families, respondents reveal how these challenges served as compelling motivations for them to explore migration as a means of improving their financial prospects. Thus, the quote and the broader theme of financial difficulties within respondents' narratives collectively support the motivations for migrating to Gulf countries, highlighting the critical role those economic considerations played in shaping their migration decisions.

According to the responses of the respondents, social influences and peer networks must also be considered as other influencing elements behind their journey to the Gulf countries. The influence of social connections, including those who had migrated before, such as peers and relatives, played a significant role. Peer influence is evident in responses such as,

My friends were one major reason why I wanted to travel because they told me about the opportunities they had encountered in the Gulf countries. They shared stories of lucrative job prospects, better living conditions, and the chance to save money for the future. Their enthusiastic descriptions of life abroad sparked my interest and planted the seed of possibility in my mind. Their firsthand accounts painted a vivid picture of the potential for success and growth that awaited me in the Gulf, motivating me to pursue migration as a means to improve my circumstances and build a better future for myself. (In-depth interview, Jane, 39-year-old)

A family member who had migrated to the Gulf countries before me spoke highly of the job opportunities and financial stability they found there. Their positive experiences encouraged me to pursue migration as well. (In-depth interview, Ato, 41-year-old)

I had always dreamed of traveling and experiencing different cultures. Migration to the Gulf countries, suggested by a friend who is already there, presented an exciting

opportunity for me to explore new horizons and broaden my perspectives. (In-depth interview, Mary, 35-year-old)

The above narratives reflect the impact of peer influence on individuals' motivations to migrate, suggesting that the experiences and insights shared by friends served as catalysts for considering migration as a viable option. Therefore, beyond economic considerations, the provocation of social ties, particularly friends and family members (desire to join friends or family members), emerges as another significant motivating factor for individuals' migration decision to Gulf countries.

Moreover, family pressures and responsibilities cannot be ignored. Family-related factors, including responsibilities and the desire to support family members, emerged as key influencers. This indicates a sense of familial responsibility and the hope or dream to upgrade the overall well-being of the family through migration. A respondent expressed;

... my ambitions, I wanted a better life for myself. I didn't want to end up like my elderly brother. I pledged to explore all options to make it and the opportunity to the gulf country presented itself..... (In-depth interview, Kofi, 40-year-old)

Moreover, the quest for better opportunities and a more prosperous life, commonly referred to as seeking "greener pastures," was a recurring theme. Respondents cited the aspiration for a better life, improved financial prospects, and the opportunity to escape challenging living conditions. This is what a respondent opined;

I wanted to travel for greener pastures and also my friends were also traveling [Gulf countries], so I also wanted to join the team. (In-depth interview, Robert, 35-year-old)

Overall, financial challenges serve as a significant push factor, while social networks, family responsibilities, and the pursuit of better opportunities contribute to the decision-making

process. The cited responses provide specific instances that reinforce the broader trends observed in the qualitative data.

4.3.4 Respondents' Funding Sources to the Gulf Regions

The common subject that surfaced from the gathered information was that the majority of the respondents (12 individuals) financed their trips through recruitment agencies. This finding suggests a reliance on intermediaries who facilitate the migration process, presumably handling logistics and arrangements in exchange for payment. Recruitment agencies play a crucial role in connecting migrants with job opportunities abroad and facilitating the necessary paperwork and travel arrangements. For many respondents, the assistance provided by these agencies is indispensable in navigating the complexities of migration. The prevalence of recruitment agency involvement underscores the significance of organized channels in facilitating migration. It reflects the challenges faced by individuals in independently arranging their migration journeys and highlights the role of intermediaries in streamlining the process. Additionally, the reliance on recruitment agencies may also indicate the financial constraints experienced by many individuals, leaving them with no alternative but to depend on these agencies for assistance. Below are some recounts from respondents:

I had to go through a recruitment agency to secure my job and handle all the paperwork. They made the process much easier for me, although it came at a cost. (In-depth interview, Paschal, 37-year-old)

I didn't have enough savings to cover all the expenses of migration, so I had to rely on a recruitment agency to arrange everything for me. It was the only option I had. (In-depth interview, Robert, 35-year-old)

Also, some respondents mentioned self-financing (4 individuals), drawing from their personal savings to cover the costs of migration. This reflects a level of individual agency and financial preparedness among migrants. A respondent opined:

I would say, I had saved up enough money for years to finance my migration opportunity. I wanted to have control over the process and not rely on anyone else. It

was challenging, but it gave me a sense of independence. I must say, it wasn't easy, but I did my best! (In-depth interview, Mary, 35-year-old)

The role of friends and acquaintances (8 individuals) in supporting the migration endeavors is notable. Instances where friends, boyfriends, or acquaintances assisted financially highlight the social networks that contribute to the funding process. It also signifies a collaborative effort within communities or personal circles to enable migration, showcasing the interconnectedness of individuals' journeys. This is what a respondent noted:

My friend lent me some money to cover the initial expenses. Without their support, I wouldn't have struggled to succeed in this journey. (In-depth interview, Niha, 38-year-old)

It is also noteworthy that in certain cases, respondents mentioned repaying the agencies or individuals who initially funded their trips after securing employment in the host country. Some respondents shared:

I promised to repay my friend once I started earning. It was a gesture of gratitude for their support during a challenging time. (In-depth interview, Sena, 40-year-old)

It was important for me to honor my commitment to repay the agency that helped me secure my job in the Gulf. They took a risk by investing in me, and I wanted to demonstrate my gratitude and responsibility by repaying them once I started earning. (In-depth interview, Jane, 39-year-old)

The above narratives underscore the economic transactional nature of migration, where individuals may incur debts as part of the process. Whether through agencies, personal savings, or support from social connections, respondents employ diverse strategies to navigate the financial aspects of their journeys. Overall, this diversity underscores the complexity of the migration experience, and the various pathways individuals take to realize their aspirations abroad.

4.3.5 Means of Transportation Chosen by Respondents

The means of transportation chosen by the respondents again varied, with the predominant mode being air travel. A significant number of participants mentioned that they reached the host country by plane. This aligns with the common practice of international migration, especially for long distances. The decision to use air travel is often influenced by factors such as speed, convenience, and the desire for a direct and efficient journey. One respondent, however, mentioned a unique and unconventional means of transportation – by ship through stowaway. This individual described a challenging journey of hiding in a ship destined for Kuwait. Such cases highlight the desperation and resourcefulness of some migrants who face financial difficulties and resort to unconventional methods to reach their destination. Lastly, no respondent transited to the Gulfs through land.

The assistance and support sought by the respondents for their travels mixt. Some individuals mentioned relying on friends, family members, or partners for financial support. In contrast, most of the interviewees mentioned the involvement of recruitment agencies in facilitating their travel. This diversity in support mechanisms reflects the nature of migration decisions, where individuals may seek assistance from multiple sources based on their circumstances. For instance, one participant mentioned:

By plane... Yes, from my friend Bismark. (In-depth interview, Gideon, 38-year-old)

This illustrates the reliance on both personal networks and air travel. Another participant stated:

By ship (stowaway)... Not really, financially no support but sought help from one of my friends who worked in the ship. (In-depth interview, Kweku, 39-year-old)

This case exemplifies the unconventional means of transportation and the reliance on personal connections for assistance.

4.4 Key Discussions, Conclusions, and Chapter Summary

The socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewees showcased a gender-balanced representation as samples were purposively selected, with participants from diverse ethnic backgrounds and varying educational levels. This diversity aligns with the impulse that migration is not exclusive to a specific gender or socio-economic group, but rather a phenomenon that cuts across various segments of society (De Haas, 2010).

The pre-migration conditions and factors that facilitated the exodus of household workers to the Gulf Region underscore the manifold nature of migration decision-making. Economic hardships, social influences, and personal aspirations emerged as key drivers, reflecting the interplay of push and pull dynamics (Lee, 1966). The responsibility of recruitment agencies and social ties in the narratives of migration highlights the significance of intermediaries and information flows in shaping migration decisions (Awumbila et al., 2019).

The living conditions and sufferings confronted by domestic workers in the Gulf Region, including exploitation and abuse, resonate with contemporary studies and scholarly works on the vulnerabilities of subjects in the region (Fernandez, 2020; Tayah & Assaf, 2018). The findings underscore the need for enhanced protection mechanisms and regulatory frameworks to uphold the rights and welfare of migrant workers (ILO, 2019).

The push-pull framework helps contextualize the economic, social, and personal factors that drive migration decisions (Lee, 1966). Transnationalism highlights the ongoing connections and exchanges between migrants and their home communities (De Haas, 2003; Portes et al., 1999), while social network model points out the function of social ties in facilitating migration and shaping reintegration experiences (Cassarino, 2004). Structuralism, on the other hand, draws attention to the structural circumstances in both source and receiving nations that influence migration outcomes (Cassarino, 2004). The findings also advance the field of

knowledge on the migration narratives of domestic workers with Ghanaian status in the Gulf Region. While previous investigative papers have explored numerous sides of this phenomenon (Awumbila et al., 2019; IOM, 2019), this research highlights a nuanced understanding of the pre-migration and migration narratives, uncovering the factors that mold migration decisions, and the challenges encountered in the destination countries.

Case Study One: From being a Stowaway to Becoming a Shop Owner

In this case study, I present a summary of Ebenezer's migration trajectories and reintegration into his community. Ebenezer's experiences highlight the challenges, sacrifices, and personal growth associated with migration and reintegration of returned migrants in Ghana.

Ebenezer Akwah, a 39-year-old resident of Madina, a densely populated area in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. With only a Form 4 education, his options were limited. At the time, Ebenezer was in a relationship with a woman who sold bread by the roadside. They had two children but providing for the family on their meagre incomes was a constant challenge. Ebenezer learned about migration opportunities to Kuwait through friends who had gone before him and spoke of the potential to earn much more money there. The idea of being able to better support his family was extremely appealing. At the age of 27, Ebenezer made the difficult decision to leave Ghana in quest of improved economic prospects. Conversely, lacking the funds to pay for a legitimate work visa and travel expenses, Ebenezer made the risky choice to migrate illegally. He managed to stow away on a ship bound for Kuwait, hiding himself to avoid detection during the long journey.

Upon arrival in Kuwait, Ebenezer faced immediate hardships as an undocumented migrant. With no legal status or work permit, he was forced to sleep under a train station for days, surviving by helping passengers with their luggage in exchange for small amounts of money for food and water. He resided in constant fear and anxiety about being apprehended by authorities and deported.

Eventually, Ebenezer's luck changed when one of the passengers he had assisted offered him work as a gardener. While the pay was low and the work physically demanding, it provided some stability and allowed him to send small amounts of money back to his family in Ghana. Over time, he was able to secure a residence permit, which eased some of his anxieties about his precarious legal status.

For 10 years, Ebenezer worked various low-wage jobs in Kuwait, primarily as a labourer and gardener. The work was often gruelling, with long hours in the intense heat. He faced discrimination and occasionally verbal abuse from employers who viewed migrant workers as disposable. There were times he considered giving up and returning to Ghana, but the thought of his family depending on his remittances kept him going.

During his time abroad, Ebenezer's family situation back home evolved. He eventually married his girlfriend, and they had four more children together. While the separation was difficult, he felt the sacrifice was worth it to provide his family with a better life. His wife was able to

expand her bread-selling business with the income he transferred home, and they succeeded to send all their children to school.

After a decade in Kuwait, Ebenezer decided it was time to return to Ghana. At 37 years old, he felt he was far apart from his family due to the demands of his work. He had managed to save a decent amount of money and wanted to be present as his children grew up. Additionally, changes to Kuwait's labour and immigration policies were making life increasingly difficult for migrant workers.

Returning to Ghana after so long away presented its own set of challenges for Ebenezer. While happy to be reunited with his family, he struggled to readjust to life in Madina. The community had changed significantly in his absence. His children, some of whom were born after he left, were practically strangers to him. His wife had grown accustomed to managing the household independently. Ebenezer sometimes felt like an outsider in his own home.

Economically, Ebenezer faced hurdles in reestablishing himself. His years of experience in Kuwait did not easily translate to the Ghanaian job market. Eventually, drawing on the capital he had saved and his experiences abroad, he decided to open his own small provision shop. While business was slow at first, it gradually picked up. Ebenezer found satisfaction in being his own boss and contributing directly to his local community.

The process of reintegration has been gradual for Ebenezer. He has had to rebuild relationships with family and old friends. Sometimes he struggles with feelings of having missed out on important years of his children's lives. However, he also recognizes that his sacrifice allowed them educational opportunities they may not have had otherwise.

Ebenezer's health has been another area of concern since his return. Years of hard physical labour have taken a toll on his body. He also experienced periods of depression and anxiety as he grappled with all the changes in his life. Fortunately, he has found support through his local church community and a men's group for returned migrants.

Looking back on his migration experience, Ebenezer has mixed feelings. While he is proud of his ability to support his family and ultimately start his own business, he regrets the years of separation and the hardships he endured as an undocumented worker. He is grateful to be home but sometimes still feels caught between two worlds.

When asked about future migration aspirations, Ebenezer is firm in his desire to remain in Ghana. "I am too old now to travel again," he says. "I want to focus on my business and my family." He hopes his story can serve as both a cautionary tale and an inspiration to young Ghanaians considering migration. Ebenezer emphasizes the importance of migrating through proper legal channels and having a clear plan for eventual return and reintegration.

Today, at 39, Ebenezer is focused on growing his provision shop business and repairing his relationships with his now-adult children. While the journey has been difficult, he feels that he is finally where he belongs, contributing to his community and enjoying the fruits of his many years of labour abroad.

This chapter captures the insights gained from the beforehand of migration and the aftermath migration experiences of domestic workers of Ghanaian status in the Gulf Region as socio-economic factors, personal aspirations, and structural conditions are notable players to shaping their migration. Themes such as diverse socio-demographics, varied decision-making

influenced by economic hardships and social networks, and the challenges of exploitation underscore the necessity for improved protection mechanisms.



CHAPTER FIVE

RETURN, REINTEGRATION AND RE-MIGRATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces a detailed analysis of the discoveries related to the return, reintegration, as well as re-migration experiences of Ghanaian domestic workers who had migrated to the Gulf Region. Building upon the previous chapter's exploration of pre-migration and migration experiences, this section discusses the complex subtleties of the returnees' lives after their return to Ghana. The chapter is structured around three main themes: factors facilitating the domestic workers' return to their home country, social experiences of interviewees with families and society after reintegration, and livelihood strategies employed by returnees. By examining these themes, this section of the text seeks to offer a thorough examination of the obstacles and prospects encountered by returning migrants as they work through the reintegration process.

5.2 Factors that Facilitate Domestic Workers' Return to their Home Country

The exploration of circumstances that facilitate the comeback of domestic workers to their home country is a crucial aspect of understanding the dynamics of returnees' migration. The current academic discourse on return migration indicates that the factors influencing migrants' decisions to return can have consequences that are either favorable or unfavorable for their reintegration into their home communities (Gmelch, 1980; King, 1986, 2000). This chapter delves into the influences and conditions that contribute to the conclusion of individuals to back by the way of their home countries after working in the Gulf Region. By examining these factors, we gain insights into the complexities of the migration experience, elucidating the motivations, struggles, and circumstances that shape the return journeys of domestic workers.

The narratives shared by participants offer valuable perspectives on the various elements that are key to the decision-making procedure leading to their eventual return home.

5.2.1 Living Conditions of Returnees in the Hosting Gulf Country

The majority of interviewees detailed substantial hardships in their living conditions upon reaching the host country. The aspiration for a better life and a refuge from challenges in their home country became nearly unattainable in light of the stark realities they encountered. Instances of inadequate sleeping arrangements leading to deprivation of rest, lack of proper accommodation, and even threats of sexual and verbal harassment, unpaid allowances were reported. This suggests a significant discrepancy between the perceived opportunities in the Gulf Region and the actual challenges confronted by the returnees. The push-pull framework helps contextualize the economic, social, and personal factors that drive migration decisions (Lee, 1966). Transnationalism highlights the ongoing connections and exchanges between migrants and their home communities (De Haas, 2003; Portes et al., 1999), while social network model points out the contribution of social ties in facilitating the journeys as well as shaping reintegration experiences (Cassarino, 2004). Structuralism, on the other hand, draws attention to the structural dynamics in both source and target regions that influence migration outcomes (Cassarino, 2004). The findings also advance the field of knowledge on the migration narratives of Ghanaian expatriate household workers in the Gulf Region. While previous learnings have explored different facets of this happening (Awumbila et al., 2019; IOM, 2019), this study supplies a nuanced understanding of the pre-migration and migration narratives, elucidating the factors that guide migration decisions, and the challenges encountered in the destination countries. One of the domestic workers recounted:

Upon my arrival in the host country, things were very difficult. My employer was very bad towards me, where I slept wasn't good at all, and I wasn't eating well. I wasn't used to their kind of food, and I also couldn't afford the local meal. (In-depth interview, Niha, 38-year-old)

The living conditions were very bad; I did all kinds of odd jobs. I had to wake up early to work. Challenges faced include accommodation, sleeping in the streets, low income, and going through starvation, not getting two square meals a day. (In-depth interview, Robert, 35-year-old)

This emphasizes the vulnerability and challenging circumstances that many domestic workers had to endure. The pursuit of a brighter future, which initially seemed promising, was met with the harsh reality of adverse conditions. This narrative emphasizes the immediate challenges related to sleeping arrangements, lack of proper accommodation, and inadequate nutrition, highlighting the vulnerability of domestic workers in the initial stages of migration. These findings resonate with the works of scholars who have posited that most returnees are exposed to sexual and verbal abuse, are deprived of their allowances, and face issues of accommodation (Teming-Amoako, 2018; Zachariah et al., 2001; Minaye, 2012; Anbesse et al., 2009; Wickramage et al., 2017). These underscore difficulties faced by these individuals, contradicting their expectations of finding a more favourable situation abroad. Another respondent shared a distressing experience, stating:

Upon arrival, I found the living conditions to be dire. I had no proper place to sleep, and my employer's brother constantly harassed me, making inappropriate comments and gestures. This made me feel extremely unsafe, and I had to find shelter elsewhere for a significant period. Additionally, I often went without meals, as my employer frequently neglected to provide me with adequate food, forcing me to endure many nights of hunger. (In-depth interview, Paa Kwesi, 38-year-old)

The narratives consistently highlighted challenges related to maltreatment and a lack of respect from employers. Numerous respondents recounted instances of disrespect and ill-treatment, significantly impacting their emotional well-being and living conditions. The spectrum of experiences extended from verbal abuse to explicit threats of sexual harassment. A respondent vividly expressed the emotional distress caused by disrespectful treatment, stating:

mannya no faala saa ... it wasn't easy. The living conditions were very bad. And the challenges I faced was that the people I worked for had no regard for me. My living

conditions wasn't easy (people even asked to have sex with me but I didn't agree, 'hw3! It wasn't easy! (In-depth interview, Grace, 41-year-old)

Another respondent revealed the threatening situation they faced, with their boss's husband making sexual advances, illustrating the disturbing extent of the challenges encountered. She recounted:

... the living conditions was very bad. I didn't get a good place to sleep, and my boss's husband made funny advances, in fact tried severally to have sex with me, so I had to run from where I was to seek for refuge in another place for a whole 3 months. There, to have a proper meal to eat was another issue and my employer didn't always give me food. Many at times, I had to go to bed without eating (In-depth interview, Niha, 38-year-old)

Also, several respondents lamented over the significant challenges in obtaining medical assistance. One of the domestic workers opined:

Sadly, on this faithful afternoon, I was feeling feverish and couldn't get anyone to assist me to get me to the hospital. My boss didn't care! And the salary I receive was nothing to write home about. I cannot afford the bills [teary] but I survived till I return. (In-depth interview, Vincent, 44-year-old)

Unarguably, financial challenges played a significant role in shaping the living conditions of the respondents. Limited income, difficulty in finding better-paying jobs, and struggles to afford basic necessities like food and shelter, medical care were common themes. Some resorted to odd jobs or faced starvation due to financial constraints.

On the positive side, there were instances where respondents reported relatively better living conditions. Those who encountered more favorable work environments, were often facilitated by supportive agencies with strong worker protections under Government licensing and accreditation, experienced improved circumstances. Support from employers, understanding

the local language, and having legal documentation were factors that contributed to improved living conditions for some respondents. During the interviews, following are some of the narratives or responses from the respondents:

... upon arrival I was assigned to a very good employer so things were really okay for me and besides I understood their language so I was really treated well. (In-depth interview, Mary, 35-year-old)

Upon my arrival the living conditions wasn't that bad because I came with an agency who linked me to a good employer so I didn't face any challenge throughout my stay. (In-depth interview, Seth, 46-year-old)

At a point the living conditions were very good since it was an agency that recruited me and I had a very good employer but after I was done with my term of service with my previous employer and was given to another, the living conditions became very bad because of the maltreatment I faced.... (In-depth interview, Mabel, 43-year-old)

The shift in living conditions experienced by the respondent reflects an opposing pattern observed among domestic workers who migrate through agencies. Initially, when the individual is placed with a supportive agency and a considerate employer, the living conditions may be relatively favourable. However, the narrative takes a turn when the respondent completes their term of service with the initial employer and is assigned to another. In contrast, while some respondents encounter deterioration in living conditions due to maltreatment faced in the new placement, others may experience continuity or even improvement. This variability in experiences underscores the uncertainty faced by domestic workers, especially when transitioning between employers or households. For instance, a respondent noted the continuation of positive treatment after changing employers, stating:

... despite transitioning to a new employer after my term of service is overdue, my living conditions remained satisfactory, and I continued to receive support and fair treatment from my new employer and household. (In-depth interview, Seth, 46-year-old)

The previous shift in circumstances highlights the susceptibility of some returnees, especially when transitioning between employers or households but cannot be generalized for all. Overall,

this opposing perspective highlights the diverse outcomes encountered by returnees, suggesting that not all experience a decline in living conditions after transitioning to a new placement.

5.2.2 Legal Status and Fear of Deportation

The respondents in this study underscored the profound influence of legal status and the fear of deportation on their decision to return home. For many, the absence of a legal working document posed a significant challenge, not only hindering their ability to work legally but also heightening the risk of deportation. This fear of legal repercussions, including the potential loss of acquired assets over the years, emerged as a compelling factor in their decision-making process. This resonates with the findings of previous studies, such as those by Gutema (2019) and Gikuru (2013), which highlight deportation-related stress and fear as key reasons for return migration from host countries. Indeed, the response of host countries towards migrants can profoundly influence their choice to either remain or return (Rajulton, 1991), as evidenced by the experiences shared by the respondents in this study.

The major factors that influenced my return was me not having a legal working document and I had also missed my family very much so I wanted to come back home and since my document had expired, I didn't want to be deported and end up losing everything that I had acquired for the past years. (In-depth interview, Kweku, 39-year-old)

I lived in constant fear of being caught without proper documents. It wasn't just about losing my job; it was about losing everything I had worked for over the years. (In-depth interview, Brown, 47-year-old)

This situation emphasizes the vulnerability faced by migrants when their legal status is precarious. The respondents' experiences underscore the critical role that legal status plays in shaping migration decisions, reflecting the broader challenges and uncertainties associated with the legal frameworks governing migrant workers in the Gulf countries.

5.2.3 Cultural and Religious Differences

The findings regarding cultural and religious differences reveal that these factors played a role in influencing the decision of some respondents to migrate back to their home countries. One respondent, in particular, emphasized the challenges associated with adapting to a different culture and religion. The respondent mentioned changing from Christianity to Islam, including adopting a new name, which was a cultural and religious shift that they found difficult to cope with. Evidence from the interviews with some domestic workers are:

“..... um ... Religion, was also another factor because I had to change from a Christian to a Muslim and also change my name to Fati which I didn't like but had no option. I couldn't cope with that religious culture. Not to even think twice about it, I made up my mind to return to Ghana. Here in Ghana, I feel liberated from this bondage of religion of theirs.....” (In-depth interview, Sena, 40-year-old)

... the Islamic religion was one factor since I was a Christian I couldn't cope with their tradition and beliefs and, thus I couldn't cope with it anymore so I had to come back home. (In-depth interview, Paa Kwesi, 38-year-old)

This cultural and religious mismatch contributed to their eagerness to return home, highlighting the profound impact of cultural and religious factors on the well-being and decision-making of migrant workers in the Gulf countries. The struggles associated with assimilating into a new cultural and religious environment emerge as crucial elements shaping the migration experience of these individuals. Overall, cultural and religious differences played a pivotal role in respondents' decisions to return. The challenges associated with adapting to a new culture and religion, including changes in name and religious practices, created a sense of discomfort and contributed to the decision to return home.

5.2.4 Family Reunion

Family reunion emerged as another factor this investigation on domestic returnee workers in the Gulf countries cannot ignore. Respondents consistently cited the desire to reunite with their

families as a compelling reason for returning to their home countries. This theme reflects the importance of familial bonds and the impact they have on migration decisions. Some respondents expressed:

My family is all I have and for those years in Qatar, I prayed for a time like this. I had always wanted a sign to indicate that it was time for me to go back home. My Boss finally had to move to another with his family. While my employer's relocation to another country necessitated my return, I also took this opportunity to fulfill a personal wish of coming back to Ghana. I missed my family greatly! (In-depth interview, Jane, 39-year-old)

I had spent so many years, so I had to come back to take care of my mum. She was ageing and I really wanted to come down and spend the remaining years she had with her. (In-depth interview, Seth, 46-year-old)

These responses highlight the intertwined nature of family dynamics and employment circumstances, where changes in the employer's situation prompted the respondents to consider returning home. Family serves as a crucial support system, and the absence of familial connections in the host country was a common challenge faced by domestic workers. The longing to be with family, especially children and aging parents, became a powerful motivator for return migration. The decision to prioritize family reunion is deeply rooted in the social fabric and personal values of the migrants. This aligns with existing empirical evidence on Ghanaian return migrants, which suggests that social and family-related reasons are of particular importance (Yendaw, 2013). The desire to reunite with family and friends, longing to be with children and aging parents often coupled with feelings of homesickness, can outweigh the potential economic benefits of continued migration (Ammassari & Black, 2001; Yendaw et al., 2017). These findings further resonate with studies on internal return migrants in other contexts, such as those conducted by Piotrowski and Tong (2010) in rural Thailand and Hirvonen and Lilleør (2015) in Tanzania.

5.2.5 Health Concerns

The narratives of respondents further revealed various health-related challenges they faced during their stay, contributing to their decision to return home. A respondent highlighted:

The nature of my work made me want to migrate back to Ghana because it was very stressful and tiring. (In-depth interview, Aisha, 37-year-old)

This statement underscores the physical toll that certain types of work took on the health of domestic workers. Long working hours, strenuous tasks, and challenging conditions contributed to health concerns, prompting individuals to reconsider their stay. The harsh living conditions reported by some respondents further exacerbated health issues. Instances of inadequate sleeping arrangements, lack of proper accommodation, and threats of sexual harassment not only affected mental well-being but also posed risks to physical health. Limited access to healthcare services was another common challenge cited by returnees. Some reported being unable to afford medical bills or facing difficulties in accessing medical assistance when needed. This lack of resources to access healthcare support added to the overall health concerns during their migration journey. These are what some of the returnees recounted:

I struggled to get medical help when I fell ill because I couldn't afford the bills. It was a constant worry, knowing that I didn't have easy access to healthcare when I needed it the most. (In-depth interview, Grace, 41-year-old)

I had to forgo medical treatment for minor illnesses because I couldn't afford it. It was frustrating and worrying, especially knowing that my health was at stake. (In-depth interview, Paa Kwesi, 38-year-old)

The findings of Zachariah, Nair, and Rajan (2001) align with the assertion, indicating that return migration is predominantly influenced by health-related issues, contract expiration, and dissatisfaction with job conditions. Return migrants commonly cited experiences of verbal, physical, and sexual abuse as contributing factors for their decision to return to their home countries.

5.2.6 Entrepreneurial Aspirations

Another noteworthy theme that emerged from the analysis of respondents' narratives is the influence of entrepreneurial aspirations on the decision to return to their home country. Several respondents expressed a desire to establish their own businesses as a motivating factor for their return migration. A respondent emphasized the importance of returning to Ghana to establish a business with the savings accumulated during their time abroad. In the domestic worker's word:

None of the situations above made me want to return home. I returned home because I had missed my husband and children and I had also made enough money that will help me start up my own business when I return. I was so eager to set a business of my own as I have learnt enough from these abroad people. (In-depth interview, Claire, 42-year-old)

The pursuit of entrepreneurial opportunities was seen as a means of gaining economic independence and creating a sustainable livelihood. This aspiration reflects the agency and resilience of some returnees, as they sought to transition from being migrant workers to entrepreneurs.

This resonates with the notion that some migrants view migration not only as a means of employment but also as a strategy to accumulate capital for future entrepreneurial endeavors (Ammassari, 2004). The decision to return for entrepreneurial reasons indicates a strategic and forward-thinking approach to migration, where individuals leverage their experiences and savings to pursue economic ventures in their home country. Entrepreneurship, in this context, serves as a driving force for return migration, highlighting the dual role of migrants as economic contributors in both host and home countries. While the challenges faced abroad may have influenced their decision to return, the prospect of venturing into entrepreneurial activities becomes a compelling factor for shaping their migration paths. This aligns with research on returnees, suggesting that they often engage in various economic ventures upon returning

home. According to scholars such as Ammassari (2004), Anarfi and Jagare (2005), and Cassarino (2008) highlight that returnees engage in various economic ventures and social interactions to enhance their socioeconomic status and establish social networks upon return as returnees have these ideas buried in mind. Hence, some returnees view entrepreneurship as a strategy for reintegration and socioeconomic advancement.

5.2.7 Accumulated Savings

For some returnees, the financial aspect emerged as a crucial factor, with the desire to utilize their savings serving as a motivating force for their return migration. This respondent's decision to return home based on the realization that he had saved enough money, coupled with the precarious situation of being an illegal migrant, reflects a strategic and pragmatic approach to migration. This aligns with the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) theory, which posits that migrants often plan for an eventual return to their home countries after accumulating sufficient resources abroad. According to proponents of the NELM theory, migrants leave their home countries with the intention of acquiring skills, savings, and other resources that would be beneficial upon their return home (Ammassari, 2004). The time spent abroad is viewed as a temporary endeavour, and many migrants aim to return home once they have achieved their goals. This empirical evidence supports the notion that financial considerations play a significant role in migrants' decisions to return home, as they seek to leverage their savings and resources accumulated abroad for their reintegration into their home communities.

I thought it wise to come back home to my family because I realized that I had saved enough money and there was no need for me to stay back since I was still an illegal migrant. Thus, I didn't want to be caught up with the police and be deported there by coming home with nothing. (In-depth interview, Vincent, 44-year-old)

The emphasis on saving enough money indicates a conscious effort on the part of the migrant to secure financial stability. The accumulation of savings serves as a safety net, providing a

buffer against potential challenges or uncertainties that may arise, both in the host country and during the process of return. It underscores the economic agency of the migrant, highlighting a forward-looking perspective that extends beyond the immediate circumstances. Secondly, the acknowledgment of being an illegal migrant adds a layer of complexity to the decision-making process. The respondent recognizes the inherent risks associated with undocumented status, particularly the looming threat of deportation. The fear of being caught up with the police and the potential consequences of deportation, such as losing acquired assets, underlines the vulnerability faced by migrants operating outside legal frameworks. Therefore, the decision to return home under these circumstances can be seen as a calculated choice to mitigate risks and protect the financial gains made during the period of illegal residence. By choosing to return voluntarily, the respondent aims to avoid the uncertainties and potential hardships associated with being apprehended and deported.

5.2.8 Working Conditions

One common thread in the respondents' accounts is the adverse conditions associated with their employment. The nature of work emerges as a critical factor, with specific emphasis on the strenuous and demanding aspects of the jobs undertaken by the migrants. Following the interviews conducted, these were what some of the respondents recounted:

I worked as a nanny for an elderly woman who was paralyzed. It was physically exhausting, having to lift and move her around all day. But what was even more challenging was the emotional toll it took on me, seeing her struggle with her condition every day. (In-depth interview, Niha, 38-year-old)

As a house help, I was expected to work long hours without breaks and perform tasks that were beyond my capacity. I felt like I was constantly being pushed to my limits, both physically and mentally. (In-depth interview, Charity, 40-year-old)

There were times when I feared for my safety because of the constant threats of sexual harassment from my employer. It created a toxic and hostile work environment that made it impossible for me to feel safe or comfortable. (In-depth interview, Becca, 36-year-old)

For instance, the mention of working as a nanny taking care of a paralyzed old lady, or the physically daunting task of working as a house help, underscores the physically and emotionally draining nature of these occupations. Related to the nature of work is the recurring theme of maltreatment experienced by the migrants. The maltreatment encompasses a spectrum of abuses, ranging from verbal insults and abuses to threats of sexual harassment. These narratives above paint a distressing picture of the hostile environments some migrants found themselves in, where their well-being and dignity were compromised.

My employer would often hurl insults at me for the smallest mistakes. It made me feel worthless and demoralized, like I was nothing more than a servant to them. (In-depth interview, Ato, 41-year-old)

Citing another respondent's experience, the mention of being verbally abused and treated like a slave sheds light on the dehumanizing aspects of the work environment. This maltreatment extends beyond the physical demands of the job, impacting the migrants emotionally and psychologically. The respondent's decision to return is, therefore, a response to the cumulative effect of both the nature of the work and the maltreatment endured. Analyzing these findings, it becomes evident that the challenges in the workplace significantly contribute to the decision-making process of return migration. The migrants' resilience is put to the test as they grapple with demanding jobs that, in some cases, violate their dignity and rights. The decision to return becomes a strategy for self-preservation, an escape from exploitative and abusive work conditions.

5.3 Social Experiences of Interviewees with Families and Society after Reintegrating

This section reveals the social undercurrents that domestic workers encounter upon returning to their home country. This crucial phase of reintegration involves navigating the minutiae of family relationships and societal interactions. The analysis unfolds the positive and challenging

aspects of the respondents' social experiences, shedding light on their efforts to reintegrate into familial and community settings. Specifically, the section explores the challenges faced in accessing employment, the current livelihood activities pursued, and draws comparisons with their livelihood activities in the host country. Through the respondents' narratives, this section aims to provide insights into the social dimensions of the reintegration process and its impact on their overall well-being.

5.3.1 Supportive Rapport

Supportive relationships play a pivotal role in the reintegration experiences of domestic workers returning to their families and communities. The narratives shared by interviewees underscore the significance of partners and family members in facilitating a smoother transition. Partners, including spouses and girlfriends, were instrumental in providing both emotional and practical support.

Yes, my girlfriend was incredibly supportive. She encouraged me to keep searching for job opportunities and helped me stay positive during the tough times. Her support proved crucial in securing a job after returning. (In-depth interview, Robert, 35-year-old)

I was pleasantly surprised by the warm reception from some of my family members. They welcomed me back with open arms, which really lifted my spirits after being away for so long. It definitely contributed positively to my emotional well-being. (In-depth interview, Sena, 40-year-old)

It was wonderful! My family organized a big celebration to welcome me back. There was so much joy and laughter, and seeing their excitement made me feel incredibly loved and valued. It reminded me of the importance of familial bonds in the reintegration process. (In-depth interview, Jane, 39-year-old)

The respondent who mentioned receiving encouragement from his girlfriend proved crucial in securing a job after returning. Upon returning, the warm reception from some family members shared by some respondents contributed positively to the emotional well-being of the returnees.

The joyous welcome described by some interviewees highlighted the importance of familial

bonds in the reintegration process. This supportive family environment played offered a quota in alleviating financial struggles, as family members provided both emotional and financial support. This assistance not only helped meet immediate needs but also offered aid in addressing emotional challenges associated with the return.

The impact of supportive relationships on reintegration success was evident, with interviewees citing smoother transitions and enhanced ability to overcome challenges. Analysis of the findings emphasizes that supportive relationships serve as a crucial buffer against the challenges of reintegration, aligning with the findings of Cassarino (2014). However, the finding also contrast his assertion that Family expectations, child-rearing responsibilities, and feelings of envy and suspicion from family, friends, and neighbours as prevalent challenges. The emotional backing provided by partners and family members contributes significantly to the mental well-being of returnees. Financial assistance further facilitates the pursuit of entrepreneurial endeavours, enabling returnees to establish themselves economically and meet immediate family needs.

5.3.2 Successful Entrepreneurship

Successful entrepreneurship stands as a triumph in the reintegration journey, showcasing the ingenuity and resilience of individuals returning to their families and societies (Cassarino, 2014). Several interviewees embarked on entrepreneurial ventures to establish financial stability upon their return. Businesses ranged from spare parts shops, boutiques, salons, to bread shops. The findings underscore the resilience and resourcefulness of returnees who, confronted with challenges in accessing traditional employment, turned to entrepreneurship as a viable alternative. The initiation of businesses such as spare parts shops, boutiques, and salons reflects a diversified approach, with individuals leveraging their skills and interests.

The money I sent my family helped them renovate our house, and invested into my mother's local business as well. More importantly, I was able to open my own spare parts shop, where I sold the spare parts of cars and motorbikes. The experience back home was and is like heaven on earth, full of positivity. (In-depth interview, Mabel, 43-year-old)

My family played a crucial role. They provided the initial capital needed to kickstart my venture. Without their support, I wouldn't have been able to get it off the ground. Why I ventured in setting my own business; I believe it's not just about my livelihood but also about contributing to the community, supporting the unemployed in the vicinity as well as stimulating the economic growth in the area. (In-depth interview, Brown, 47-year-old)

Financial support from family members played a critical role in jumpstarting entrepreneurial ventures. This support not only provided the necessary capital for business establishment but also served as a safety net during the initial phases of entrepreneurship. The ability to capitalize on familial support highlights the interconnectedness of social experiences and economic success in the reintegration process. However, the diverse entrepreneurial landscape observed among interviewees showcases the adaptability of returnees to local market demands. The impact of successful entrepreneurship extends beyond individual livelihoods to community development. The creation of employment opportunities through shops, supermarkets, and service-oriented businesses contributes to the economic growth of the communities in which returnees reintegrate.

Now, concerning the trend of ingenuity and resilience showcased by respondents, they must have cultivated it during their stay in the Gulf Regions. Thus, respondents who worked as domestic workers in the Gulf Region often faced challenging circumstances. These experiences provide insights into the difficult conditions they encountered, such as poor working conditions, limited legal protections, and exploitation (Escobar-Mendez et al., 2021). Despite the adversities, these individuals demonstrated remarkable resilience in coping with the difficulties they encountered. A respondent shared:

It was tough. I faced long hours, sometimes with little rest, and there were instances of mistreatment from employers. The environment was vastly different from what I

was used to back home, and it took time to adjust. However, despite these challenges, I learned to adapt and persevere. I had to be resilient to keep going, to keep providing for my family. It wasn't easy, but I refused to let the difficulties break me because I envisioned something big ahead and it as a learning ground to that which is to come. (In-depth interview, Seth, 46-year-old)

Despite these difficulties, this respondent's resilience is evident in their determination to navigate these obstacles and make a living through jobs. These narratives collectively underscore the strength and tenacity exhibited by domestic workers in the face of adversity. Hence, this theme emphasizes the need for recognizing and supporting the inherent strength of these individuals, acknowledging their capacity to navigate challenges and rebuild their lives in unfamiliar environments.

5.3.3 Navigating Financial Struggles and Higher Expectations

Conversely, the reintegration journey for domestic workers is often fraught with financial challenges and heightened expectations from both family and society. This is what a respondent highlighted:

Things didn't go well, and I was still struggling with the little money I came back with. I had to use some for my marriage ceremony and take care of my little sister's school fees, due to that I went really down. Faced with these pressure, number of financial challenges to the extent of taking loans from friends to take care of his family. All the family depends on you and the society is expecting you to deliver due to the mere fact that you've travelled abroad. This deep-seated illusion can't just stop but adding flames to the fire. We those that came from abroad are not super humans but privileged to try our luck and see if things end better. It's not certain but a chance to turn things around which can end positive or negative. (In-depth interview, Paa Kwesi, 38-year-old)

Emphasizing the vulnerability of returnees in meeting the immediate financial needs of their families, financial struggles are revealed. The necessity to contribute to significant life events like marriage ceremonies or educational expenses placed returnees in a precarious position, especially when faced with limited resources. The high expectations from family and society created a challenging environment for returnees as exclaimed by several interviewees. This support the findings of Setrana (2014) that family and community expectations and economic

struggle are both common social experience of returnees. The societal perception that working abroad equates to substantial financial success places returnees under immense pressure, often overshadowing the realities of their financial constraints upon return. The impact of financial struggles and elevated expectations is not only economic but also has profound implications for the emotional well-being of returnees. The juxtaposition of the desire to support family and societal expectations with the practical constraints faced upon return creates a delicate balancing act that requires careful navigation.

5.3.4 Employment Challenges

A common thread among the interviewees was the formidable challenge of securing employment upon their return. Factors such as a fiercely competitive job market, limited job opportunities, and the influence of personal networks played pivotal roles in shaping the employment-seeking landscape. This highlights the harsh reality faced by returnees as they navigate a job market that may not readily accommodate their skills and aspirations. Also, the significance of personal connections and networking emerged as a crucial factor in mitigating employment challenges. Interviewees frequently underscored the influential role of social contacts, such as church elders or friends, in aiding their job search. This underscores the importance of social capital in facilitating access to employment opportunities and enhancing the prospects of successful reintegration. Highlighted by some domestic worker during the interview:

I faced some challenges getting a job, looking at the unemployment rate in Ghana; it's all about whom you know. So, I opted for trading by selling second-hand clothes as I persisted with my search. Finally, I was able to get a job with one of the Zoom Lion companies through my church elder. (In-depth interview, James, 39-year-old)

It was incredibly tough. The job market is so competitive, and there just aren't enough opportunities available, especially for someone like me who doesn't have specialized skills. But what really helped me was my personal network. I reached out to friends, church elders, anyone who could possibly help me find a job. And thankfully, through those connections, I was able to secure employment. It just goes to show how

important it is to have strong social connections when you're trying to reintegrate back into society. (In-depth interview, Vincent, 44-year-old)

Faced with the daunting task of finding traditional employment, several interviewees opted for entrepreneurial ventures as a viable alternative. Whether it was selling second-hand clothes or establishing small-scale shops, these individuals demonstrated adaptability and resourcefulness in creating their own opportunities. Entrepreneurship emerged as a pragmatic response to the limitations of the job market, showcasing resilience in the pursuit of financial stability. While some faced immediate challenges in securing employment, others mentioned that over time, they were able to find suitable positions. This suggests that persistence, adaptation, and the evolving nature of the job market are crucial factors in the post-return employment landscape.

5.3.5 Transitioning Careers

The stories of interviewees paint a vivid picture of the diverse career paths undertaken during reintegration. From roles such as caregiving, cleaning, and gardening in the host country, individuals transitioned to a spectrum of vocations, including computer engineering, entrepreneurship, boutique ownership, retail shops to engaging in agriculture and fruit export businesses upon returning home. This diversity highlights the dynamic nature of the reintegration journey and the willingness of returnees to explore new avenues. Central to these transitions is the remarkable adaptability and resilience demonstrated by interviewees. Whether shifting from manual labour to skilled professions or venturing into entrepreneurial endeavours, returnees showcased a capacity to navigate and embrace change. The ability to adapt to new career paths signifies not only personal growth but also a readiness to confront evolving circumstances. Recounted by some respondents:

Transitioning from a maid, washing clothes, cleaning the house, and working as a gardener in my host country to owning a salon in my home country was a significant change for me. (In-depth interview, Claire, 42-year-old)

Yes, I was a house boy and a gardener as well but my current livelihood activity is I have my own business now which deals with exporting of fruits to close by neighbouring towns and countries. And this has paved way for over 70 unemployed Ghanaians. It wasn't easy but God saw us through (In-depth interview, Kweku, 39-year-old)

The impact of transitioning careers extends beyond individual trajectories to influence livelihoods at both the individual and community levels. Career shifts contributed to economic growth, created employment opportunities, and, in some instances, resulted in transformative changes in financial stability. This ripple effect emphasizes the interconnectedness of individual experiences and broader community dynamics. Overall, the reintegration process becomes a catalyst for personal and communal growth, shaped by the varied trajectories of returning domestic workers.

5.3.6 Financial Preparedness

The social experiences of interviewees after reintegrating into their families and communities reflect an interplay of financial preparedness and its subsequent impact on family dynamics.

Some of the domestic workers opined:

I was able to save up enough money, so things were really okay upon my return. The positive outcomes include financial support for family needs, renovations of family houses, and even purchasing land. Clearly, you can see that my integration and aftermath was smooth. (In-depth interview, Kofi, 40-year-old)

Having saved up money during my time abroad really made a difference. It gave me a sense of security and allowed me to explore entrepreneurial opportunities when I returned. But it wasn't just about me. My family benefited too. I was able to provide financial support for various needs, we could renovate our family house, and we even managed to purchase some land. It felt like we were making tangible improvements to our lives. However, it wasn't all smooth sailing. There were tensions within the family, especially when it came to meeting expectations and dealing with financial pressures. It's a delicate balance, and while financial preparedness can lead to positive outcomes, it can also strain relationships. (In-depth interview, Seth, 46-year-old)

Respondents who strategically saved substantial amounts of money during their overseas work experiences reported smoother reintegration journeys. Financial preparedness emerged as a key facilitator, providing individuals with a financial cushion to navigate challenges and pursue

entrepreneurial endeavours upon their return. However, their preparedness translated into positive outcomes for families, including essential financial support for various needs, renovations of family houses, and, in some instances, the ability to purchase land. These tangible improvements underscored the potential transformative impact of thoughtful financial planning on the overall well-being of families. Furthermore, alongside positive outcomes, instances of strained family relationships surfaced. The pressure of meeting familial expectations, coupled with financial challenges, created tensions within some families. The dichotomy between positive and challenging outcomes reflects the nuanced nature of financial dynamics during reintegration.

5.3.7 Psychosocial Experience

Psychosocial experience, returning domestic workers often grapple with a myriad of emotional and social challenges as they reintegrate into their home communities. This period of transition can be marked by feelings of isolation and alienation, even amidst familial surroundings. Memories and experiences from their time abroad may haunt them, causing emotional distress and impacting their relationships with loved ones. Moreover, societal stigma surrounding mental health issues adds an additional layer of difficulty, as returning migrants may feel unable to openly address their struggles or seek support. The feelings of isolation and distress resonate with findings from the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (GAATW, 2022), which suggests that many migrants return home with mental health issues, including feelings of depression, aggression, and stigma. Hence, these victims do not fight back because of the feeling of being outnumbered.

Coming back home was not easy; I felt so isolated, even in the midst of family. Flashbacks from my time abroad haunted me, and it affected my relationships with family and friends. Coupling is the societal stigma associated with mental health made it hard to share my struggles openly. In the span of time, support from family and counseling played crucial roles in overcoming emotional challenges. (In-depth interview, Niha, 38-year-old)

Yes, I decided to seek counseling to help me deal with my feelings of isolation and distress. It was a difficult step to take, but it made a significant difference. My counselor provided me with tools to cope with my emotions and helped me work through my past experiences. It was a crucial part of my reintegration journey. (In-depth interview, Seth, 46-year-old)

From the above narrative from the interview, the return to one's home country after an extended period abroad can be paradoxically isolating. Despite being surrounded by familiar faces and family members; interviewees often expressed a profound sense of isolation. This emotional state, rooted in the disconnection between the overseas environment and the home country, becomes a significant contributor to the challenges faced during reintegration. The adjustment from a life shaped by foreign landscapes and cultures to the known but changed environment of one's homeland brings about a complex set of emotions that contribute to the overarching theme of isolation. Further, the reintegration process serves as a catalyst for flashback experiences, with interviewees grappling with memories from their time abroad. These flashbacks, frequently linked to challenging or traumatic encounters, introduce an additional layer of emotional hurdles in the journey toward readjustment. The clash between past experiences and the present reality can create a dissonance that profoundly affects emotional well-being. Acknowledging and addressing these flashbacks is essential in supporting individuals as they navigate the intricacies of reintegration. Finally, in the Ghanaian landscape, societal stigma surrounding mental health further complicates the emotional landscape for returning domestic workers. Interviewees hesitated to openly discuss their emotional struggles due to the pervasive fear of judgment and biases related to mental health issues. This societal stigma adds a layer of complexity, making it challenging for returnees to seek the understanding and support they need. Destigmatizing mental health discussions within society is crucial for fostering an environment where individuals feel comfortable sharing their emotional challenges without fear of judgment.

Eventually, the findings underscored the crucial role of family support in mitigating emotional challenges. Instances where family members offered understanding, empathy, and a supportive environment played a significant role in aiding the reintegration process. Informal and Professional counselling also emerged as valuable resources in addressing emotional and psychological challenges. Interviewees who sought counselling reported positive outcomes, highlighting the importance of mental health support in the broader reintegration framework.

Moreover, prior to migrants returning back to their host country, interviewees did express shared concerns on outcomes of migration which revealed a pervasive sense of anxiety and apprehension woven into their experiences. Health-related worries, driven by the physically demanding nature of their jobs, were a recurring theme, reflecting genuine concerns for personal well-being. Moreover, anxiety stemmed from the unpredictable and challenging circumstances encountered during migration, including stress, maltreatment, and hardships in the host country. Legal concerns and fear of deportation added further stress, particularly for those in undocumented or irregular migration situations. However, positive experiences such as fair treatment and achieving financial stability provided assurance for some respondents.

An Interviewee on the outcomes of migration;

I was really worried about my health, especially considering the physically demanding nature of my job. There were times when I felt exhausted and overworked, and I was afraid that it might take a toll on my well-being. Additionally, the stress and uncertainty of living in a foreign country added to my anxiety. (In-depth interview, Ato, 41-year-old)

Concerning sexual health, instances of verbal abuse, neglect, and attempts at sexual assault were reported, further aggravated by the inability to report mistreatment due to legal status and authorities' perceptions. Emotional trauma and fear were significant consequences, highlighting the intersectionality of mental and sexual well-being in the migration context. migration influenced the behaviour of some respondents, with instances of celibacy, fear of

engaging in sexual activities, and the use of protection to prevent sexually transmitted infections. Support and assistance from religious or community figures, such as pastors and community elders, played a crucial role in coping with mental and sexual health challenges post-migration, contributing to the recovery of those who faced mistreatment and abuse. This respondent mentioned:

Hmmm..... yes, I did, I spoke with my pastor and he recommended me to his doctor friend who counselled me for a period of time before I could come back to my normal self. Truly, my sexual behaviour was affected but I thank God for my pastor and all those who helped..... (In-depth interview, James, 39-year-old)

Overall, support and assistance, primarily from religious or community figures, is revealed as a crucial factor in coping with the mental and sexual health challenges post-migration. According to some respondents Pastors and community elders played significant roles in providing counselling and support, contributing to the recovery of those who faced mistreatment and abuse.

5.4 Livelihood Strategies Employed by Returnees after their Reintegration

To secure their livelihoods, a significant portion of returning individuals utilize a combination of strategies. These strategies may include wage employment, self-employment ventures, and agricultural activities. This diversified strategy serves as a risk-mitigation measure and proves effective in generating an ample income. The livelihood strategies employed by returnees after their reintegration reveal a diverse array of approaches to financial sustainability. Many respondents turned to entrepreneurship, establishing businesses such as spare parts shops, agrobusiness, boutiques, salons, and small-scale retail ventures. The findings underscore the resilience and resourcefulness of returnees who, faced with the challenges of traditional employment, sought alternative paths to financial stability. Also, financial support from family members played a crucial role in jumpstarting entrepreneurial ventures. These are what some respondents voiced:

My family played a crucial role in helping me kickstart my business. They provided the initial capital I needed to get things off the ground. Without their support, it would have been much more difficult to pursue my entrepreneurial venture. It just goes to show the importance of family support in achieving economic success during reintegration. (In-depth interview, Brown, 47-year-old)

I decided to start my own business, a small boutique selling clothing and accessories. It was a risky move, but I knew that traditional employment options were limited. Many of my fellow returnees also ventured into entrepreneurship, establishing various businesses like salons, retail shops, and even agrobusiness. It's amazing to see the resilience and determination of people in finding alternative paths to financial stability. (In-depth interview, Charity, 40-year-old)

This familial support not only provided the necessary capital for business establishment but also served as a safety net during the initial phases of entrepreneurship. The ability to capitalize on family support highlights the interconnectedness of social experiences and economic success in the reintegration process.

Also, the diversity in livelihood activities showcases the adaptability of returnees to the local market demands. Whether through trading, retail businesses, or service-oriented ventures, individuals leveraged their skills, interests, and available resources to navigate the post-return landscape successfully. The impact of these livelihood strategies extends beyond individual well-being to community development, with the creation of employment opportunities and contributions to local economic growth. However, it is notable that not all returnees received external support. Some had to rely on personal savings or income generated from their businesses, illustrating the challenges faced by those without a robust support system. This emphasizes the importance of comprehensive reintegration programs that address both financial and social aspects, ensuring a more holistic approach to the returnees' successful reintegration into their communities. Following are some responses shared by respondents:

I knew I had to find a way to support myself and my family, so I decided to start a small trading business. I used my knowledge of local markets and my passion for certain products to establish myself in the community. It wasn't easy, but being adaptable and willing to try different approaches helped me succeed. (In-depth interview, Mary, 35-year-old)

One of the biggest challenges was lack of external support. I didn't have access to support, loan or grants, so I had to rely on my personal savings to get my business off the ground. It was tough, but I was determined to make it work. Eventually, my hard work paid off, and my business started to thrive. (In-depth interview, Kweku, 39-year-old)

In addition, the selection of livelihood choices among returnees is involvedly woven with several influential factors. Foremost among these is the pre-migration experience, where the skills and expertise acquired during the migration period exert a profound impact on subsequent choices. Returnees endowed with specialized skills are inclined towards ventures such as self-employment or skilled wage labour. Additionally, the local context emerges as a pivotal determinant, with economic opportunities and prevailing market conditions in their communities wielding significant influence. Moreover, individual aspirations and preferences play a crucial role, showcasing the diverse motivations driving returnees. Whether prioritizing income maximization, seeking flexibility, or aspiring to be entrepreneurs, these individual inclinations guide the diverse array of livelihood strategies adopted by returnees. A respondent who now runs a furniture business recounted:

During my time abroad, I gained valuable skills in carpentry, which I knew I could leverage upon returning home. I had always dreamed of starting my own furniture-making business, and my experience abroad gave me the confidence and expertise to do so. It was a natural choice for me to pursue self-employment in this field, as it aligned with both my skills and my aspirations for entrepreneurship. (In-depth interview, Chris, 42-year-old)

5.5 Future Migration Aspiration of Returnees

The exploration of future migration aspirations among returnees reveals varied motivations, considerations, and personal circumstances shaping their decision. The responses encapsulate a spectrum of perspectives, ranging from a resolute decision to stay rooted in one's home country to contemplations of potential journeys for distinct purposes. In the narrative gathered during the interviews, exhibit a remarkable variability in the intentions of returnees regarding

future migration. While 16 of the respondents expressed a definitive decision to refrain from traveling again, citing reasons such as past challenges or a desire to focus on family, others entertained the prospect of migration for specific purposes like vacationing, visiting relatives, or seeking greener pastures. These are some responses from the returnees:

I've decided to stay in my home country for the foreseeable future. My family needs me, and I feel a strong sense of responsibility towards them. I want to be here to support them, especially as they grow older. Besides, I've invested a lot in my business here, and I see great potential for growth. I believe I can contribute positively to my community and make a difference right here at home. (In-depth interview, Brown, 47-year-old)

Honestly, I feel content and comfortable where I am. This is my home, and I have deep roots here. I've built strong relationships with my neighbors and friends, and I don't want to uproot myself again. Plus, as I grow older, I value the stability and familiarity of my surroundings more than ever. I plan to stay put and enjoy the simple pleasures of life right here. (In-depth interview, Kweku, 39-year-old)

The finding that a majority of returnees express no intention to re-emigrate contrasts with the observations of Cassarino (2004) and Colton (1993). This suggests that successful reintegration may be occurring in cases where there is minimal disparity between the norms, values, and opportunities at home and the expectations developed by migrants during their time abroad. Cassarino (2004) points out that this divergence often occurs when migrants are not adequately informed about the economic, social, and political situation in their home country while residing abroad. This lack of information can lead to unrealistic expectations about the prospects and opportunities available upon return, contributing to a desire to seek opportunities elsewhere; was not consistent with the study's findings. This variability underscores the mixed feelings and considerations among the respondents in shaping future migration. Thus, among some respondents is the prioritization of family and a sense of responsibility toward their home country. Several express a firm commitment to stay in their current location, emphasizing a desire to care for family members, age-related concerns, focus on business endeavours, or simply enjoy the comforts of familiar surroundings. This rootedness highlights the significance

of blood bonds “reaffirming the figure of speech – blood is thicker than water” and the sense of belonging in influencing migration decisions. This supports the assertion claimed by De Hass (2010).

Moreover, the influence of past experiences emerges as a significant factor shaping future migration aspirations. Those who underwent challenging or traumatic encounters during their overseas work express reservations about embarking on another migration journey. The lasting impact of these experiences becomes a lens through which they view and decide on their future plans, emphasizing the need to address the repercussions of past hardships in the reintegration process. This is what a respondent exclaimed:

No, I don't have any intensions of travelling again. I just want to focus on my retail business and my family. Truly, after all that I went to get to where I have gotten, I won't reconsider or think twice about it koraaa.... (In-depth interview, Mary, 35-year-old)

Conversely, a subset of respondents expresses a more open-ended approach to future migration, considering travel for exploration, vacation, or visits to relatives living abroad. The motivations behind these aspirations vary, ranging from a curiosity about new places to a desire to reunite with family members in different parts of the world. These responses highlight the multifaceted nature of migration aspirations, encompassing both practical considerations and the pursuit of personal experiences. The findings present specific countries such as Holland, Canada, Australia, USA etc. emerging as potential destinations. One respondent conveyed a desire to migrate to Holland or Canada, seeking what they referred to as "greener pastures." A respondent recounted:

I'm keeping my options open when it comes to future migration. While I'm content here for now, I also have a curiosity about exploring new places and experiencing different cultures. Additionally, I have siblings living abroad, particularly in Holland and Canada, whom I haven't seen in years. So, I've been considering the possibility of visiting them or even potentially relocating for a while. The idea of seeking 'greener pastures' in these countries has crossed my mind, especially considering the economic

opportunities they offer. However, nothing is set in stone, and I'm taking things one step at a time. (In-depth interview, Paschal, 37-year-old)

This suggests an aspiration for improved economic opportunities and a potentially better quality of life in these countries. Another respondent mentioned a plan to migrate to Canada, a nation often recognized for its diverse opportunities, high quality of life, and welcoming immigration policies. Additionally, a respondent expressed an intention to migrate to Australia, a destination known for its strong economy, employment prospects, and appealing lifestyle. Although not explicitly indicating permanent migration, another respondent expressed an interest in traveling to the United States for vacation, reflecting a desire for leisure experiences rather than permanent settlement. These aspirations highlight the varied factors influencing migration decisions, including economic considerations, lifestyle preferences, and personal interests. To put in quote, this is what a returnee said:

Yes, I do! I would want to travel but I haven't decided yet. But I have some countries I am considering, Canada, US, Australia potentially just to visit or for a vacation. (In-depth interview, Aisha, 37-year-old)

Overall, these responses also reveal the theme of disinterest in returning to Gulf countries among the interviewed individuals which signifies a noteworthy shift in migration aspirations. While Gulf countries have historically been prominent destinations for migrant workers, the expressed disinterest suggests a re-evaluation of the perceived benefits and challenges associated with employment in these regions.

5.6 Key Discussions, Conclusions, and Chapter Summary

The findings on the return, reintegration, and re-migration experiences of Ghanaian domestic workers from the Gulf Region provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities they face upon their return. The analysis reveals a compound interaction of factors influencing the decision to return, including adverse living conditions, legal status concerns, cultural and

religious differences, family reunion, health issues, entrepreneurial aspirations, accumulated savings, and work-related maltreatment. These findings align with existing literature on return migration, highlighting the multidimensional nature of the decision-making process (Cassarino, 2014; King, 2000).

Upon return, the reintegration process encompasses economic, social, and psychosocial dimensions, as outlined by Setrana and Tonah (2014) and the IOM (2019). The social experiences of returnees underscore the significance of supportive relationships, particularly from partners and family members, in facilitating a smoother transition. This finding aligns with social network theory, which emphasizes the role of social ties in shaping reintegration experiences (Cassarino, 2004). Social reintegration, a key component identified by Setrana and Tonah (2014), is reflected in our findings on returnees' experiences with family and community. The importance of rebuilding social networks and adapting to changes in family dynamics is evident. Challenges in re-establishing relationships with spouses and children, and adapting to shifted gender roles, exemplify the complexities of this process. However, returnees face structural barriers to successful reintegration, as posited by structural theory (Cassarino, 2004). These include financial struggles, heightened societal expectations, and employment difficulties, which can impede smooth reintegration despite supportive social networks.

The livelihood strategies employed by returnees, particularly the prominence of entrepreneurship, showcase their resilience and adaptability in navigating the post-return landscape. This finding extends our understanding of returnees' economic reintegration strategies and highlights the potential for entrepreneurship to contribute to local economic development (Ammassari, 2004). However, the economic reintegration of returnees, as described by Setrana and Tonah (2014), is evident in our findings. Many returnees utilized skills acquired abroad to secure employment or start businesses, aligning with the concept of

economic reintegration as a crucial aspect of the overall process. However, challenges in finding employment or meeting financial expectations underscore the importance of economic factors in successful reintegration. These observations demonstrate both the opportunities and obstacles returnees face in re-establishing their economic footing in their home country.

The psychosocial experiences of returnees, characterized by feelings of isolation, flashbacks, and societal stigma surrounding mental health, underscore the importance of addressing the psychological dimensions of reintegration. This finding contributes to the growing recognition of the mental health challenges faced by return migrants (IOM, 2019) and emphasizes the need for targeted support services.

The exploration of future migration aspirations reveals a spectrum of perspectives, with some returnees expressing a firm commitment to staying in their home country, while others contemplate re-migration for specific purposes. This finding supports the notion that return migration is not necessarily a one-time event but can be part of a cyclical process (Cassarino, 2004). The expressed disinterest in returning to Gulf countries signals a shift in migration aspirations, potentially influenced by the challenges experienced during previous migration.

The study's findings contribute to the existing knowledge on return migration and reintegration in the Ghanaian context, providing a broader understanding of the experiences of domestic workers returning from the Gulf Region. The insights gained can inform policy and practice, highlighting the need for comprehensive support mechanisms that address the social, economic, and psychological dimensions of reintegration. Largely, the findings underscore the need for a holistic approach to reintegration support that addresses the many challenges faced by returnees while harnessing their potential as agents of change and development in their communities.

Case Study Two: From a Shop Attendant to an Entrepreneur

In this case study we encounter Elizabeth who left Ghana for Saudi Arabia as a domestic work.

Although she encountered several challenges while working in Saudi Arabia, she returned to Ghana 10 years later to settle. Her reintegration process involved returning to her Christian faith, marrying and having children as well as finding a job and setting up her own business.

Elizabeth, a 41-year-old woman of Nigerian and Ghanaian ancestry, tells her moving tale of leaving her home country of Ghana and eventually moving to Saudi Arabia. Born and raised in Madina, a suburb within the La Nkwantanang Municipal District of the Greater Accra Region, Elizabeth was single but in a relationship at the time of her migration, and a Christian. Her experiences provide a nuanced view of the difficult reintegration issues faced by domestic workers upon their return to the Gulf Region and the varied realities they face.

Elizabeth altered her life at the age of 25, moving to Saudi Arabia in pursuit of greater economic prospects. She was raised in a Madina slum in the Greater Accra area, where she saw firsthand the dearth of good jobs available for young people in her neighbourhood. Elizabeth, a shop attendant with an Ordinary National Diploma (O.N.D.) as her best credential, found it difficult to make ends meet. She couldn't resist the allure of having the opportunity to support herself and her family financially by travelling overseas.

Elizabeth's decision to migrate was influenced by her brothers, who had previously travelled abroad, and the persistent financial challenges she faced at home. Unlike many of her peers who relied on recruitment agencies, Elizabeth took it upon herself to arrange her migration, with some financial support from her boyfriend and brothers. "I financed my trip myself from the little money I had saved," Elizabeth recalls, demonstrating a sense of determination and self-reliance that would prove crucial throughout her journey.

Elizabeth travelled to Saudi Arabia via plane, as is typical for migrants making their way to the Gulf. Her experiences after arriving were not at all what the hopeful recruitment posters frequently depicted. Elizabeth says, "Mannya no faala saa... it wasn't easy," in an emotive tone. "The living circumstances were appalling. The fact that the individuals I worked for didn't care about me was another difficulty I encountered."

Elizabeth's worked as a nanny to an elderly, immobile woman in Saudi Arabia - a job that proved to be physically and emotionally demanding. The challenges she faced were numerous and daunting. Basic necessities like food and healthcare became luxuries she could barely afford. "Feeding myself was also very terrible," she recounts. "I was also not able to pay my medical bills anytime I fell ill."

Perhaps one of the most significant changes Elizabeth experienced was in her religious identity. Despite being a Christian before migration, she converted to Islam upon arriving in Saudi Arabia. This change, while potentially providing some social protection in a predominantly Muslim country, came at a personal cost. "I had to change from a Christian to a Muslim and also change my name to Fati, which I didn't like but had no option," Elizabeth explains, highlighting the cultural pressures faced by migrant workers.

The challenges Elizabeth faced went beyond the physical and cultural. She experienced verbal abuse from her employers and even faced sexual harassment. "People even asked to have sex with me, but I didn't agree. Hw3! It wasn't easy!" she exclaims, the pain still evident in her

voice. The trauma of these experiences had a lasting impact on Elizabeth's mental health and sexual behaviour. "I began to have wild thoughts and overthinking," she admits. "Due to the attempted rape by my madam's husband, I was scared of becoming intimate with a man for some time."

Despite these harrowing experiences, Elizabeth persevered for ten years in Saudi Arabia. Her decision to return to Ghana was ultimately influenced by a combination of factors: the nature of her work, the cultural and religious pressures, the abuse she faced, and the meager compensation she received. "My salary was very small," she notes, highlighting the financial exploitation often faced by migrant domestic workers.

Upon her return to Ghana six years ago, at the age of 35, Elizabeth faced new challenges in reintegrating into a society that had continued to evolve in her absence. The initial period was particularly difficult. "Things were not moving well when I came back, so I had to start doing some odd jobs," she recalls. However, Elizabeth's resilience, honed through years of adversity abroad, served her well during this period of transition.

With the support of her church elder, Elizabeth was able to secure a job with a Zoom Lion company, a waste management firm in Ghana. This opportunity provided her with a stable income and a chance to rebuild her life in her home country. In addition to her job, Elizabeth has also ventured into entrepreneurship, opening a shop where she sells second-hand clothes. This business venture not only provides her with an additional source of income but also allows her to apply the skills and business acumen she developed during her time abroad. Thus, as a domestic worker, this experience likely honed her caregiving skills and ability to work under demanding conditions, reflecting her initiative and determination to create additional income streams upon return.

Elizabeth's personal life has also undergone significant changes since her return. She is now married and a mother to four children, a stark contrast to her single status and childless state before migration. Her boyfriend, who supported her decision to migrate, has also experienced positive changes, transitioning from a fruit seller to owning his own fruit shop.

The process of reintegration has not been without its challenges for Elizabeth. The trauma of her experiences in Saudi Arabia left lasting psychological scars. "I was always afraid," she admits, speaking of the impact of the abuse she suffered. However, she has taken steps to address these issues, receiving counselling from one of her church elders upon her return to Ghana.

Despite the difficulties she faced, Elizabeth's migration experience has equipped her with new skills, perspectives, and resources that have proven invaluable in her reintegration journey. Her ability to adapt to challenging circumstances, her entrepreneurial spirit, and her resilience in the face of adversity have all contributed to her relative success since returning to Ghana.

Regarding the future, Elizabeth makes it apparent that she intends to stay in Ghana. "I have no plans to travel again," she declares emphatically. This sentiment captures her sense of stability since coming home, as well as the difficulties she encountered while living overseas. Elizabeth's tale serves as a tribute to the nuanced reality that migrant domestic workers must contend with. Her experiences serve as a reminder of these workers' vulnerability, their susceptibility to abuse and exploitation, and the long-term effects such events can have on relationships and mental health. Her experience also shows how adaptable and resilient migrant workers can be, as well as how they can still experience positive transformation and development in spite of difficult conditions.

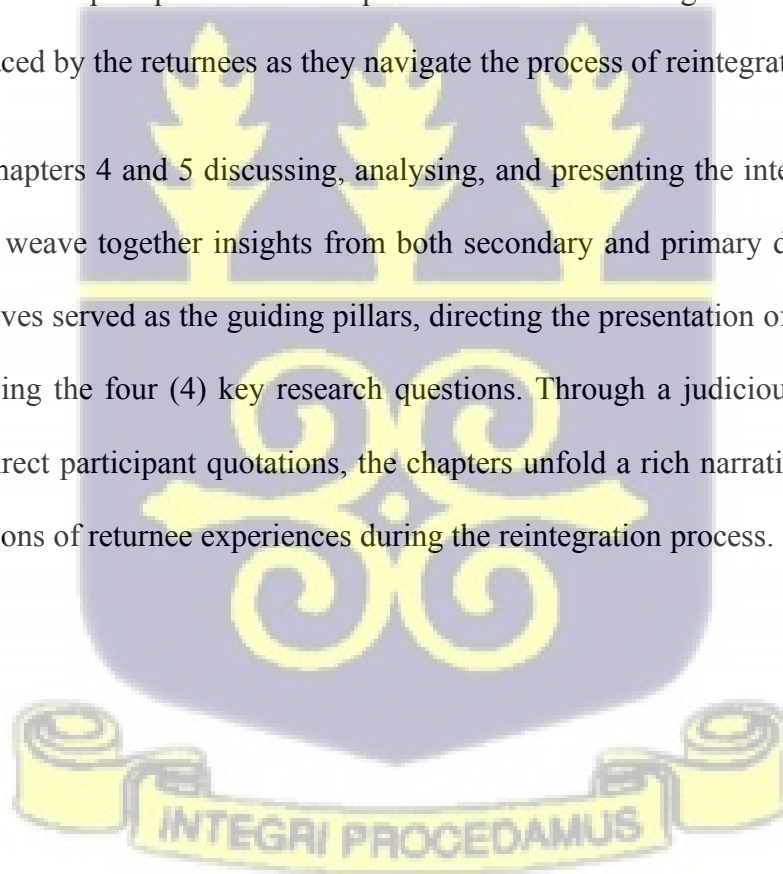
As Ghana continues to grapple with issues of migration and return, stories like Elizabeth's provide valuable insights for policymakers and support organizations. They underscore the

need for better protections for migrant workers, comprehensive support systems for returnees, and the importance of addressing the root causes of migration, such as limited economic opportunities in home communities.

Elizabeth's journey from a struggling young woman in a Ghanaian slum to a migrant domestic worker in Saudi Arabia, and finally to a working mother and entrepreneur in Ghana, illustrates the transformative potential of migration, despite its challenges. Her story serves as a powerful reminder of the human faces behind migration statistics and the complex interplay of factors that influence migration decisions, experiences, and outcomes.

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the findings related to the return, reintegration, and re-migration experiences of Ghanaian domestic workers who had migrated to the Gulf Region. The chapter highlighted the finding around the factors facilitating the domestic workers' return to their home country, social experiences of interviewees with families and society after reintegration, and livelihood strategies employed by returnees. By examining these themes, the chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the returnees as they navigate the process of reintegration.

Overall, both chapters 4 and 5 discussing, analysing, and presenting the interpretation of the study's finding weave together insights from both secondary and primary data sources. The research objectives served as the guiding pillars, directing the presentation of outcomes while adeptly addressing the four (4) key research questions. Through a judicious use of figures, counting and direct participant quotations, the chapters unfold a rich narrative, capturing the diverse dimensions of returnee experiences during the reintegration process.



CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

6.1 Introduction

This chapter six (6) serves as the culmination of an extensive exploration into the experiences, challenges, and dynamics surrounding the reintegration of returnees into their families and societies. Having traversed the diverse terrains of entrepreneurship, employment, financial dynamics, emotional well-being, and future aspirations of returned migrants in the preceding chapter, this final chapter synthesizes the key findings. The aim is to distill valuable insights, draw meaningful conclusions, and provide well-informed recommendations.

6.2 Summary of Major Findings

With the main objective of exploring the lived experiences of reintegrated returned domestic workers from the Gulf Region in Ghana, the study delved into specific objectives including investigating factors contributing to their return, examining the role of families in their social experiences post-reintegration, analyzing their livelihood strategies, and exploring their future migration aspirations. The socio-demographic characteristics of the 24 returnees from the Gulf Regions, integral to understanding their reintegration experiences, encompass a gender-balanced representation, with 12 males and 12 females successfully reintegrated into the Madina community, who were purposively selected. The demographic variables considered include sex, age, length of stay in the Gulf Region, educational level, occupation, religion, ethnicity, and marital status. Notably, the demographics considered did challenge previous empirical findings.

Regarding age, the participants embarked on migration journeys during their mid to late twenties, with current ages ranging from 30 to 50 years upon return, indicating varied temporal

spans since their migration experiences. Ethnic backgrounds exhibit a rich multicultural sample, contributing to a nuanced exploration of returned domestic workers' experiences across different cultural contexts. Religious shifts, witnessed in 6 respondents, highlight the intersectionality of migration experiences with religious identity. Educational qualifications remained largely unaltered post-migration for 19 of participants, suggesting that migration did not significantly impact their formal education. Marital status transitions, from predominantly single to married, align with existing research indicating the influence of marital status on migration decisions.

According to the respondents, the occupational landscape post-migration further reflects a high degree of mobility, with 18 respondents experiencing a change, notably shifting towards entrepreneurship and personal business ownership. Family dynamics reveal an overall improvement in children's well-being after migration, indicating a positive impact. Information streams predominantly rely on friends (16 individuals), family connections (2 individuals), and advertisements (6 individuals), emphasizing the role of peer networks in decision-making into these gulf countries. Migration facilitators include recruitment agencies (13 individuals), self-initiation, friends, and family members, reflecting diverse influencers. Destination choices among Gulf countries vary, with Qatar emerging as the most favoured (9 individuals), driven by economic prospects and social networks. Returnees are primarily voluntary (23 individuals), while the duration of stays in host countries spans from a few years to over a decade, contributing to varied reintegration experiences.

The pre-migration conditions of the respondents form a pivotal dimension in comprehending the factors that propelled individuals to undertake journeys to the Gulf Region. The exploration of personal status, family/household conditions, and community context before migration unravels a spectrum of challenges and motivations that influenced their decisions. Economic

hardships, including financial constraints and the impact on education, emerged as recurrent themes, illustrating the profound economic struggles that compelled individuals to explore migration for alleviating financial burdens. Community contexts exhibited variations, with mentions of limited job opportunities and challenging living conditions, prompting individuals to seek better prospects abroad.

Social influences, such as peer networks and family members who had already migrated, also played a significant role, indicating the impact of social connections on migration decisions. Family pressures and responsibilities emerged as key influencers, reflecting a sense of familial responsibility and the aspiration to improve the overall well-being of the family through migration. The quest for better opportunities and a more prosperous life, commonly referred to as seeking "greener pastures," was also a recurring theme, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of influences on migration decisions.

In terms of funding sources, the data revealed diverse approaches, with a majority number of respondents (12 respondents) relying on recruitment agencies. This highlights a prevalent dependence on intermediaries facilitating the migration process, presumably handling logistics and arrangements in exchange for payment. Self-financing (4 respondents) through personal savings reflected individual agency and financial preparedness among migrants. Support from friends and acquaintances (8 respondents) showcased collaborative efforts within communities or personal circles to enable migration.

Concerning the means of transportation chosen by respondents varied, with air travel being predominant. Air travel aligned with common international migration practices, driven by factors such as speed, convenience, and the desire for a direct journey. However, a unique case of stowaway by ship highlighted the desperation and resourcefulness of some migrants facing financial difficulties and resorting to unconventional methods.

Furthermore, the narratives shared by participants shed light on various elements that influence the decision-making process leading to their eventual return home. Living conditions and challenges in the hosting Gulf country emerged as a key factor, with the majority of respondents detailing substantial hardships upon reaching the host country. Adverse living conditions, inadequate accommodation, threats of harassment, and maltreatment by employers significantly impacted the well-being of domestic workers. While some experienced relatively better conditions through supportive employers or reputable agencies, others faced distressing challenges, emphasizing the vulnerability and resilience exhibited by these individuals.

Legal status and fear of deportation emerged as compelling factors influencing return decisions due to the absence of legal working documents, heightening the risk of losing acquired assets and facing legal consequences. This highlights the precarious situation faced by migrants when their legal status is uncertain, underscoring broader challenges associated with legal frameworks governing migrant workers in Gulf countries. Moreover, cultural and religious differences also played a pivotal role in influencing return decisions, with some respondents struggling to adapt to different cultural norms and religious practices, contributing to a sense of discomfort and prompting the decision to return home. Family reunion emerged as another significant factor, reflecting the intertwined nature of family dynamics and employment circumstances in shaping migration decisions, especially when changes in the employer's situation coupled with the absence of familial connections in the host country prompted returnees to prioritize family bonds. Additionally, health concerns contributed to return decisions, with respondents highlighting the physical toll of strenuous work, challenging conditions, and limited access to healthcare services, underscoring the importance of health-related issues, contract expiration, and dissatisfaction with job conditions as factors contributing to return migration.

The study also revealed entrepreneurial aspirations as another factor for return migration, with several respondents expressing a desire to establish their own businesses, reflecting the migrants' agency and resilience. Leveraging their experiences and savings, they aimed to pursue economic ventures in their home countries. Additionally, accumulated savings played a significant role in return decisions, with some respondents choosing to return home after realizing they had saved enough money. This emphasis on financial stability and acknowledgment of being an illegal migrant underscored a strategic and pragmatic approach to migration. The nature of work and related maltreatment emerged as a recurring theme, highlighting adverse conditions associated with specific occupations and the maltreatment endured by migrants. The physically and emotionally draining nature of the jobs, coupled with exploitation and abuse, contributed to the decision to return as a strategy for self-preservation

Consequently, among interviewees commenting about the outcomes of migration is a shared worriedness that reflects pervasive anxiety rooted in health-related concerns, challenging circumstances, legal worries, and fear of deportation. Despite these worries, positive experiences provided assurance for some, showcasing diversity in migration experiences. Regarding sexual and mental health concerns, returnees faced significant challenges impacting their psychological well-being, including verbal abuse, physical mistreatment, and the demanding nature of their jobs. Reluctance to report mistreatment due to legal status compounded the impact on mental health, leading to emotional trauma and fear. Changes in sexual behavior were also observed, highlighting the correlation between migration and intimate aspects of individuals' lives. Support from religious or community figures played a crucial role in coping with these challenges, providing counselling and support for recovery.

Also, findings on the social experiences of domestic workers upon reintegration reveal both challenges and triumphs as respondents navigate familial and societal dynamics. Supportive

relationships, particularly from partners and family members, play a pivotal role in facilitating a smoother transition, providing emotional and financial assistance that alleviates challenges and contributes to overall well-being. Successful entrepreneurship emerges as a noteworthy aspect, showcasing individuals' resilience and resourcefulness in establishing diverse ventures, ranging from spare parts shops to boutiques. However, financial struggles and heightened societal expectations pose formidable challenges, leading to a delicate balancing act for returnees. The employment landscape post-return is marked by fierce competition and limited opportunities, prompting some to embrace entrepreneurship as a pragmatic alternative. The diverse career trajectories of returnees, transitioning from roles such as caregiving to establishing businesses, underscore their adaptability and resilience. Financial preparedness is highlighted, with those who strategically saved money overseas reporting smoother reintegration journeys and positive outcomes for their families, although it also contributed to strained family relationships in some instances. The psychosocial experience of returnees reveals a paradoxical sense of isolation despite being surrounded by familiar faces. Flashbacks from their time abroad, coupled with societal stigma around mental health, create emotional challenges that are often difficult to openly discuss. Family support emerges as a crucial mitigating factor, providing understanding and empathy. Nevertheless, societal stigma remains a barrier, emphasizing the need to destigmatize mental health discussions within Ghanaian society. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of the reintegration process, where familial, societal, economic, and psychological factors intertwine to shape the experiences of returnees.

Again, the post-reintegration livelihood strategies adopted by returnees reflect a diverse and adaptive approach to financial sustainability. Entrepreneurship emerges as a prominent avenue, with individuals establishing businesses such as spare parts shops, agrobusiness, boutiques, salons, and small-scale retail ventures. The findings underscore the resilience and

resourcefulness of returnees who, facing challenges in traditional employment, explore alternative paths to achieve financial stability. Family support plays a pivotal role in jumpstarting entrepreneurial ventures, serving as both capital and a safety net during the initial phases of entrepreneurship. The diversity in livelihood activities showcases the adaptability of returnees to local market demands, leveraging skills, interests, and available resources. The impact of these strategies extends beyond individual well-being to community development, contributing to local economic growth and the creation of employment opportunities. However, the absence of external support for some returnees emphasizes the need for comprehensive reintegration programs addressing both financial and social aspects. The selection of livelihood choices is intricately linked to pre-migration experiences, skills acquired during migration, local economic opportunities, and individual aspirations, illustrating the multifaceted nature of returnees' motivations and decisions in shaping their post-reintegration livelihoods.

Lastly, a predominant inclination among respondents is a firm commitment to remain in their home country, motivated by various factors such as past adversities, a prioritization of family responsibilities, and a focus on local business ventures. This commitment is underscored by a strong sense of rootedness, driven by familial bonds and a preference for familiar environments. Challenging or traumatic experiences during overseas work serve as decisive deterrents for some, solidifying their resolve against future migration. In contrast, another subset of respondents contemplates migration for specific purposes like leisure, family visits, or pursuit of enhanced opportunities. Motivations for potential migration encompass a curiosity for new experiences, reuniting with family abroad, and a pursuit of improved economic prospects and quality of life. Noteworthy is the identification of specific countries such as Holland, Canada, Australia, and the USA as potential destinations, reflecting a nuanced interplay of economic considerations, lifestyle preferences, and personal interests. The expressed disinterest in returning to Gulf countries signals a significant shift in migration

aspirations, indicative of a reassessment of the perceived benefits and challenges associated with employment in these regions.

6.3 Conclusion

The research draws conclusions based on the study's theoretical framework, methodology, and key findings. It notes that Ghanaian return migrants from the Gulf States predominantly fall within the youth demographic, particularly in the active age working group. While migration to the Gulf States has been observed to positively impact the lives of most migrants during their stay, the decision to return to their home countries is influenced by a multitude of factors. These factors encompass economic considerations and a desire for peace, among other motivations. Notably, the primary motivating factor, as substantiated by various studies (Awumbila et al., 2008 and 2011; King, 2000), is the negative influences and abuses experienced by migrants in the host countries.

The findings underscore the involvedness of migration experiences, revealing not only the challenges faced but also the resilience, adaptability, and resourcefulness of returnees. Key themes emerged, including pre-migration decision-making influenced by economic considerations, the varied nature of migration experiences, and the diverse strategies employed for reintegration. Health concerns, legal challenges, and social and emotional well-being were critical aspects affecting returnees, highlighting the need for comprehensive support structures. The chemistry of family dynamics, entrepreneurship, employment challenges, and shifting career trajectories demonstrated the intricate web of factors influencing the social experiences of returnees.

The study's findings both validate and challenge the employed theoretical frameworks in significant ways. While Push-Pull theory effectively explains initial migration motivations through economic factors, the findings reveal its limitations in explaining return decisions

where psychological trauma and exploitation override rational economic calculations, suggesting the need to expand Lee's (1966) framework beyond economic determinism. Transnationalism theory is partially supported through maintained connections and remittances, yet the study uncovers how forced religious conversions and traumatic experiences can rupture rather than sustain transnational identities, challenging Portes et al.'s (1999) assumption of fluid cross-border belonging. Social Network Theory proves robust in explaining migration facilitation and reintegration support, though the findings reveal network constraints through stigma and excessive expectations, extending Cassarino's (2004) framework to include negative network effects. Structural Theory most comprehensively explains reintegration challenges through Ghana's inadequate support systems, yet the 75% entrepreneurship rate among returnees suggests individual agency can partially overcome structural constraints, refining the theory's deterministic tendencies. These theoretical refinements contribute to a more nuanced understanding of return migration as a complex phenomenon requiring multi-theoretical approaches that account for both structure and agency, economic and psychosocial factors, and positive and negative network effects.

The significance of financial preparedness and the impact on family dynamics underscored the delicate balance returnees navigate upon their return. Furthermore, the exploration of future migration aspirations revealed a spectrum of perspectives, with a majority expressing a firm commitment to stay rooted in their home country, while others contemplated potential journeys for specific purposes. The expressed disinterest in returning to Gulf countries signifies a noteworthy shift in migration aspirations. Overall, these findings contribute to the understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with the migration and reintegration of domestic workers, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to support their well-being and successful reintegration into their home communities.

6.4 Recommendations for Research

Building on the insights gained from this study, several avenues for future research emerge that could contribute to a more in-depth understanding of migration dynamics, reintegration processes, and policy implications. These recommendations not only serve the broader academic community but also outline potential trajectories for my own PhD, Post-Doctoral, and future research endeavours.

For an immediate research priority, first, a comprehensive examination of the effectiveness and challenges of policies aimed at regulating recruitment agencies in labour-sending countries like Ghana would provide valuable insights into the practical implementation of these measures. This research avenue, which I am particularly interested in pursuing for my PhD studies, could explore the impact of such policies on reducing migrant vulnerabilities and ensuring fair treatment, guiding policymakers in refining and optimizing regulatory frameworks.

Additionally, an investigation into the role of technology in facilitating communication and support networks for migrants during their overseas employment and upon return could be a fruitful area of research. Understanding how digital platforms and communication technologies influence the well-being and reintegration experiences of migrants could inform the development of targeted interventions and support mechanisms. This technological dimension of migration represents a potential Post-Doctoral research focus, particularly as digital transformation continues to reshape migration experiences.

More importantly, looking beyond immediate priorities, several interconnected research themes warrant sustained investigation:

1. Longitudinal studies tracking the same cohort of returnees over 5-10 years to understand the long-term sustainability of reintegration strategies, particularly entrepreneurial ventures.
2. Comparative analysis of return migration experiences across different African countries sending workers to the Gulf, which could reveal regional patterns and best practices.
3. Gender-specific investigations into the differential impacts of domestic work migration on male versus female workers' psychological well-being and family dynamics.
4. Policy evaluation research assessing the effectiveness of bilateral labour agreements between Ghana and Gulf states in protecting worker rights.
5. Innovation in reintegration support, examining how diaspora networks and returnee associations can be leveraged for more effective reintegration programs.

These research directions collectively form a coherent research agenda that I envision pursuing throughout my academic career. The progression from examining regulatory frameworks (PhD) to exploring technological solutions (Post-Doctoral) and eventually conducting longitudinal impact assessments represents a logical evolution of scholarly inquiry that builds upon the foundation established in this dissertation. Overall, these research directions can collectively contribute to a more comprehensive and dynamic understanding of the phenomenon of international migration, while providing a clear pathway for my continued contribution to this vital field of study.

6.5 Policy Implications and Recommendations

The ongoing trend of increasing globalisation and heightened migration is expected to continue drawing migrants to the Gulf Region, particularly from sub-Saharan African nations like Ghana. While some returning migrants reported positive experiences with recruitment agencies, others faced challenges. To address these inconsistencies and improve overall worker

protection, policymakers in Ghana could consider implementing measures such as strengthening the regulatory framework for recruitment agencies. This could involve increased oversight, stricter licensing requirements, and clearer guidelines for ethical recruitment practices.

Additionally, collaboration between the Government of Ghana and labour-receiving countries, facilitated through consulates, is recommended to investigate and prosecute cases of abuse. This proactive approach aims to deter potential perpetrators and safeguard the rights of migrants.

Moreover, building on this study's empirical findings, the following recommendations are systematically categorized to address specific reintegration challenges identified in the research.

Economic recommendations, responding to the finding that 65% of returnees face unemployment while 75% pursue entrepreneurship, require the Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Trade and Industry to establish returnee-specific business incubation centers with dedicated microfinance schemes, partnering with existing institutions like the National Board for Small Scale Industries and Microfinance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC). Social interventions, addressing documented experiences of stigma and family pressure, necessitate the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to coordinate with Ghana's extensive network of religious institutions and civil society organizations to implement community sensitization programs and peer support groups, leveraging existing structures like the Christian Council and Ghana Muslim Mission for immediate, low-cost implementation. Psychological support, crucial given that high note of returnees report depression symptoms and trauma from exploitation, requires the Mental Health Authority to integrate screening protocols into the Ghana Immigration Service's return processes while training specialized counsellors through collaboration with teaching hospitals and WHO funding. Policy-level

reforms, responding to widespread recruitment agency exploitation, demand strengthening the National Migration Policy (2016) enforcement mechanisms through establishing a dedicated Migration Management Bureau as outlined in the policy but not yet implemented, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs accelerates bilateral labour agreement negotiations with Gulf states to include mandatory worker protection clauses, agency liability provisions, and joint monitoring mechanisms.

The feasibility of these recommendations varies significantly: short-term initiatives like peer support groups through religious networks (3-month timeline) demonstrate high feasibility by building on existing community structures; medium-term interventions such as mental health integration (12-18 months) face moderate challenges due to limited specialized personnel requiring phased training approaches; while long-term structural changes including comprehensive reintegration centers (3-5 years) depend on sustained political will and donor commitment, competing with pressing national priorities like education and healthcare. Implementation challenges include fragmented institutional mandates requiring inter-ministerial coordination through the proposed National Coordination Mechanism on Migration, limited fiscal space necessitating innovative financing through diaspora bonds and development partner support, and capacity constraints within implementing agencies requiring technical assistance from IOM and ILO.

Critical to success is establishing clear accountability through a stakeholder responsibility matrix: the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations leads policy coordination with quarterly progress reviews; IOM provides technical assistance and pilot program funding; NGOs and civil society organizations deliver direct services; returnee associations facilitate peer mentorship; while academic institutions including the Centre for Migration Studies monitor and evaluate outcomes. The Ministry of Information's role extends beyond awareness

creation to countering misinformation through targeted campaigns in high-migration communities, utilizing local radio and community durbars. International organizations must move beyond advisory roles to direct implementation support, with ILO establishing a dedicated Gulf Migration Desk in Accra and UNHCR expanding protection mechanisms for trafficking victims.

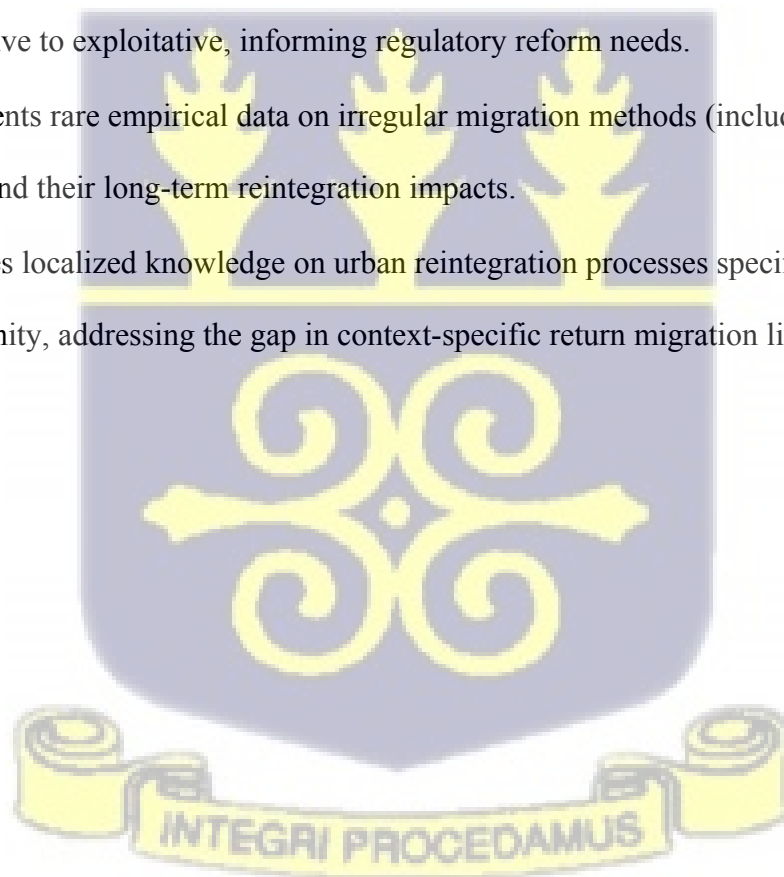
These recommendations transform research findings into actionable interventions while acknowledging Ghana's resource constraints and institutional limitations. Success requires shifting from reactive crisis management to proactive migration governance, recognizing that protecting citizens abroad and supporting their successful return contributes directly to national development objectives. The ongoing review of the National Migration Policy presents an immediate opportunity to institutionalize these recommendations, ensuring that Ghana's estimated 1.5 million citizens abroad and growing numbers of returnees receive the protection and support that is both their right and the nation's obligation.

6.6 Groundbreaking Contributions to Knowledge

This research makes the following original contributions to migration studies, particularly regarding the experiences of Ghanaian domestic workers in the Gulf Region:

1. Develops the first integrated four-theory framework specifically for analyzing Ghanaian return migration from the Gulf Region, providing a replicable analytical model for future research.
2. Documents unprecedented gender-balanced perspectives (12 male, 12 female) on domestic work migration, revealing previously unexplored gendered dimensions of this phenomenon.
3. Establishes entrepreneurship as the dominant post-return livelihood strategy (75% of returnees), challenging existing literature's emphasis on employment-seeking behavior.

4. Identifies religious conversion as an undocumented survival strategy among Ghanaian migrants in the Gulf, contributing new understanding of cultural adaptation mechanisms.
5. Reveals a paradigm shift in migration aspirations with 96% of returnees rejecting future Gulf migration, indicating changing migration patterns requiring policy attention.
6. Provides the first systematic documentation of mental health challenges and the role of religious institutions in supporting Ghanaian returnees' psychosocial reintegration.
7. Introduces a replicable methodological innovation using community leaders as research facilitators for accessing sensitive migration populations.
8. Generates empirical evidence on recruitment agency practices ranging from supportive to exploitative, informing regulatory reform needs.
9. Documents rare empirical data on irregular migration methods (including stowaway cases) and their long-term reintegration impacts.
10. Produces localized knowledge on urban reintegration processes specific to the Madina community, addressing the gap in context-specific return migration literature.



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APPENDICES

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



CENTER FOR MIGRATION STUDIES

**"LIVED EXPERIENCES OF REINTEGRATED RETURNED DOMESTIC
WORKERS FROM THE GULF REGION IN GHANA."**

Dear respondents, I am an MPHIL Candidate at the Centre for Migration Studies of the University of Ghana, Legon-Accra, undertaking research on *"Lived Experiences of Reintegrated Returned Domestic Workers from the Gulf Region in Ghana."*

I would kindly ask you to provide the most accurate response you can to the following questions. Your specific comments are anonymous and absolutely confidential. I guarantee your responses will only be utilized for academic purposes.

Thank you.

IDENTIFICATION

REGION:

MUNICIPALITY:

TOWN/SETTLEMENT:

PLACE OF INTERVIEW:

HOUSEHOLD NUMBER (if applicable)

PART A – PERSONAL/ DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

1. Gender/Sex: Male [] Female []

2. i) What was your age before migrating?

- ii) What is your current age?

3. What is your ethnicity?

4. i) What was your religion before migrating?

- ii) Has your religion changed since migration?

5. i) What was your qualification before migration?

- ii) Did your qualification change after migration?

- iii) What is your current level of education?

6. i) What was your marital status before migration?

- ii) Has your marital status changed after migration?

7. What was the state of your spouse and their occupations before and after migration?
(If applicable)

8. i) What was your occupation before migration?

- ii) Has your occupation changed after migration?

9. i) How many children did you have before migration?

- ii) How many children do you have currently?

- iii) What was the state of the children before migration and after migration?
.....

10. How did you hear of the migration opportunity in the Gulf Region?

.....

11. Who facilitated the migration?

- a) A recruitment agency b) Yourself c) Other (Specify)

Any additional information:

12. Which country did you migrate to?

- a) Qatar b) Saudi Arabia c) UAE d) Kuwait e) Jordan f) Others (specify)

.....

13. What was your reason for choosing this country?

.....

.....

...

14. What type of returnee are you considered?

- a) Forced returnee b) Voluntary returnee

15. How many years did you spend in host country?

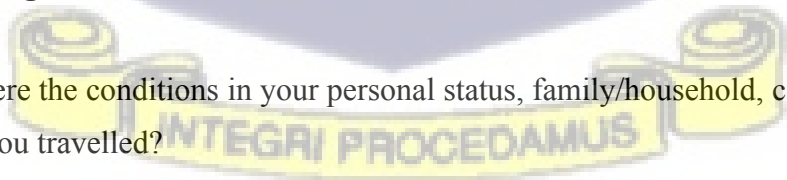
16. How many months/years spent in **Ghana upon return** from host country?

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PART B – VIEWS OF RESPONDENTS ON THE TOPIC UNDER INVESTIGATION.

1. Pre-Migration Condition

- What were the conditions in your personal status, family/household, community before you travelled?
- What factors influenced your decisions to migrate to the Gulf Region?
- How did you finance your trip?



- By what means did you get to the host country?
- Did you seek any assistance/support for your travels?

2. a) Factors that facilitate the return of these domestic workers to their home country.

- Can you tell me about your migration journey – Living conditions and challenges?
- What are the major factors that influenced your decision to migrate back to your home country?

Probe: The nature of work?

Culture/religion?

Hospitality?

Abuses?

Financials/compensation/wages?

- Did you at some point in time worry about the outcome of your migration?

b) Other critical factors (Mental and Sexual health) that facilitate the return of these domestic workers to their home country.

- Did you experience any mental health issues while working in the Gulf Region?
- What impact did your migration experience have on your mental health?
- Did you experience any abuse or mistreatment while working in the Gulf Region?
- What kinds of abuse or mistreatment did you experience?

- Did you report any abuse or mistreatment to your employer or authorities in the Gulf Region?
- What impact did the abuse or mistreatment have on your health and well-being?
- Have you received any support or assistance related to the abuse or mistreatment since returning to Ghana?
- Did your migration affect your sex life or sexual behaviour?
- How did migration affect your sex life or sexual behaviour?
- Did you use any form of protection when you have sex and why?
- Did you experience any sexually transmitted infection as your migrant?
- If you did, how did you handle the issue?

3. *The social experiences with their families and the society as a whole after reintegrating.*

- What social experiences were you faced with after reintegrating with your family and the community?

Probe: Discuss both negative/challenges and positive feedback if any?

Challenges in accessing employment?

Current livelihood activity and livelihood activity in host country?

4. *The livelihood strategies employed by returnees after their reintegration*

- What was your means of survival after reintegration?

Probe: Personal mechanism adopted to resolve difficulties?

External support received in communities?

5. *Future migration aspirations for returnees*

- Do you have any intentions of migrating again to where and what are your reasons?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

