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Children Balancing Work With School: A Sociocultural Conception of Child Work and Schooling in Cape Coast Metropolitan Area, Ghana

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CHILDREN BALANCING WORK WITH SCHOOL: A SOCIOCULTURAL

CONCEPTION OF CHILD WORK AND SCHOOLING IN CAPE COAST, GHANA

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Author

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DECLARATION

I, **Enoch Tawiah Sackey**, do hereby declare that except for references to other people's works, which have been duly acknowledged, this work was conducted by me under the supervision of **Professor Overå Johannesen** at the Institute of Psychology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim, during 2012/2013 academic year. This work has neither been submitted in whole nor in part for any degree in this University or elsewhere.

Signed……………………… ………………………

Enoch Tawiah Sackey Date

    (Student)

This work has been submitted for examination with my approval.

Signed………………………… …………………….

Prof. Berit Overå Johannesen

(Supervisor/Advisor)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

> ➤ my grandparents

> ➤ my friends on the streets.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

This study looks into the sociocultural conception of child work and schooling by studying children who are combining work with school in Cape Coast metropolitan area in Ghana. The study is based on the assumption that to understand children who are concurrently working and schooling, we must study the lives and the position of these children in their socio-cultural context. The present study is based on data from semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, participant observations and my personal experience. Qualitative analysis of the data indicated five major themes from the responses of the research participants. These are intergenerational relations, work as a cultural tool for rearing children, school as a setting to prepare children for their future lives, changing functions of work and school knowledge and contention between work and school. The study finds that the children see everything they do in a future lifespan perspective which influences their participation in work and school activities.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1   Background to the Study

According to International Labour Organization (ILO) report (2011), four out of every ten Ghanaians live in poverty. From the report, most of the population that live in poverty work in agriculture, mostly as farmers and fishers.

Ghana, which is one of the foremost countries in the world to ratify the ILO Conventions on Child Labour, is still struggling to implement the conventions faithfully (Boakye-Boaten, 2008).

Boakye-Boaten (2008) further posits that Ghana has a poor welfare system for her children and her economy is not sound. Children are, therefore, left with limited opportunities to have a 'benign' childhood that is free of work, full of play and complete adult care. Children in Ghana, as a consequence, have to work in order to support themselves and their families (ibid).

There are also cultural and social functions of child work in Ghana. For example, Kufogbe, Awadey & Appenteng (2005), report cultural functions of children's work. They posit that the work children do should be seen as satisfying some particular needs. Some of the needs among other things include establishing relationships, learning, developing competence and self-esteem and to becoming a responsible member of their community. Liebel (2004) also relates some of the things the children he studied relished about the work they did. The children were proud to contribute substantially to their personal and family needs; the children found friends and played together in work; the work supported the children in school; and the children developed productive competences which school could not offer them.

Schooling and work are described in some studies as exclusive entities (Fatunla, 1996; Ram, 1991). They described traditional occupations (works) as marginal occupations in indigenous communities which are associated with oral culture. According to Overå (2011), such representations restrict skills in farming and fishing to indigenous knowledge. For example, Overå (2011) cites the following example in Ram (1991, p.223); *"Most fishing and farming households still regard fishing and farming as the most reliable and readily form of employment, and to train the children in trade, begin their apprenticeship by seven or eight"*. These representations have presented the traditional fishing and farming communities as rigid and static in their ways as if they were impervious to social, economic and political changes that are associated with globalization.

According to statistics, the attendance and enrolment rates among children in the fishing and farming communities are below the national average (Mensah, Koranteng, Bortey & Yeboah, 2006; GSS, 2005). 64.2 per cent of people employed in fishing and farming have never been to school (Overå, 2011; GSS 2005: 253). The greater proportion who had been to primary school dropped out, and were unable to read and write. According to Mensah, et al, (2006), lack of appreciation of the value for education, high demands for unskilled labour and lack of finances were cited as the main constraints that tended to hinder fishers and farmers from sending their children to school. They also cited early recruitment and long years of apprenticeship for succession in fishing and farming as additional factors that contributed to poor school enrolment and attendance.

Presently, it is reported that there is a rise in literacy rates in fishing and farming communities (UNESCO, 2011). Findings indicate that these traditional communities are responding to influences of economic and social changes in the country through education (Béné, Mafadyen & Allison, 2007; Kraan, 2009; Overå 2011). According to them, the current social, economic and political changes are making it imperative for the members of these traditional

communities to adopt behavioural practices which are closely tied to new opportunities which are accessible through knowledge in schools. They also state that fishers and farmers are ready to invest in the education of their children to the highest levels to meet the current socio-economic challenges in their communities.

Notwithstanding the apparent changes in the attitudes of fishers and farmers towards schooling, poverty remains a problem, as does the ability to fully fund secondary and tertiary education by fishers and farmers (GSS, 2011).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In this study I focus on children who are persistently faced with a decision to either earn or attend school. These are children with substantial occupational skills that are in high demand in their communities.

There are, principally, two positions regarding the debate on children's work, with regards to the ILO Conventions on Child labour. There are those who support the view that children's work should be abolished in all forms, and those who support children's right to work.

Available literature on children's work in Ghana have totally come from the perspective of those who support the opinion that work should not have any place in children's lives (Ashagrie, 1993; Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1997; GSS, 2010 ; Mensah et al., 2006 & Nieuwenhuys, 2005). Most of the studies focus on the effects of excessive work on the health and development of children serving in servitude on cocoa farms and in fishing, and the relations between children's work and school performance. These studies have tended to label child work, regardless of its form, as negative (Liebel, 2004). Also, these studies have defined a "child", and "childhood" based on age, disregarding the context in which the children are raised.

I have carried out the present study from the perspective that different cultural attitudes and different economic situations present childhoods which are different in their agencies. The children in this study come from communities in which work is an integral part of child development practices. The argument here is that issues that border on childhood should be addressed contextually.

Let's look at a brief description of the social and economic context of the children. According to UNDP (2009), 42 per cent of population in the developing countries are younger than eighteen, as compared to 18 per cent in high income countries. Also, in the developed world, there are three adults in the productive age per child (defined as anyone under eighteen); whereas in Ghana, there are more children than adults. The children's socio-economic background is further characterized by low salaries, poor market values for farming and fishing products and high dependency ratio.

These characterizations make it impossible to define childhood as a playful, dependent and care-giving phase of life (Hecht, 2000; Twum-Danso, 2009) in Ghana. The difficulty in accessing good and reliable incomes in Ghana greatly hinders parents' capacity to cater for their children as seen in the developed world. Additionally, there is a progressive breakdown in family support structures as it is becoming unsustainable to provide for children (Afenyadu, 2008;) The extended family which had been the mainstay of children in Ghana is fast crumbling in the face of harsh economic realities and social pressures (Nafstad, Blakar, Botchway, Bruer, Filkukova & Rand-Hendriksen, 2013). The nuclear family has also had its share of the overwhelming global economic and social upheavals. More single women are becoming family heads and children are taking on roles that were previously assigned to adults (Ghana Population and Housing Census, 2010).

Also, child work has important socio-cultural functions in Ghana (Zdunnek, Dinkelaker, Kalla, Matthias, Szrama &Wenz, 2008). For example, Afenyadu (2008) reveals that in the coastal areas such as Volta region, fishing is regarded as an integral aspect of their cultural identity and therefore children are made to assimilate fishing while they are young. Mensah, et al., (2006) also cite similar functions of child work in the farming communities.

There is a scant literature that previews the role of work in the lives of children from the perspectives of children and parents, and also from the members of the community in which children live in Ghana (Mensah et al. 2006).

This present study assumes that in order to localize and broaden the understanding of child work and the role of schooling in the lives of children in fishing and farming communities, it is important to involve the people who are directly involved in this issue, including the children who balance work with school, parents and members of the community in which the children live (Liebel, 2004, Boakye-Boaten, 2006).

1.3   Aims of the Study

Based on the aforementioned problem statement, this study intends to explore the following aims:

- Children's conception of work and schooling in their lives
- Parents and the general community's conception of child work and schooling
- How children negotiate their lives between earning and learning

1.4   Significance of the Study

I believe that a nuanced understanding of the socio-cultural conception of child work in Ghana will broaden the understanding of the place of work in children's lives in Ghana. It is hoped that this will help in the development of effective programmes and policies for

children who work. Many intervention programs that are meant to take children out of work and abolish child labour have failed (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). This is essentially due to the fact that the models are not based on the socio-cultural context of the people for whom they are meant (Liebel, 2004). It is expected that an understanding of the socio-cultural conception of child work from the perspectives of the children and parent who are directly involved in it will help enhance the understanding of the children's agency based on the context in which they live.

Additionally, understanding the socio-cultural conception of child work and schooling will help agencies including governmental and Non-governmental organizations who work to promote the development of children to develop intervention models that take cognisance of the cultural and social factors that mediate child work.

According to Liebel (2004), understandings, conditions and practices that are related to children's work are changing all over the world, and it is particularly important to introduce the voices of children, parents and community members into the centre of the discourses that bother on working children and schooling.

1.5   **Motivation for the Study**

As an indigen of a farming community, I grew up with work as an integral part of my daily routine. Also, considering my experiences as a child and those of the children who had been studied on themes that bother on child work, I believe that I share a similar childhood with these children. I had to work to keep myself in school. I had to also support my grandmother and siblings economically through the works I did as a child.

Like Liebel (2004), I cannot comprehend how removal of children from work would enhance their development, and subsequently take them out of their poor states. I would like to bring to fore the importance of work to children in poor agrarian communities like mine. I believe that recognizing children in these communities as active agents and subjects capable of

reproducing their lives will help enhance the development of intervention programmes that

seek to promote the well-being of children who work and school at the same time.

1.6   **Research Questions**

This study is intended to find answers to the following questions:

- How do intergenerational relations influence children's decision to work and attend school?

- How does work influence the everyday routines of children?

- What do children gain from school?

- How does work and school environment influence the children's plans for their future occupations?

- How do parents and adults in the traditional fishing and farming communities perceive the role of work and school in the lives of their children?

- How do children manage the competition between work and school in their lives?

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1   EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.1 The Concept of Childhood in Ghana

In order to understand the meaning of childhood in Ghana, it is well placed to understand the position of the child within their families and communities. According to Twumasi-Danso, (2009), children in Ghana have the obligation to respect and obey their parents and adults.

This obligation is supported by the Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. This Charter obliges children to show profound respect to all adults. Children are therefore expected to submit themselves absolutely to parental and adult control.

A lot of importance is placed on respect to the extent that every child is scared to engage in any form of activity which could be imputed as disrespectful. It is believed that engaging in any despicable act of disrespect could attract curses from their parents. For example, Oppong (1973, p.38) states, "*a child who does not obey his father may suffer illness and death as a result of the father's curses*".

Also, children are often punished severely when they disobey and disrespect their parents and any adult in their communities. According to Twum-Danso (2009) some of the punishments include parents putting water up the nose of their children and fresh pepper into in the anus of their children. Also, a good beating with a well selected stick always awaits the child who disrespects. Children are made to observe these strict practices of respect and obedience so that they will not bring the name of their families into disrepute.

Children in Ghana also work (Boakye-Boaten, 2006). Adults engage children in work related activities for purposes of learning and earning money. Nukunya (2004, p. 111) considers

children's early engagement in activities of their families as "*an indigenous instrument that is used to integrate children into the social fabric and economic life of their families with little effort*". Children are therefore made to take on adults roles early in life on the farm, sea, or at home. According to Mensa-Bonsu & Dowuna-Hammond (1996), customarily, children are supposed to assist their parents in their enterprise of life.

There are also legal frameworks that place responsibility on children to work to support their families and communities. For example, The Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999) resonates with the laws of the 1981 Africa Charter on Human and People's Rights (The Banjul Charter) that all individuals, including children, have responsibilities towards their families, community, society and the state. According to Van-Bueren (1995), the provisions in the laws about children's responsibility should help people understand the potential economic and social importance children could render to society. Article 31 of the Charter on the Rights and Welfare of children, according to Twum-Danso (2004, p. 423), highlights the duties which children are supposed to perform. This is summarized in the following quotation; "*every child has responsibilities towards his family and society, the State and other legally recognized communities, including the international community*".

According to Twum-Danso (2009), children in Ghana begin to take responsibilities by the age of 5 or 6. Usually, during the early stages responsibilities are allotted based on competence, size and gender of the child. For example, in fishing communities, boys normally work at the shore while girls sell at the market. On the farm, boys weed and tend crops while girls cook and attend to babies. The children's responsibilities increase and become more specialized as they grow older (Nsamenang, 2004).

According to Twum-Danso (2009), children reported their engagement in work in terms of the contributions they make towards their family household. There is a vehement acceptance

of work by children. It is therefore not uncommon to find children who are briskly engaged in various ventures and making contributions to their personal and family well-being.

It is through the collective effort of children that poor parents are able to keep up their families. It would therefore not be useful to structure the world into a binary category of children and adults, with binary set of roles and responsibilities (Bourdillon, 2006). He argues that diverse social, economic and physical environment determine different childhoods.

2.1.2. Child Work and Poverty in Ghana

Prior to the period of colonization in Ghana, the child was seen as a delicate being that needed to be carefully taken care of (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). During such period, most fostering practices centred on the provision of needed material and spiritual support for the development of children. Every child belonged to a family, kinship or community. According to Kilbride & Kilbride (1990), the entire society in which a child belonged was responsible for the rearing of children. Families produced enough to provide, adequately, the needs of children. During that period, family and child destitution was a rare phenomenon (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). However, the children were socialized in the traditional practices of their communities including indigenous occupations. Through this socialization process, children learned to acquire occupational skills, and also learned to live responsibly. Child work was used as a fostering practice that helped children to acquire occupational competence (Onwauchi, 1972; Boakye-Boaten, 2010).

However, changes in the political, economic and social institutions associated with colonialism and globalization have tremendously affected the social institutions in the Ghanaian societies. These changes have weakened the ability of traditional practices to sustain the values and child care practices which defined children (Twum-Danso, 2009). According to Craig (1971), the contemporary problems in Ghana and African in general have

resulted from disruptions created by colonialism. For example, the colonial powers forced their social structural system on the indigenous people. And imperial education which sought to take children out of the adult work world was blatantly imposed with no relevance to the child's existing cultural context. This was also reported in Sudan by Katz (2004). It is not surprising, as Ghana and Sudan had the same colonial powers. This brought about disengagement between the colonial education and the lives of the children in their communities. This affected the traditional socialization practice that ensured that children contributed to the upkeep of their families (Nukunya, 2003)

The monetization of the economic institutions in Ghana also had a huge impact on the traditional society's subsistence way of life. Poll tax was introduced and parents had to pay school fees for their children's enrolment in colonial education. According to Valentine & Revson (1979), the head tax that was introduced greatly modified the social structure of traditional societies. Ghanaians had to work so that they pay their head tax. Anyone who could not pay their head tax had to lose their lands. Parents had to pay head tax for their children as well. Children at that moment in time became economic liabilities to their parents. This resulted in the legitimization of involving children in paid work. The occupational patterns that resulted from the new political economy did not support traditional subsistence practices and this led to the weakening of kinship and extended family system. According to Valentine & Revson (1979), the new political economies introduced institutionalized poverty. This made child labour a legitimate venture.

Globalization has also put Ghana at the receiving end of current political economic downturn. This has deepened the poverty in Ghana (Bass, 2004). The economic crisis and poverty in Ghana partly resulted from the implementation of economic programs that were supposed to revamp the country's economy. One of such policies was the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). On the contrary, the implementation of SAP led to catastrophic economic

consequences in the country; all social services including welfare programs, government subsidies on agriculture, health and education were abolished. The well-being of Ghanaians was sacrificed for debt service. According to Bass (2004), children were worst affected. Endemic corruption by Ghanaian political leaders has also played a huge part in deepening the poverty in Ghana.

These factors have conspired against the former traditional practices in which children were basically involved so that they could imbibe the occupational skills of their families.

2.1.3. **Work and School**

Traditionally, children in Ghana are educated through the on-going process of life in their traditional activities (Onwauchi, 1972). Children acquire the competences and skills for life through apprenticeship training and cultural participation. This includes the direct participation of children in works or activities that contribute to the well-being of their families. Traditional learning involves the direct participation of children in the adult world. The missionaries in Ghana introduced formal educational curricula based on the cultures and traditions of the British (Nukunya, 2003). There was strong concentration on European values and practices while training and participation in traditional activities was hugely de-emphasized (Boakye-Boaten, 2010; Katz, 2004). Children increasingly aspired to take up white-collar jobs like teaching, clerks and storekeeping. This introduced disengagement between formal education and the lives of children in their natural environment (Boakye-Boaten, 2006; Nukunya, 2003). The disengagement of children from parental occupations weakened the extended family system and greatly reduced yields from farming and fishing.

Most studies on children who combine learning with earning in Africa have tended to disagree on the possibility of children engaging in child work and schooling simultaneously. Some argue that children's engagement in paid work does not enhance their education. They

also argue that when children engage in work they are likely to leave school and join the adult world before they are ready (ILO, 2010; UNCRC, 2008).

According to Mortimer (2003), school attendance or performance is inversely related to child work. However, the data on the amount of time children spent in work is inconclusive. The problem with this argument is that they fail to determine the causal relations between work and school in terms of the interaction between the factors that mediate children's everyday life, like the time children spend hanging out and watching television.

However, other studies have also established that time children spend in paid work is not always in direct competition with school. There is the argument that children can use some of the hours they spend on leisure to improve their attendance in school (Hazarika & Bedi, 2003; Ravallion & Wodon, 2000). According to Guarcello, Rosati & Valdivia (2005), variables such as parental poverty and education weaken the cause and effect link between child work and school outcomes. According to them, the social context of children as well as the kind of work children do is important in discussing the usefulness of child work in terms of school outcomes.

Myers (2001) shows that balancing work with schooling can meet children's pertinent social demands, makes sense educationally and is doable. Several studies in Ghana and other parts of Africa have indicated that working children and their parent had positive view of the work children did, by citing opportunities for children to increase in knowledge, competence and self-confidence (Twum-Danso, 2009; Boakye-Boaten, 2010; Bourdillon, 2005).

Instead of the ILO (2010) pursuing policies that seek to abolish child work, Bissell (2005) argues that improving the provision of education in poor communities could enhance the performance of children in school. She also argues that instead of focusing on gross abolishment of child labour, policies should be directed at removing harm in children's work

and advancing programs that will seek to protect children. In spite of this, she acknowledges that in poor countries, there could be competition between school and work.

She concludes that it is too simplistic to oppose school and work: she argues for a pragmatic strategy that respects children whose only option is the combination of learning and earning.

Studies around the world over acknowledge that, even in poor and typical traditional communities, education is highly valued. There is the strong belief that education could provide children with skills that can help them gain employment with high remuneration and also empower them with knowledge. These benefits can help children alleviate poverty in their communities.

However, when the quality of education is poor and nepotism is not checked, it becomes idealistic to extol the material and immaterial importance of formal education. It would mean nothing, practically, to the well-being of children. According to Katz (2004), sometimes the knowledge provided by formal education is inferior to the more practical traditional knowledge that is learned on the farm and in fishing. She argues that children should have the chance to learn from both traditions of learning.

2.1.4. The Spatiality of Ghanaian Children

The social and economic life of the people in Ghana is largely dependent on the environment, which means that traditional occupations of the people are related to the economic potential of their environmental conditions (Nukunya, 2003).

In Ghana, those who live along the coast, rivers and on the islands are fishers. It is possible to also farm in some areas in the coastal areas. The people who live within the inlands of the country are mainly farmers; those who live in the grass and desert areas are basically pastoralists. Prominent fishing communities in Ghana include Anlo, Ga and Fantes. Cape

Coast is a Fante area. Cape Coast metropolitan area has a fishing community along the coast, while those at the northern part are predominantly farmers. Cape Coast thus has a mixed economy, involving the cultivation of farm produce and fishing. These are the main occupational activities; there are, however, other economic activities which are done by the people here, such as weaving, house-building and blacksmiths (Oppong, 1973).

In the fishing communities, children are involved in all aspects of the fishing activity. Most fishing activities are gender structured. The boys are involved in actual fishing activities, while the girls usually sell fish at the market. There are no restrictions on who is allowed to work at the shore and every child has the legitimacy to be there. Usually, the work at the shore is not family based. Those children who are sufficiently competent to fish join the fishers to sail to deep seas for days. Children are also included in the singing and the dragging of fishnets from the sea.

The shores are regarded as the second home of the people in the fishing communities. Some of the children even sleep at the shore as they wait for fishers to arrive from deep seas. There is no disconnection between what happens at the shore and in other parts of the village. Messages are readily carried to the community to announce the arrival of fishers at the shore. It is a common place to find children escaping school to work at the shore (Twum-Danso, 2009).

The indigens of Northern Cape Coast metropolis are farmers who are engaged in the production of plantains, cassava, and palm oil. In the farming communities, there are two main farming seasons. These are the major season and the lean season. Farming is thus rain-fed in Ghana.

The basic farming activities involve the clearing of bush, felling of trees, and the preparation of the land for planting or sowing. These preparatory activities are mainly done by men. The

competence of the local children determines the amount of work that is apportioned to them or the degree to they are involved. Usually, boys are involved prominently in the preparatory activities. Girls are involved in activities such as sowing, harvesting and carrying of the farm products home. Children are involved more in farming during planting and harvesting seasons when farm activities become brisk.

The children in the farming communities mostly earn outside their familial farming occupations. They usually work on other people's farms for money. Others also earn incomes from various works that are in demands in their communities. Some of these include sand winning, load carting, domestic works, bakery, drumming and dancing, and basketry (Oppong, 1973; Twum-Danso, 2009).

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theories offer explanatory framework to find answers to questions (Creswell, 2009). One concept and three theories are employed in this study to explore the research questions. These are the concept of intergenerational relations in Ghana, position theory, theory of situated learning and the theory of intent participation.

2.2.1. The Concept of Intergenerational Relations in Ghana

In pursuing understanding of children's work, I believe that the concept of intergenerational relations in Ghana provides a good framework to explore the ideals of children's material and social obligations to their parents, siblings and kinfolks. According to Gyekye (1996), the communal structure of the Ghanaian society is built on the traditional value of intergenerational relations. It encompasses the social relations, attitudes and behaviour that exist between members of a family who share a social life and strive towards a common good. Tsai & Dzorgbo (2012) defined intergenerational relations as mutual and exchange relationships among members of a family, individuals or community.

Intergenerational relations are expressed in various ways, including sharing, caring for one another, showing solidarity and positive regards. In Ghanaian families, everyone regardless of age or sex is culturally required to engage in some acts of exchange, either materially or immaterially. According to Gyekye (1996), each member of the family and community accepts the existence of common values, obligations and feels a sense of loyalty and commitment to the family and the community which is expressed through the willingness and readiness to advance the well-being of the family and the community. One of the beliefs underlying intergenerational relations in Ghana is that every human being is born into a human society which already existed. Reference to this belief could be traced to an Akan maxim,

"*When a baby descends from heaven, they descend into a human society*".

The maxim connotes that every human is social and communal in nature. This means that no individual person can live in isolation or is self-sufficient. This expresses the need for social relations in families and the community at large.

Globalization, political and economic changes are straining intergenerational relations in Ghanaian families (Nafstad, et al., 2013). Regardless of these changes that are putting stress on intergenerational relations in Ghanaian families, children, parents and kinfolks regularly observe obligations of exchange and sharing towards one another (Nukunya, 2003 &Tsai & Dzorgbo, 2012). I believe that the concept of intergenerational relations may help explain part of the reasons why children work.

2.2.2. Positioning Theory

Positioning theory explains how changing relationships are experienced and enacted by individuals as they make meaning in their lives. Positioning helps to identify the dynamic attitudes, and responsibilities of individuals in relationships, as they engage in an activity (Harré & Langenhove, 1999). As people interact socially or culturally they explain, defend and alter their positions. They also tend to position others. Positioning theory considers everyday activities and language as the means through which individuals construct meaning in their lives (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003). According to Harré& Langenhove (1999), the constant flow of everyday life for any group of people, including ourselves, is fragmented through activities into distinct episodes that make up the basic elements of our individual identities and our social world.

As people engage in meaning making, two things are observed. One of which is, "*what people do, publicly and privately, is intentional, that is directed to something beyond itself,*

and normatively constrained" (Harré & Langenhove, 1999; p.20). Also, the traditional moral order subjects what individuals do to assessments of their behaviours. Such markers of assessments could be competent/incompetent, correct/incorrect, approved/disapproved, proper/improper and so on (Harré & Langenhove, 1999).

A focus on positioning is further used to analyse culturally mediated interactions between people, both from their own individual perspectives and as representatives of groups (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003). This means that an individual's position usually consists of clusters of personal attributes. Such personal attributes could emanate from interpersonal, intergroup or intrapersonal action.

According to Harré& Langenhove (1999, p.2), the second observation as people make meaning in their lives is "*What people are, to themselves and others, is a product of a lifetime of interpersonal interactions superimposed over a very general ethological endowment*". The second observation assumes that identities are constructed through interactive activities. This means that identity is seen as local or "ethno"-ways in which activity is used in interactive context to demonstrate clearly the local display of positioning of the self and others.

Positioning therefore affords the researcher the opportunity to understand the research participants as much as possible as they engage in activities, such as work or schooling. The focus here is on the research participants actively interacting and making sense of their given social and cultural phenomena of which they are a part. This makes it possible to also understand the active subjective positioning and constructive processes of the individual research participants. According to Koroboan & Bamburg (2004), positioning theory analyses the different activity-based endeavours used to position oneself within different activities, during different interactive situations, and for the management of certain ideological tensions in the overall establishment of "who I am" or "who I am becoming".

I believe that positioning theory will help the present study to explore the children's collective experiences of work and schooling.

2.2.3. **The Theory Of Situated Learning**

The theory of situated learning construes learners as whole and active persons in their communities or world (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this process of learning the development of an identity as a member of a community and becoming a knowledgeably skilful are seen as parts of the same process. According to Lave (1996), the motivation to become a member of a community drives the desire of learners or emerging persons to acquire their traditional skills. As individuals learn to acquire knowledge and develop their identities, they produce themselves and reproduce their communities as well.

In situated learning, the process of learning involves newcomers or emerging individuals moving from engaging in improvised activities to participate, peripherally, in ongoing activities. A developing individual's peripheral legitimate participation in a community of practice is viewed as an integral part of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Individuals progress from being peripheral participants to actual participants as they increase in competence. Through the process of continuous participation in ongoing activities in the communities, emerging persons move from newcomers to active legitimate participants. As individuals continue to assume full participation in their community's activities, they earn their identity as practitioners. At this stage, they have become old-timers.

The change in positions of the participants in community of practice reflects the dynamics of social relations in which persons and practices change, re-produce and transform each other (Lave, 1996). The old-timer-newcomer relations in situated learning do not imply normative master-apprentice relations. Old-timers do not have any rigid, direct and instructive impact on what the newcomers learn, as organization of learning situation does not follow any formal

instructional procedure, as seen in formal school. The old-timers act as facilitators of learning. This means that the old-timers' basic function in situated learning is the provision of opportunity situation for learning to the emerging person. Newcomers and old-timers are dependent on each other. Newcomers depend on old-timers in order to learn. And, old-timers depend on newcomers in order to carry on the process of production in their communities.

In situated learning, learning activity is organized in practice. As a result, newcomers have an unhindered access to observe the full range of activities of their work. This gives them the opportunity to see the complexity of their community practice or work from the beginning and subsequently develop a broader understanding of what it is about than just the particular task in which they are engaged (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

In situated learning, the evaluation of newcomer's progress is enshrined in their readiness to engage in the ongoing work practices. Newcomers are not given external tests or scores for their participation. As progress is visible to both newcomers and old-timers, the success of the learning process depends on the eventual replacement of old-timers by newcomers. This is when newcomers become old-timers themselves.

2.2.4. The Theory of Intent Participation

Intent participation assumes that people learn by actively observing and "listening-in" on ongoing activities as they participate in shared activities (Rogoff, Paradise, Mejia-Arauz, Correa-Chavez & Angelillo, 2003). According to Rogoff et al. (2003), intent community participation takes place in communities where children are part of mature adult activities, as well as in settings where children are segregated from full range of adult activities. There is no regular format for organizing learning for children in Ghanaian communities (Gyekye, 1996). According to Lave & Wenger (1991) the most important aspect of having

the opportunity to acquire and practice work is being there during essential activities. However, a careful study of children's work could delineate internal logic in how children are oriented in work (Rogoff et al., 2003). The internal logic is presented in the prism which constitutes the structure of intent participation. The internal logic applies to learning that takes place in both formal and informal settings. This present study therefore study uses the structure of intent participation to analyse how learning is organized for the children both in work and at school.

The features of the prism are based on the assumption that an understanding of children's acquisition of skills and their subsequent participation in work requires the understanding of the formats that are used routinely, both consciously and unconsciously, to organize learning for children (Philips, 1983). According to Rogoff et al. (2003), the prism of intent participation has the following features: children as participants; organization of work; roles of more experience people; motivation for work; sources of learning; communication method; and assessment.   **The prism of Intent Participation**
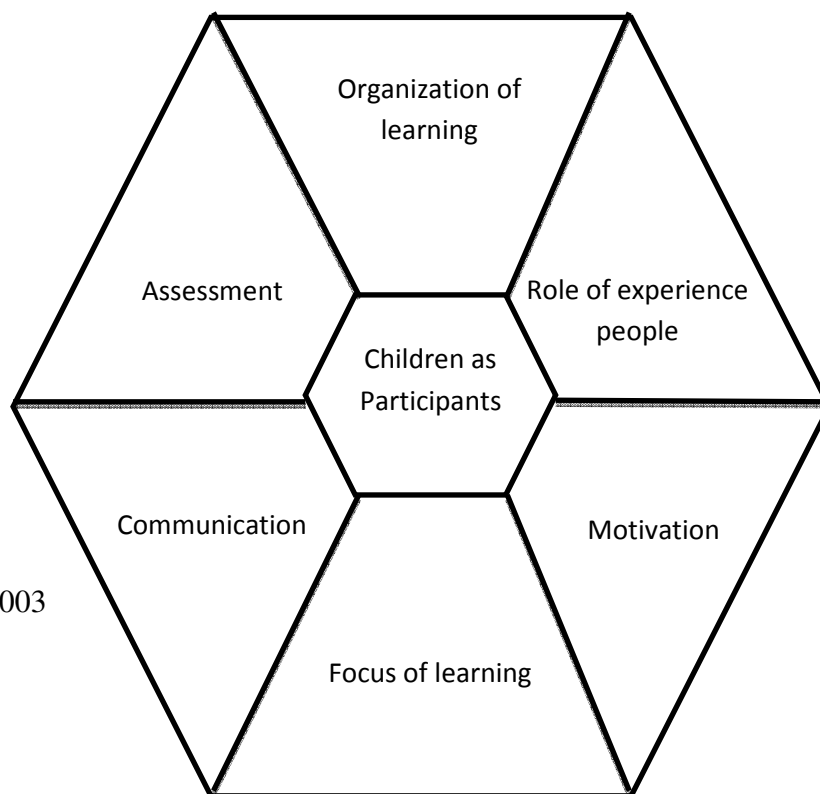
Rogoff et al., 2003

Children as participants: This segment of the prism identifies the place of children in the learning situation or context. It also shows the degree of legitimacy children have to participate in learning activities.

Organization of work: This segment indicates how learning endeavours are organized for children.

Roles of More-Experienced People and Children: This feature of the prism indicates the role of experienced people and learners in a learning context.

Motivation for Work: The drive for learners and experienced individuals to engage in learning enterprises are explained here.

Sources of Learning: This segment of the prism represents learning settings.

Communication method: The communication method represents the medium of instruction in the learning settings. It also shows the tools that are used to transmit information to the learners.

Assessment: Assessment represents the methods that are used to gauge learners' performance and progress as they engage in learning activities. Assessment also indicates the degree of the entire learning enterprise.

The prism defines a cluster of features that fit together to form a way of orienting children in a learning endeavour. The features therefore describe related aspects of learning. Based on the kind of learning activity that is being done by the children, the features thicken or wane in practice. The prominence of a feature in practice or learning mode depends usually on the child's level of competence and the setting of the learning context. Usually, in a learning context, these features are not followed regularly; they are integrated within a community of learning practices (Rogoff et al., 2003).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. **Data Collection Site**

Cape Coast Metropolitan area is the smallest district in Ghana in terms of land size. It covers approximately 122 square kilometres. Cape Coast doubles as the Metropolitan capital and the capital of Central Region of Ghana. It borders Gulf of Guinea on the south, Western Region on the east, Greater Accra on the west and Eastern Region on the North. Cape Coast is the administrative headquarters of Central Region. It is known as the citadel of education in Ghana, as it serves as the home of the most prestigious second cycle and tertiary educational institutions in Ghana. Cape Coast served as the capital of Gold Coast (now Ghana) during the colonial period until 1877 when the capital was moved to Accra.

The poverty level in Cape Coast is the highest in Central Region as a result of its slow growth (Agyei-Mensah, 2006; Lund, Dei, Boakye & Opoku-Agyeman, 2008). Central Region is the fourth poorest region in Ghana (Agyei-Mensah, 2006). According to Agyei-Mensah, (2006), the only region in southern Ghana that has recorded increase in the incidence of poverty is Central Region.

Fishing and farming activities are the main economic mainstays in Cape Coast. These agricultural activities are practiced on the subsistence level. Fishing is mostly done by the indigens who reside along the coast in the southern part of Cape Coast; while farming is mostly done by those who reside in the central and northern part. However, there are individuals who do both fishing and farming in these areas. Most studies on children who work and school in Ghana have been undertaken in Western region and Greater Accra region. Western region is predominantly a cocoa producing area which attracts a lot of migrating

children from the northern part of Ghana. Greater Accra region also attracts large numbers of migrating children who work as porters (Boakye-Boaten, 2010; GSS, 2011; Twum-Danso, 2009). These children who were largely studied in these works did not originally come from the communities in which they were studied. These were children who moved basically from place to place in search of work to do.

This study sets out to explore the lives of children who live in their communities together with their parents and kins. These are children who are integral part of the occupational culture of the community in which they live. I chose Cape Coast to undertake the study because it is one of the places in Ghana where fishing and farming activities thrive successfully. Also, as an indigen, I have deep understanding of the social and cultural activities that take place in Cape Coast. I am also familiar with the education and school enrolment pattern of children in Cape Coast, as I have experience as a teacher in both the fishing and farming communities.

3.2.   **The Study Design**

3.2.1. **Qualitative Approach**

The study is set to explore how children and adults conceive and construct the meaning of child work and schooling in their social and cultural context. A qualitative approach is considered the most appropriate to use for the study design. Qualitative approaches are premised on the fact that the human world is linguistically and socially constructed. The methodologies are context sensitive to provide a deep understanding of how people live around their subjective beliefs and motivations (Limb & Dwyer, 2001; Pope & Mays, 1995; Toomela, 2007). More specifically, this study sets out to investigate how children negotiate the contention between learning and earning and their socio-cultural conception of the role of work and school in their lives. In order to produce nuanced and deep understandings of

contextual factors that mediate traditional constructions of meaning, I use a triangulation of qualitative methods; participant observation, personal interviews and group discussions. This approach precludes the use of "pre-conceived variables" in studying the livelihood strategies of children (Willig, 2008, p.9).

3.2.2. **Materials**

Audio recorder, pens, pencils, sheets of paper, notebook and interview guide were used to collect the data. The audio recorder was used to capture the information informants gave during individual, focus group interviews and informal conversations. The pencils, pens and notebook were used to take note of personal observations and informal discussions that ensued between informants during interviews and participant observations. I also took field notes of informal interviews with random participants. This served as a supplementary data for the study.

The semi-structured interview guide served as a guide during interviews and focus group discussions. The semi-structured interview guide was structured along the following pattern; introductory statement to participants, key questions and closing remarks (See Appendix I).

3.2.3. **Participants/Sample**

The informants for the study are children who work and school at the same time. These children have to decide between school and work every day. These are children who have first-hand experience in what it means to work and study at school at the same time. The study also includes parents who have children who are balancing work with school. I believe that the parents live with the dilemma of work and school; as a consequence, their ways of dealing with it will reflect their sociocultural values.

Members of the communities in which the children live were also involved in the study. The members of the children's community were involved based on the assumption that they would deepen the socio-cultural understanding of child work, and the meaning of formal education in their lives. Teachers of the schools where the children were enrolled were also included in the study to bring to fore the impact of the contention between school and work on the children's motivation and interest in school.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the children, parents, community members and teachers for the study. This approach to recruiting participants for this study is consistent with livelihood studies (Bourdillon, 2005; Nieuwenhuys, 2005).

Before I invited the child-participants for the study, I had taught in both schools for three weeks as part of the participant observation I did. This helped me build trust and confidence with the children (Abebe, 2007; Punch, 2001). The schools were both public schools. My choice of the schools was based on the fact that most of the indigenous children in the community attended these schools. I also had professional ties with most of the teachers in the schools. Another important fact was that, most of the children in these schools combined learning and earning.

After I had taught for two weeks, I became familiar with the children and also learned a lot about their backgrounds. I developed participation criteria which enabled me to invite the children. Before a child would participate, such a child should have been combining work with school for the past two years. Also, a child should be working in the community. Every child should participate actively in the local forms of production. I applied the same approach in both schools. The children were aged between 11-16 years.

Similarly, I recruited three parents from both fishing and farming communities. These were not the parents of the children who participated in the research.

I know a lot of people in both communities and this made it easy to for me to invite the parents who bore the right characteristics to participate in the study. These parents had children who worked and schooled concurrently. These parents also participated actively in the local forms of production. I invited them purposively.

3.2.4. **Method Triangulation**

The ethnographic nature of the study required that I did participant observation, interview and focus group discussions with children, parents, teachers and members of the children's communities (Hartley & Muhit, 2003; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

The participant observation enabled me to watch children, parents, teachers and community members in "their own territory and interact with them in their own language" (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 9).

After the initial period of participant observation and informal interactions, I interviewed the children and parents on one-on-one basis to get grasp of the meaning of the life worlds of the research participants (Kvale, 1995). They were useful for getting the story behind participants' experiences and the meanings of work and school in their everyday life (McNamara, 1981). After the interviews, I organized focus group discussions with both the children and the parents. The focus group discussions were organized to further explore their experiences and views on child work and school.

I interspersed the interviews and the focus group discussions with informal conservations and participant observations at the shore and farm. The detail description of the data collection methods I used are below.

3.2.4.1. **Participant Observation**

3.2.4.1.1. **Observations at the shore and farm**

To generate a realistic understanding of the experience of children learning and earning, in terms of how it is embedded in their everyday existence, I sought to observe children who were working and studying in their natural settings (Jorgensen, 1989). I employed participant observation to explore the differences in the ways children are involved in work and how they are taught in school. This is because studying children in their natural settings helps to increase the understanding of their motivations in what they do easily (ibid).

Participant observation is also considered as an effective tool for livelihood studies (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2001), as it helps in the contextualization of learning and earning. According to Bernard (2001, p.136), "it involves getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives". Some authors have identified five levels of participation in participant observation; non-participation, passive participation, moderate participation, active participation, and complete participation (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2001). Active participation was used in this research. Even though I maintained my position as a researcher, being an indigen and a former teacher made it easy for me to immerse myself in the communities. I taught as a teacher in these communities. I actively participated in fishing and farming.

Based on my former experience as a teacher, I decided to actively participate in teaching during the period of my stay for the data collection. During my stay in the schools, I actively observed the interactions that ensued between teachers and the school children. I also learned through conversations with children about their motivation to attend school, the difficulty in deciding whether to attend school or to stay at home and earn. Informal interactions with

teachers also revealed a great deal about the understanding of child work and why it is appropriate or not.

It was relatively easy to observe at the shore. I did not appear a stranger to the people there. I could flawlessly speak Fante (the indigenous language of Cape Coast). Basically, you do not have to be known before you are admitted to participate in fishing in Cape Coast. The shore is a vast open area that welcomes assistance from everyone. I helped in singing, dragging the net and ate coconuts with them. I also assisted some of the children who were mending fishing net. I was also visiting the shore late in the night to observe the children who slept and waited for fishers to arrive from the sea. I observed children while they played, cooked and sold at the shore. I practically visited the shore almost every day of my two months stay in Cape Coast.

I accompanied parents and children to farms. I took part in various farming activities like harvesting of cocoa and weeding. I observed children and parent work together. I also observed children make mats for drying cocoa. I saw them fetch bamboos, ripped them apart and dried them. I was going to farms on Saturdays. Usually, because children do not go to school on Saturday, every child in the farming community is expected to be on farm on Saturday.

I took part in the ongoing flow of events instead of focusing on specific questions. I carefully recorded everything I observed, including trivial facts. I showed eagerness to listen to what the people had to say. I took notes right from the start of every observation, as the human memory is undependable, not even the disciplined ones (Jorgensen, 1989).

3.2.4.2. **Informal Interactions**

As part of my participant observations, I also had informal interactions with other community members who were not among the main respondents. I went through the regular routines of

introduction and consent seeking before any form of discussion was started. I used the informal conversations to expand and corroborate the understanding and conception of child work and schooling in Ghana. This made the studies holistic.

3.2.4.3. **Personal Interviews**

3.2.4.3.1. **Interviews with Children**

To explore the personal views of children on schooling and on the work they do and how these contribute to their livelihood strategies, I interviewed eight children. Four children came from a school in a farming community, while the other four children came from a fishing community. Out of the eight children, seven were interviewed in their schools, while one child was interviewed at the market when she was selling.

As a voluntary teacher, I was assigned to a class in each of the two schools. I acted as a class teacher for these classes, even though I was teaching all the Junior High School classes. I used the classrooms I was assigned to interview the children. I did all the seven interviews when the children had gone on recess.

All the interview sessions went smoothly and uninterrupted, apart from the one that was done at the market. We had to stop intermittently so that she could attend to customers who wanted to buy. However, this did not significantly affect the interview as we comprehensively exhausted all the questions on the interview guide. All the interviews lasted between 30-50 minutes.

3.2.4.3.2. **Interviews with Parents**

I also used one-to-one interviews to investigate parents' conception of the work children do and meaning of schooling to them. I interviewed three farming parents and three fishing parents. I interviewed all the farming parents in their homes. I interviewed two fishers at the

shore, while I interviewed one at the market. All the home interviews were relatively smooth, even though there were occasional disturbances from their infant children. At the shore, I had to speak louder than usual because of the noise from the waves and brisk fishing activities. There were occasional interruptions from buyers at the market.

All the interviews averagely lasted between 35-55 minutes.

3.2.4.4.   **Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

Focus group discussion was chosen as one of the methods to collect data as the study sought to explore the informants' views and experiences (Kitzinger, 1995). The explicit use of group interaction among individuals with fairly similar characteristics helped focused the discussion. This also helped in understanding how and why the informants thought about child work and schooling.

According to Madriz (2000), focus group is able to unearth information that other methods cannot reach. It is able to uncover dimensions of understanding that often remain untapped by more conventional one-to-one interview or questionnaire. The informants in the focus group interviews represented resources upon which the members drew information. This helped the group to encourage one another to verbally formulate their ideas and make observations which had been unarticulated in the previous individual interviews.

Focus group discussion is also considered as an interactive and vigorous method of collecting data as it holds the potential to bring forth expressive and emotional views from the participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The less inhibitive members in the group helped break the ice for shyer participants in the discussion of issues which involved the sharing of discrediting information. The participants filled in for each other, and they corroborated their experiences.

Two focused group discussions were held. One was organized for the children and another for the parents.

Eight children took part in the focus group discussion because the number fell within the range of 6-12 which is considered very appropriate for focused group discussion (Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2007; Willig, 2008). In the group discussions, I followed up on the interactions I had with them in the individual interviews.

The groups were equal mix of females and males. The mixed-group was meant to ensure diversity and also deepen the understanding of both male and female constructions of child work and schooling. The mixture was also meant to ensure that the group members articulated their experiences in ways that broke away from the dominant male cultural constructions of issues in Ghana (Kitzinger, 1995). The diversity and broad-based discussion of issues was further enhanced by the mixture of fishers and farmers. This applied to both parents and children. In fact, the mixed group made the discussions more effective and interactive than some researchers have assumed (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005).

The focus group discussion for the children was organized at Cape Coast Town Hall. Every child knew the place and it was also easy for me to transport the children there. The hall provided the most congenial atmosphere for privacy and uninterrupted discussions. The children were relaxed and talked freely in the atmosphere of the Town Hall. I was granted the permit to use the hall by Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly.

A week before the discussion was held, I had given out the parental consent forms to the children and explained the contents to them. I also offered to provide further explanations to any parent who had any questions to ask. I gave two forms to each child. I asked them to give one of the signed forms to their parents to keep, while they returned one to me.

In all, the focus group discussions for the children lasted one and a half hours, while the focus group discussion for the parents lasted one hour and forty minutes.

3.2.5. Choice of Language

As the approach in this study claims that social reality is constructed and negotiated through language (Willig, 2008), it became imperative for me to use the language the participants in the study were most comfortable and felt at ease with using it. Apart from the teachers who preferred to use a mix of Fante and English language, I interacted with the participants in Fante which is the local dialect of the indigens of Cape Coast.

The respondents had no difficulty in articulating their views and opinions on the questions I asked. I was conscious about my role as a teacher and researcher and a possible feeling of powerlessness among the respondents. Usually, in Ghana, individuals who are proficient in the English language are considered elite. I did not sense any assumption of elitism in my interactions with the respondents, and they did not seem constrained by any fear of me as an authority figure. Rather, the flexibility and proficiency with which the respondents articulated their views enabled me to explore multiple dimensions of the issues I investigated.

3.2.6. Reliability and Validity

As a qualitative study, this work comprehensively and thoroughly documents all the procedures that were used in the study investigation to ensure consistency and truthfulness. This is meant to satisfy a condition in qualitative studies which stipulates that to ensure reliability of results there should be thorough documentation and report of all processes used in the study (Opare-Henaku, 2006).

In all the data collection meetings and discussions, intermittent and corroborative questions were asked to ascertain and confirm the respondents' answers. To ensure that the findings

from the study were truthful from the points of view of the researcher and the research participants, comprehensive debriefing sessions were held for all the research participants after every data collection meeting (Creswell, 2003).

3.3. Data transcription and Analysis

I transcribed the data from the recorded interviews and focus group discussions word-for-word from Fante language to English. All the local terminologies and concept without appropriate equivalencies in English were maintained in their original forms. The tape recordings were played and listened to several times. The data was checked and rechecked on countless occasions to ensure accuracy and confirmability (Easton, McComish& Greenberg, 2008).

3.4. Thematic Analysis

Selective protocols were used to organize the field notes from informal conversations and participant observations into themes. The themes followed key patterns, trends, concepts and common phrases. This follows from the assertion that conceptually similar reports in terms of happenings and events are supposed to be categorized together (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Field notes were consistently checked against the recordings on the tape for clarification of responses. It also prevented misinterpretations of data. The keen attention that was paid to the data ensured that the information the respondents had given became very homely. This made the analysis and interpretation of themes and concepts occur naturally from the data. Discourse analysis with a focus on positioning was used to comprehensively analyse the data, after continued and repeated listening and reading of the data.

The cultural and social constructions and positions of the respondents were used to discuss the realities of children's lives in the light of traditional culture and values, local economy

and future expectations of the participants. The research aims, theories, and questions guided the interpretation of the relationships and common themes in the data.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Research ethics require that all research processes from research design through to documentation of research results must follow strict ethical procedures (Silverman, 2006). In accordance with this statement, ethically approved and relevant procedures were followed throughout the study.

After the research study had been designed, ethical clearance was sought from Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). After going through the description of the research design, approval was subsequently issued by NSD for the study to be carried out. In Ghana, as my research did not border on any health related subject, Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR) referred the application for research approval to University of Cape Coast. In line with this, approval for the study to be conducted in Ghana was given by the Ethical Committee of University of Cape Coast (appendix V).

The following ethical concerns were additionally observed during the data collection and process.

Informed consent: To show respect for the autonomy of the participants and the protection of children in the study, informed consent was prepared. The individual consent was meant to ensure that participant understood the purpose of the study and to also assure them that their participation in the study was voluntary (Ellsberg &Heise, 2005).

Effort was made throughout the study to ensure that before any participant volunteered information, they fully understood the content of informed consent. Every prospective participant also had to either sign or thumb-print the informed consent form to show their

endorsement and personal readiness to assist in the study. Where prospective participants could not read, every effort was made to ensure that they fully understood the content of the consent form through interpretation from a trusted other. Parents and guardians consented for the children who participated in the study. See appendix (II) for a copy of the informed consent form.

Confidentiality: All informants were fully assured of their confidentiality in the study. I made sure that anything that could reveal the identity of the participants was avoided. No question was asked that required the informants to reveal their identity. Informants in the study were labelled by names I had randomly prepared prior to every data collection session. I also named some participants based on the day of interview, for example, Ama is the name of a girl born on Saturday, Yaw a name of a boy born on Thursday. During focus group discussions, informants referred to themselves using pseudonyms. All the recorded interviews were securely stored according to guidelines provided by NSD, and deleted at the end of the project.

Freedom of participation: All informants were informed duly about their right of participation. They were assured of their right to withdraw participation any time they deemed necessary. They were further assured of their right to refuse answer to any question they felt uncomfortable about.

Debriefing: Debriefing session was held after all interviews and discussions. Participants were made to discuss honestly any discomfort they felt in the course of the meeting. Opportunity was taken to allay any fear participants might have nurtured as a result of their participation.

Trust: To ensure free, friendly and open communication it was paramount that trust was built between the researcher and the research participants (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). The opportunity I had to teach was used to establish rapport, positive regard and friendly relations

with the children who participated in the study. Also, the opportunity to work actively with the informants at the shore and farm helped to build warm and friendly relations between me and the other informants. This is because my position as a teacher would have influenced the children to respond to my questions. The teacher carries a lot of authority in Ghana. I also showed profound respect in all my interactions with the participants. I ensured that I identified myself with the participants in various ways, including sharing food and actively discussing issues of interest to them that did not really border on the study. I also made sure that the data transcribed reflected their account as much as possible.

3.6. **Practical Challenges**

In some of the informal conversations, I was misconstrued for a government official. Some of the informants I approached did not want to participate in the study as they claimed that often information they volunteer to researchers is not used for anything. They considered participation in the study as a waste of time. I had to patiently explain the purpose of my study and my status as a student.

I was also asked by several informants to give them money before they would participate. They thought I had money because I was coming from a university abroad. Even, some informants at the shore asked if I could assist them to buy a canoe. I had to really try hard to let them understand that I was just a student.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study is premised on the assumption that to understand the lives of children who concurrently work and school, we must study the lives and the roles of these children in their socio-cultural context (Ennew, 2003). This study also assumes that the context in which children exercise their agency is culturally and situationally specific (Desiree, 2003). Five major themes emerged from the data that was collected. The themes are intergenerational relations, work as a cultural tool for rearing children, school as a setting to prepare children for their future lives, changing functions of work and school knowledge and contention between work and school.

4.1. **Intergenerational Relations**

The pervasiveness of intergenerational relations is one of the majors themes that emerged from the data. Kofi in reference to his mother asserted: "*I am her child; she is my mother. We are responsible for each other…including my other relations*".

Auntie Mansah also referred to her children as, "*They are my children…they are my future…*"

In Ghana, the older generation see themselves in the children, and vice versa (Gyekye, 1996); this is reflected in these quotes. It is highly recognized that children embody the future of the community; the future that consists in the total identities of the people that define them.

Even though there is a vehement acknowledgement of parent-child position in terms of social hierarchy, the responses in the present study indicate diffused parent-child responsibilities in terms of provision of care. It is the collective responsibility of parents and children to take care of each other. This is also noted by authors such as Gyekye (1996) and Boakye-Boaten (2010).

From the data, intergenerational relationships are driven by cultural values of reciprocity, responsibility and respect. These values underlie intergenerational relations and influence the behaviour of children

Reciprocity, from the data, refers to the ideals that promote the need for people to share collective responsibility for each other. Reciprocity derives one of its sources from traditional proverbs. For example, Egya (an informant) asserted, "*One finger cannot lift a thing*". Ernest also cited, "*The left hand washes the right hand, whilst the right hand washes the left hand*".

These proverbs point out the inability of individuals to be self-adequate. They demonstrate their self-inadequacy and how personal talents and abilities are not enough to fulfil their needs completely. When they use the proverbs, Egya and Ernest are referring to the need for individuals to be in cooperative relationship with others. For example, all the five fingers are needed to be able to lift something. We also know that the left hand cannot wash itself when we are bathing; we need the right hand to wash the left hand, and vice versa. Reciprocity thus orients individuals towards a shared life.

The importance of reciprocity again relates to lack of effective social welfare system in Ghana. According to Ernest (a parent), "*The children need to support our effort to take care of them…also the children are our future. It is the duty of both young and old to take care of each other*".

Auntie Mansah posited, "*It is important that we take good care of the children…so that they will in turn good take care of us*". Children are therefore regarded as a form of security for parents and members of the society.

 Intergenerational relations are implied in shared understanding between children and the older generation. According to Ama, "*Children hold the understanding it is their*

responsibility to take care of their parents… those children who do not support their parents…as well as their kins are considered useless and good for nothing. They are seen as bad children".

The children consider it as their obligation to reciprocate the care they receive from their family and kinship relations. For instance, Kofi reported: "*It is my duty to give back to my parents whenever I can…I take their roles when they are not able; I go to farm for crops; I cook. I also give them money*".   Emma asserted; "*It is my responsibility to help my parents…If they need anything, I should be able to assist. I should be there for them*".

Reciprocity is preferred to be executed in concrete or material terms. Egya (a parent) without stating the obvious that it is more preferred that children "pay" their debts in deeds, uses "work" to replace "payment". He claims, "*When children work to support you it is liked more…it indicates that they appreciate what you are doing for them…*" This indicates that children are expected to "pay" their debts once they are in position to do so (Nsamenang, 2002).

According to Pellow (1977), in its most crass form, reciprocity imputes a concrete value to any transaction or interaction. It is stated further that if one party gives or does something for another, there is an equivalent return to be made, contingent upon the role relationship. One does not receive something for nothing. Everything is given a concrete worth. In Ghana this is not left to chance; however, the demands individuals make on one another is often implicit (Nunkunya, 2003; Boakye-Boaten, 2010).

As soon as children are old enough they begin to reciprocate the care they receive from their parents. Nsamenang (2002) writes that children start paying off their 'debts' from an early age. By accepting their position in the society, children act as active agents making active

decisions because they are aware of the roles that are expected of them. For example, Ama stated, "*I must help my mother…because it my duty*".

The second cultural value that underlies intergenerational relations is responsibility. From the data, responsibility is embodied in the contributions children make and the roles they play to support their family and kins. Children learn responsibility in the child rearing practices that are used to socialize them. According to Theophilus (a parent), "*When you are bringing up children, it means you are training them to be responsible adults in future…so that they can capably perform their roles in the family and society*".

Responsible children are seen as the result of best child rearing practices. Annan (a parent) asserted that "*Children are like clay on the potter's wheel, you have to mould them… so that they become responsible*". Egya (a parent) further claimed that "*One is not born with a bad head, he takes it on earth*". These claims make the idea of training children to be become responsible people an imperative obligation for parents.

The modes of bringing children up to be responsible can be called instruments of child socialization (Gyekye, 1996). In the data, work stands out as the major instrument in these communities that is used to train children. As Yaw (a child) put it, "*I feel responsible when I work because that will make me a competent and successful adult*". In line with this, Nsamenang (2004, p.111) states that "work is an indigenous instrument that is used to train and integrate children into the social fabric and economic life of the people".

In the parents' responses we see cultural assumptions that children are predisposed to be irresponsible and lazy if they are left on their own without appropriate training in work. Annan (a parent) intimated, "*As you know children are liable to be lazy and silly; you have to show them the appropriate things to do...they have to work to be responsible. This is child*

training". The parents believe that it is through the engagement of children in work that they can be brought up to behave appropriately.

Theophilus (a parent) asserted, "*we are not rich already, children cannot afford to be lazy…it is abominable. Children must take responsible roles so that they do not become stupid*". Laziness is associated with stupidity and it is assumed that both can be cured by hard work. The parent helps the child by disciplining him or her. Theophilus again posited, "*… the rod of discipline drives laziness and folly far from the child*" (Proverbs 22: 15).

Children are therefore reared in a manner that would be considered crude in the Western context. For example, they are routinely caned and scolded publicly if they fail to perform their responsibility. According to Kofi (a child), "*If you fail to perform your roles and duties…you are severely beaten by your parents*". The severe punitive measures which are attached to non-performance of responsibilities are believed to make children behave appropriately. This was affirmed in the following responses by Egya (a parent), "*A child's fingers are not scalded by a piece of hot yam which his mother puts into his palms*". This saying means that even though discipline inflicts pains to the child, the importance of discipline in shaping the child for prosperous and successful future cannot be taken for granted. Children are, therefore, not spared punishments when they fail to do their duties.

Not so surprisingly, the children in the study remember these experiences of discipline with fondness. They interpret these experiences in terms of the determination of their parents and care-givers to make them grow up to become responsible adults. For example, Ama (a child) related, "*As a child, I think am going through sufficient training to be a responsible person in future. I am happy; I know that my parents are doing their best for me…Umm I'm okay*".

Children begin to take responsibilities early in life. There is no fixed age when children are assigned responsibilities. It is a common sight to find children, as young as two, trying hard

to get a chore done in the house. Usually, when the very young children are not able to find anything their skills could help them do at home, they tag along the older ones with drinking cups in their hands to the riverside, or to the community pipe stand, to fetch water. Ama posited, "*Honestly, the infants are usually a nuisance, as you have to walk at their pace, rather than benefits. You cannot stop them either*". You do not have to stop children from striving to achieve their cultural goal of responsibility which will earn them respect. As soon as children develop the appropriate physical capacities and competences to assist in any work, children begin to perform various forms of responsibilities. This was seen in the following responses by some of the child-informants:

Yaw: "*I do not know when I began to take responsibilities…it's all about being able to work and take roles with the right skills*"

Ama: "*I do not know when I started working, age is not important. It should be about being able to help your parents. We understand that to be able to succeed in life you have to work hard. If you start working early in life, it becomes part of you…*"

There are no distinct stages in the life of children at which they are promoted to take on higher responsibilities. Emma stated, "*I do not remember when I started working with a cutlass. I engage in various communal weeding (Nnoboa), but I do not know how it all began*". The progression could be very rapid, but it is usually subtle. He continued, "*When I became conscious of myself, I could do, practically, everything adults were doing on the farm*".

Even though children usually determine what they want to do, parents and adults in the Ghanaian society also assign children with specific roles and duties depending on how matured the child is.

According to Egya (a parent informant); "*I know the amount of work every child can do. I also know the type of work each child is able to do…they are my children I know their abilities. I make sure that I do not overburden them*".

As children increase in competence they take on more difficult and specialized responsibilities. Kofi (child informant) had said; "*Right now, I am big enough to take care of my siblings. I know how to do everything they might need when my mother is away*". He further said, "*I take up my mother's roles. I make sure they are fed, stay at home and do not roam in town*".

Responsibilities children take are gender structured. For example, Jane (a girl-child informant) states; "*the girls at Anafo sell fish, while the boys go to sea*". This is how Ama (a girl informant) described how she helps her parent; "*I help my parents on the farm; I look after my younger siblings while my parents are working. I also cook for them on the farm; I pick fruits and vegetables. I also sell farm products after school*". Kofi (a boy informant) related, "*I weed with a cutlass. I prune cocoa trees and short palm trees. I also thin-out seedlings. I will never sell at the market. I cannot be able to bear the name calling that will ensue from this activity from my friends. It is considered girls' duties to sell*".

We see that children provide assistance to their parents in all tasks their abilities and competence permit them. They are expected to participate both in household duties and family occupation or income generating activity.

Responsibility and understanding is seen in situations where children express concern and empathy towards their parents' situation or circumstance. Emma (a child) reported, "*I know that my mother is struggling to make ends meet. She does not tell me. I know it, no matter how hard she tries to conceal it from me*". Responding to parents' needs in hard times or difficult circumstances shows parents that the children are not only their children, but their

friends as well. It shows that they are there for them. Kofi (a child informant) states; "*It is my responsibility to help my mother in times of need. I have to support her. After all, I am her child I have to be there for her*".

Children demonstrate responsibility by contributing material and monetary resources to support their parents. When I asked the children why they would give their incomes to their parents, these were some of their responses;

Kofi said, "*I am their child, they are my parents; they are my responsibility*".

Another child, Jane stated; "*It is good for children to support their parents with the money they make...through work... I feel that it is my responsibility to support my parents to take care of me and my siblings*".

Ama stated; "*I give the money I make to my parents to take care of us. My other siblings also contribute money to support our parents to take care of us*".

Children also show responsibility by engaging directly in the work their parents do. Kofi retorted; "*I weed my parents' farm; I also cart load from farm to the house to relieve them of some of their burden*".

It is traditionally acknowledged that parents alone cannot perform all the tasks that need to be done to keep the family running. Egya referred me to this traditional maxim; "*If all people were to carry the heavens, no one individual would become a hunchback*". Who can carry all the heavens alone? This saying connotes the importance of sharing responsibilities. It means if people bear a responsibility together no one individual would suffer, regardless of how demanding or drudgery the responsibility is. According to Kofi, "*It is my responsibility to work so that I can help my mother. My mother does not earn enough. It would be impossible for her to take care of us if I did not work*". Papa (a child) also related; "*My parents are not*

rich. They are mere farmers. I have two younger siblings who are also dependent on them, I need to be supportive. This will also help me to a responsible person in future".

It is also important to note the orientation to the future that is attached to children's responsibilities. For example, this is how Jane (a child) conceived of, as part of the reasons, why she is selling at the market; "*I want to become a nurse. I am saving money towards that. When I complete school and my parents are not able to support me fully, I could be in position to complement their effort*".

Parents cited reasons of rearing children to be hard working and of transferring future skills to children as the basis of assigning children with responsibilities.

According to Egya, "*we give the children responsibilities in order for them to become hard working. It is the normal way of bringing up children*". Annan also states that, "*children work so that they will become more competent when they grow up and take over from us*". Giving responsibilities to children is a traditional approach of transferring parental skills to children. According to Maame (a parent), "*giving children responsibilities or work to do provides the means to transfer parental occupational skills to children*". Auntie Mansa (a parent) further relates; "*We acquired our occupational skills from our parents, and they, in turn, had theirs from their parents. We acquired these skills through the responsibilities we took to participate in their work*".

The third underlying value of intergenerational relations is respect. Respect is the reward that is accorded children who have accepted their intergenerational roles and are also responsible. According to John (a child), "*Children who are responsible are shown great respect by their peers, parents and adults*". According to Egya (a parent), "*Hardworking and responsible children always earn respect from everyone…respect is priceless*". Children's desire to be

seen as responsible and therefore respectable was confirmed in this saying by Jane (a child); "*A responsible child is a respectable child*".

Respect is a cultural value which is highly priced in Ghanaian communities (Nunkunya, 2003). Emma posited, "*Respect is earned. There is a huge value on it…you earn it through responsibilities you take*". Ama (a child) also asserted, "*The role you play in helping your parents take care of you earns you respect*". It is as a result of this that a child, regardless of age, who lives on the compound of every home, makes the effort to assist their parents, siblings and elders.

Provision of parental assistance is a way of demonstrating how valuable you are as a child. The measure of value you achieve in handling responsibilities commensurate your level of success. This is reflected in the level of respect that is accorded you. According to Ama, "*The harder you work and the more responsibilities you take, the more respect you earn…*"

Respect is seen as the measure of responsibilities you take. According to Emma, "*We do respect; it is carried out in deeds, which are work and responsibilities*". The elements for earning respect are not only demonstrated through the courtesies children pay to adults. More important measures of respect are carried in work which is embedded in the responsibilities children take. In the communities, work and responsibilities are closely associated. According to Auntie Mansah, "*work is responsibility…you have to work before you can be responsible…*" Activities that are carried in work connote responsibility.

Courtesies are not priced as highly as responsibilities. Ernest cited this traditional maxim to emphasize this point, "*It is not expensive to go to the market and buy words*". This maxim implies that children could pretend to use courteous words as marks of respect. After all, there is no market where words are sold. Children are in this sense expected to demonstrate what they mean in deeds, not in words.

Being respected as a child comes with enormous social benefits. According to Kofi, "*You are highly regarded by your peers, parents and elders when you are respectable. You are not seen as lazy… You make a lot of friends with your elders and peers…you are also regarded as cool among your peers*".

When elders respect you in the Ghanaian community, you are invariably placed in the category of elders by the elders and your peers. This is confirmed in the saying by Maame (a parent), "*A child who knows how to wash their hands eats with their elders*". The meaning of this saying stems from the fact that in Ghana people usually eat in groups. The people in a group are usually similar in age, occupational skills or status. If a child is found in a group of elders, they are seen as "knights" by their peers. It is a pedigree every child struggles to achieve. According to Papa, "*It is every child's wish to be found in the company of elders…it's a dream*".

As a confirmation of how highly they are regarded, children count the number of friends they have. Jane reported that, "*Highly respected and regarded children are those who have many friends…every child desires to be their friends*". As relatedness is highly valued in the Ghanaian communities, every child strives to have as many friends as possible. Yaw related this in the statement; "*Respected children have more friends…. You are seen as a model for other kids*".

Children also desire to make as many friends as possible as solitariness is abhorred in the communities. Jane asserted that, "*solitary is not a good sign…it is not liked here…*" Papa further affirmed this in his citation of a traditional maxim, "*Solitariness is a pitiable condition*". Solitariness is abhorred and described as a pitiable condition, as it deprives the solitary individual of the opportunity to benefit from the helpfulness and support that emanate from communal life (Gyekye, 1996).

Also, the need to be respected is reinforced by the belief that children could be punished by their ancestors if a child is deemed to be disrespectable. Annan (a parent) reported this in the statement, "*A wilfully disrespectful child could be punished by their ancestors*". The punishment from the ancestors could be incurred when the parents or the elders of the child complain about the child's disrespectful behaviours. According to Ama, "*As children, we believe that severe consequences await our disrespectful behaviours and actions*". On the other hand, showing respect is believed to elicit blessings from the ancestors. According to Maame, "*Our ancestors always bless children who are responsible and respectable*".

Children also cited religious reasons to affirm the need for children to be responsible and respectable. For example, Papa quoted the bible, "*God blesses children who are respected to live longer because they bring honour to their parents*" (Exodus, 20:12). Children have been taught this as the only commandment with a promise in the bible.

4.2. Work: A Cultural Tool For Rearing Children

From the interviews, focus group discussions, informal conversations and participant observation, the data revealed that work is conceived as a cultural tool for rearing children. Child informants John, Ama and Jane expressed this in these responses:

John: "*Everything we are trained to do and learn is embedded in work*".

Ama; "*Our parents do not tell us formally that they are training us. They just ask us to work, and out of that we get the knowledge they want us to get. We are trained through work*".

Jane; "*Child work is the same as child training. We are trained through work. We are trained to be responsible and hardworking*".

The important role of fishing and farming in the lives of the people in these communities is the context to understand child rearing practices as embedded in work. The livelihood of the communities depends on the resources the people can appropriate from their environment. This takes place through traditional occupations like fishing and farming. Ernest (a parent) asserts; "*The Sea is our God-given gift*; *we do not joke with the sea; we are fishermen. That is our work*". Egya (a parent) also confirms this in the statement; "*We have thick forest and large farm lands around us. Farming is the source of our livelihood; everybody in this village farms*". These provide the means through which the survival and continuity of the traditional communities are ensured.

The pervasiveness of fishing and farming practices in the children's everyday life is apparent in the following reflections by some of the children. Kofi, "*I think that since I come from a farming community, I should know how to farm. Farming is my traditional occupation; therefore, I am trained in it*". Emma, "*I know everything about farming. Every child knows how to farm*". And, Yaw, "*The children here grow with fishing knowledge; fishing provides the means through which we are trained*". This is how Ama saw farm work; "*I was born into farming*". Ama further remarked, "*When I work I feel responsible and productive*".

From Ama's response, it could be inferred that training children in work provides a means to inculcate socio-ethical values in children. Parents as well as the children express real feelings of appreciation about cultural and moral development that take place in the children's lives, as a result of their participation in work. Parents and adults account for this belief through their ability to visibly see the children's level of acquisition of traditional values. According to Auntie Mansah (a parent), "*it is easy to see children growing through the way they act responsibly in work*". According to Egya, "*Good and competent children are very supportive. They help us a lot in our work*".

Various reasons were assigned for training children in work. The opportunity for practice and evaluation is one of the basic underlining beliefs that motivate parents to rear their children in work. According to Theophilus (a parent), *"Children must learn by doing. It is easy to know the children's level of competence when they work"*. Egya (a parent) further claimed, *"Children learn better by doing. When children work it becomes easy to train them for the future because you clearly see the rate at which they are maturing"*.

Training children through work provides a means to transfer parental occupational skills to children. According to Maame (a parent), *"Work provides the means to transfer parental values and occupational skills to children. It's a means of child training"*.

The threat of poverty is part of this picture and also has a role to play in children's involvement in work. In order to alleviate poverty, work is exhorted as the soul of the community. According to Annan (a parent), *"the life of this community is set in work. Work provides the means to our survival"*.

He aptly put this in a song;

"Work is cure for poverty;

Be hardworking my friend,

For one can become great

Only through hard work"

Eradication of laziness accounts for one of the means of fighting poverty in the communities. Laziness is treated as an abhorrent behaviour. It is believed that the best way to beat laziness out of children is to train them in work. Ama (a child) points out; *"We understand that to be*

able to succeed in life, you have to work hard. Those children who do not work hard are seen as lazy".

To visibly see children's acquisition of socio-ethical values, to inculcate the spirit of hard work in children, to transfer parental occupational skills to children and to stem out poverty and eradicate laziness in children, work is used to rear children in these communities.

4.2.1. The everyday context of children's work

The children in the traditional communities have unbridled access to observe and participate in the activities that take place in their communities. The setting in which adult-work takes place also serves as the setting where children both play and work. In this way, the work environment is also the arena where children interact with each other and develop friendship and build peer relations. The data further indicates that the norms and identities of the peer groups are inseparable from the working environment of the children. Examples of such indications from the data were:

Kofi: "*We play as we work on the farm. You make a lot of friends as you work. You are regarded as cool person among your peers. We tease ourselves, joke and talk a lot when we are working. We actually make fun of those children who do not do anything. They are 'Dabbies' (not trendy)*"

Nana: "*We play at the shore. Every child comes to the shore. All my friends come to the shore to play. Everybody here works at the shore, also. We use part of the money we make to organize football matches at the shore*".

Yaw: "*Everybody works at the shore. We also play at the shore. We combine the two; we play as we work or we work as we play.*".

Jane: "*We play while we work. If you do not go out to sell fish, you will not get the chance to play with friends. Our friends work; so we play and work together*".

Children's learning and participation in work are organized informally. Ama (a child) stated, "*Our parents do not tell us formally that they are training us. They just ask us to work and out that we get the knowledge they want us to get*". The informal nature of the farming and fishing activities have made the children become so accustomed to the works in their settings that they could hardly remember how they learned them. The commonplace nature of work in these communities has also made some of the children refer to their engagement in work as not being a learning endeavour. This inference is drawn from the following statements by children: Kofi: "*I do not really know how I learned farming. Farming is my traditional occupation, and that I should know how to do it*". Emma: "*I know everything about farming. I do not consider farming as a job because I did not learn it*". Ama: "*I do not know when I started farming. I started going to farm at a tender age. My mother was carrying me to farm when I was a baby. I would say that I was born into farming. Farming is the traditional occupation here. People here live their lives on the farm*". Nana: "*Nobody taught me fishing. I just know it...Everybody here knows it*". Yaw: "*The children here grow with fishing knowledge. Every child here knows how to fish; it is normal*".

Papa: "*Nobody learns farming. How can you learn farming? It is normal here. Even the young children know farming*".

Before I give a closer analysis of the participant structure and the position of children and learning outcomes in fishing and farming practices, I want to present two case examples.

4.2.2. Two Case Examples from Participant Observation

4.2.2.1. An Observation at the shore

There was a canoe sitting at the seashore on heavy wooden rollers. The canoe had been lashed to a coconut tree by a rope. There were several children as young as 4 years playing at the shore. Some of them were playing football; others were using the sand on the beach to build things like houses, ovens, and settings that looked like villages, while others were frantically running around. From the seashore, there were two big balls or balloons which were lying about five hundred meters on the sea. There were also two long ropes which were about two hundred meters apart and running from the sea. The ropes had been lashed tightly to coconut trees.

Four men and two boys who were aged about 13 and 15 came to stand by the anchored canoe. They were dressed in football jerseys and short panties. They started singing some traditional songs. I did not understand anything, even though I share a common language with them. They started releasing the canoe. Suddenly, several of the children who were playing had joined them. Some of the children could barely see over the canoe. The children joined in the singing. Two children went to guard the rope that was tied to the coconut tree. There were two or three children standing with each man. While the children and the men released the rollers, the children standing by the coconut tree were also releasing the rope. Intermittently, someone would shout that they stop releasing more rope. The releasing of the rollers and the rope ran concurrently in a rhythmic pattern. The pattern was synchronized regularly with the rhythm in the songs they sang. There was a benign harmony in the way they worked. When the canoe reached the shoreline, four light weight children aged 12-16 jumped into the canoe. One sat at the bow cast over the front, one at the stern over the rear and the other two sat in the middle over each side. They allowed the canoe to float

downstream with the current, using their paddles as rudders. The children in the canoe placed their paddles over the side, near the back of the canoe, in the direction they wanted to turn, or were guided by the other experienced children or men to turn. The children in the canoe also directed where they should push the canoe. The children in the canoe held the blades of the paddles against and parallel to the canoe. The more they rotated the paddles, the sharper the canoe turned.

At this point, the relatively small children had retired to the shore to play. When they had the canoe stably stationed on the sea, one man joined the child at the stern of the canoe to fix a trolling motor (outboard motor) on the side of the canoe near the stern. They talked while they worked together in the canoe. When they had started the trolling motor, the four men and the two children who had come to the canoe earlier jumped into the canoe. The four children who had paddled the canoe into the sea jumped back into the sea and swam ashore to join their friends to play. The six people were going to cast net in the sea.

The other two ropes I mentioned earlier were fishing net ropes. The balls that were lying on the sea were corks. 'We use the cork to identify the direction of the fishing net', I was told by a child. Three men came to pull on the rope while they were singing. In numbers of one, two, three, etc. children and adults joined them to drag the net. Those who could not get a place on the rope to pull sat while they sang along with those who were pulling on the net.

Whenever anyone got tired, they sat down while someone replaced them immediately. Those children who were not strong enough to join them pull the net were sent around to buy them water and food. Some of the children were sent to inform potential buyers when they should come to the shore. Regardless of age, everyone present at the shore sung expertly. The whole shore was thrown into frenzy when they dragged the net onto the shore with fish fluttering about in the net. Several women and girls about 12 years and older came and took portions

of the fish they could afford. The fishing net was taken over by children, both boys and girls, some as young as four. They picked the fingerlings and cleaned the net.

4.2.2.2. **An Observation at the farm**

It was about time for families to harvest their cocoa. Both children and adults were busily preparing bamboo mats to dry their cocoa beans. "The best way to dry cocoa beans is to lay them on bamboo mat and let them bask in the sun's warming rays", a child said. The children who were 11 years and older went into the forest to cut bamboos unaccompanied by parents and adults. A parent or an adult would tell a child where they might get good bamboos. Some experienced children also helped their friends by telling them where they would find good bamboos. The younger children tagged along their parents and other adults or experienced children to fetch bamboos home. This activity was usually performed by men and boys, however, I saw girls who carried bamboos home.

A man was making bamboo mats with his two children. One was aged about 12 and a younger child of about 9 years old. The man was working with the younger son. The older son was working quietly, alone. The man would periodically stretch his eyes to observe the older son. The younger son was fetching bamboos for his father, while he observed and conversed with his father, at the same time. The older son, at a point, called his younger brother to get him water to drink. They made awesome mats for the cocoa beans. It was Saturday.

I accompanied a group of farmers to farm to harvest their cocoa. Everyone was busy on the farm on the harvesting day. There were about twelve people comprising children and adults who had come from the community to help the family harvest their cocoa. The adults and experienced children removed the pods from the cocoa trees. The adults and tall children removed the pods with sickles, while the shorter children removed the pods with cutlasses.

The women, girls and kids as young as 5 years collected and carried the cocoa pods. Everybody knew what they were supposed to do, apart from some children who wanted to remove cocoa pods, but they were stopped. Those who came late joined in the work without asking what they were supposed to do.

All the cocoa pods were gathered at one place. Some of the women were cooking. There were girls who were helping the women cook and also fetching water for those who were harvesting the pods to drink. Some of the children were hopping around and kicking cocoa pods. Some of them were also climbing cocoa trees. Occasionally, an adult would tell a child to climb down. Some of the children who were harvesting the cocoa were occasionally reminded to be careful so that they would not remove the back of the cocoa tree. A parent actually showed a child how to cut the pod. Actually, some children had knocks on their heads because they were cutting the green buds.

The men and the children who harvested the pods split open the pods with machetes, while the women, girls and the infants scooped out the beans from the pods. There were children who were preparing the ground for the pulped cocoa beans to be dumped for fermentation. An adult went to look at what they had done. Some finishing touches were applied to the prepared ground, while the children stood and watched. The fresh cocoa beans were dumped on the prepared platform and covered with plantain leaves to ferment. The men and the children sang in unison while they covered the cocoa beans with plantain leaves.

4.2.4.   **Participation Framework for Work**

4.2.4.1.   **The children as participants**

Children were an integral part of the mature activities in the traditional communities. There were children everywhere I went. There were several mixes of activities that involved children and adults. You could hardly separate children and adult from the activities that were on-going, both at the shore and on the farm. My experience as a child also confirms this. As a child, I was permitted to go wherever I liked. I knew what took place in every part of my community, at an age I cannot remember. As children, we roamed the community, watched people work, engaged in role plays and other playful activities. I equally participated in work with my grandmother and other adults in the community.

The children in the communities identified themselves with their traditional occupations, as we have seen from their responses already presented. The children consider it a trendy experience to participate in work.

There are no defined rules that guide how children should involve themselves in work. Usually, the decision to observe and participate is entrusted in the hands of the child who finds themselves in the opportunity situation. At the shore and farm, every child who wanted to take part in the works that were done did so without any prohibition. The essential ingredient for participation in work is "being available". According to John, "*I take part in any work that is ongoing at the shore…I only need to be around*".

The socio-ethical values of reciprocity, responsibility and respect strongly motivate children to volunteer wilfully to participate in work. Children consider it their responsibility to participate, as much as they can, in work. As they want to be seen as responsible and helpful,

the children frantically keep themselves busy with whatever they think will positively contribute to the work that is being done.

On the larger scale, children in traditional communities learn on purely informal basis. During my stay in the fishing and farming communities, I never heard of or saw a situation where a child was formally invited to join in a learning endeavour of fishing or farming. The children wilfully volunteered to join in the work activities. Parents and adults also do not formally arrange situations for children to work. The most formal situation I observed was when a father was arranging bamboos for his son to weave a mat. Even in this situation, the father's son was not there. When the boy came around, he sat down and started peeling the bamboos without asking the father anything. This was also reflected in what Ama had said; "*Our parents do not tell us formally that they are training us. They just ask us to work and out of that we get the knowledge they want us to get*".

Indigenous knowledge involved in executing traditional occupations is considered a bona fide property of the indigenous people. "*Traditional knowledge is given freely in this community*", said a fisherman. "*It is available, unreservedly, to whoever enters the community*", he continued. As a result of this, effort to acquire traditional knowledge is not considered a "learning" endeavour; practising is also not considered a professional job. Ama stated, "*Farming cannot be taken as a professional job. You do not learn it. Everybody knows it*". Nana (child) poked, "*Do you think fishing is a career? No, everyone here knows how to do it. It is normal to know it*".

Indigenous knowledge is thus conceived as a common characteristic that all members of the communities should have. It is an integral part of their lives. This was inferred in the following statements by the child-informants:

Ama; "*Farming is the major occupation here. People live their lives on farms here. Everybody here knows how to farm*".

Nana; "*Everybody here knows how to fish*"

Jane; "*It is usual for a girl from Anafo to sell fish*"

John; "*Everybody in this community works at the shore. Fishing is part of our lives*"

From my personal experience, everybody in my village was considered a farmer. In Cape Coast, a person would identify themselves as either a farmer or a fisherman. To a large extent, everybody in Ghana could be put conveniently in either of these categories- farmers or fishermen.

Every person is therefore seen as a legitimate participant (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in their community or traditional occupation. For example, in 2010, there was an effort to take statistics on the percentage of Ghanaians who were involved in agriculture. An official from the Ministry of Agriculture humorously remarked, "*You do not need to be told this; you already know it: it's 100%*", (Ghanaweb, 2010).

Traditional knowledge is very pervasive. It is at everybody's behest. I do not know how it would be possible to segregate children from traditional settings. I saw from the participant observation and the interviews that for the segregation of children from mature activities to be possible, children should be given their own utopia. It is practically impossible for children to be removed from mature activities. It was a common sight to find children, as young as 3 years, working with either their parents or siblings. Children played a key role in the fishing and farming activities I observed.

4.2.4.2. **Organization of work**

Even though, the organization of work did not follow any regular pattern, the engagement of children could be described as involving collaborative, fluid and mutual negotiation of responsibilities and roles (Rogoff, 2003). Everyone pitched in as needed, and usually there was no clear leader. According to Kwabena (an adult informant); "*You do not have to be known before you can join the fishermen to drag the net ashore. All the children are helping. As you can see, everyone is contributing their quota*".

However, in group activities, individuals opted to take the roles of coordinators, who were not necessarily leaders. Individuals in groups synchronized their duties in smooth accordance with others without following any pre-planned instructions. This was especially the case when the fishermen were dragging the net ashore. They sang songs that rhymed in harmony with the regularity with which they pulled on the net. They had a "leader" who led them in singing. However, leadership changed anytime the person who was "leading" was seen to be tired. I cannot still tell how they managed to know that the "leaders" were tired. The swapping of "leadership" was very smooth and harmonious. The swapping never interrupted the flow of the work. In working with parents, "leadership" roles were automatically ceded to parents.

Children took instructions and guidance from parents and adults regularly when they were engaged in work. According to Theophilus (a parent); "*You have to give the children instructions occasionally when they are working*".

Even though, there was a general acceptance of this assumption about children, parent and other adults were not treated as bosses; they were treated as experienced collaborators who should be respected. The children working at the shore and the farm listened intently to what the more experienced people told them, even though they seemed to have profound

understanding of what they were doing. According to John (a child); "*Even though I know everything about fishing, I still have to take instructions from the older people. They are my elders; I have to obey and respect them*".

4.2.4.3. Roles Of More-Experienced People And Children

Parents, adults and experienced children were usually treated as facilitators. They gave guidance when needed, and participated in work with the children. This facilitation by experienced people was reflected in what John (a child informant) said; "*Nobody formally taught me how to mend fishing net. Whenever I made a mistake when I was mending, I was told the right thing*". This also points to the fact that children have the opportunity to take initiative and seek adult help whenever they encounter problems. The responsibility to take initiative does not always come directly from an adult or a parent. Ama (a child informant) confirmed this in the response, "*Whenever I see the need to assist in work, and I have the capacity to do so, I do it*".

The roles children and parents performed complemented each other's effort; there is an active collaboration between children, parents and adults. This resonated with what a parent had said. According to Theophilus (a parent informant), "*Children work to support our effort to take care of them*". Papa (a child informant) further collaborated this in the statement, "*I need to complement the effort of my parents to do their work*".

As they worked together, parents expected their children to observe them by making the effort to ensure that children were asked intermittently to do or to replicate what the parents had done. Ernest (a parent informant) had said, "*You make the children observe you as we work. In all, you have to give the children a chance to practice on their own what they observed you do*". Egya (a parent informant) rephrased this in the statement, "*You either tell them or show them what to do, and then you ask them to do it for you to see*".

Further, children believe that they are expected to take on more responsibilities as their observation and participation in work activities increase. It is highly appreciated if children take the initiative to engage in more sophisticated work activities. Emma (a child informant) was happy he could work more because that indicated that he was increasing in competence. He had said, "*As my competence increased, I am able to work more and also engage in more skilful work*".

Even though the working environment was relaxed, children knew that they needed to show their commitment. Inattentive children were scolded, reprimanded or caned, as such behaviour was deemed as an indication of children's unwillingness to be trained in work and laziness. Nana (a child informant) had said, "*They scold us if you are not able to do what they had asked you to look at. Sometimes, they cane us*".

4.2.4.4. **Motivation For Work**

Children participate actively in work with the hope to merit the respect and recognition of their parents and important people in the community who admire competent and hardworking children.

Often the valuable nature of the work activity to the family's economic and social wellbeing serves as an incentive for children to engage in work activity. Such an incentive provides the means for children to fulfil their duties that are enshrined in intergenerational relations. The purpose of the work activity tends to be inherent in the work situations. This means children enjoy the opportunity to work in real situations with known utility. This is confirmed by Yaw (a child) in the retort, "*We become happy whenever we complete weeding a portion of land. When we look back on what we have done, we see several crops that have no weeds around them. We often report the amount of work we have done to our grandmother in terms of the*

number of plantain or cassava trees we have cleared of weeds. The success or failure of our work is obvious".

Also the opportunity to contribute to parental effort to keep-up the family was implicated as one of the major motivators for children's participation in work. Some of the responses from child informants pointed to this.

Kofi; "*I feel happy within when I am able to accomplish a piece of work. I use some of the money I make from work to support my family*". Jane; "*I feel happy when I am able to support my parents to take care of us*".

Also, the opportunity to observe and participate in more complex activities serves to motivate children. Kofi (a child) had said, "*We participate in work with zeal whenever we feel that we will get the chance to increase in competence and skills*".

Parental admonitions that accompany children's lack of desire to engage in work also served to motivate children. Ama used a scripture to sum up why a lazy child should be punished, by stating; "*After all the bible states that the idle hand should not eat*". Annan (a parent) referred to this in the statement, "*You do not leave children who do not want to work alone. You have to straighten them by disciplining them*".

Personal motivation to work to satisfy one's needs and acquire wealth also influences children's engagement in work. This was inferred from the following responses by the children. Kofi stated, "*I work to make money to support myself in school*". Emma stressed, "*I save the money I make for my future needs*". Children work to save money for their future education. Examples: Ama, "*I want to be a nurse. I am saving the money I make towards it*". Yaw, "*I am able to buy all the books I need in school. I am saving money in bank for my secondary and tertiary education*".

Occasionally, the desire of children to work conflicted with their parents' expectations. Even though child work is pervasive, some parents did not want their children to work. Nana affirmed this in the statement, "*My parents do not want me to work at the shore. However, I feel that I need to work so that I can get other things they are not willing to provide me*". Nana continued, "*I can't stay at home…I need to play. We play at where we work…working comes naturally*".

Some of the children disobey their parents' instructions not work. In the communities, child work was everywhere; it was difficult to identify a playground from an occupational setting, especially in the fishing communities. Children often followed their friends to the shore so that they could play, and subsequently work.

4.2.4.5. **Focus/Sources of learning**

The entire settings in the communities provided opportunity for learning. Learning situations for work were not deliberately set up for children. Children were informally incorporated in the everyday tasks in the family or in the community. The children learned by themselves through keen observation and participation. It was the readiness to take part in work, on the part of children, that was most important.

Children figured out the roles they were expected to play or would be allowed to play and pitched in, at both the farm and the shore. Children coordinated their roles with the experienced companions by following their guidance and directions.

Children also made the effort to identify the aspects of the work where help was needed to dedicate their attention. For example, as the direction of the sea's current changed, the children kept shifting to places around the canoe where they needed to exert more energy. On the farm, when the children saw that there were huge piles of cocoa pods on the ground, they

joined those who were carrying the cocoa pods; they helped carry the cocoa pods to the collection point. Children kept shifting their positions and roles in the work situations as the work progressed or urgent needs arose.

4.2.4.6. Communication method

Verbal expressions were used to engage in discussions and conservations during work. You audibly hear them, both children and adults, talk as they work. Verbal expressions are used to seek information and explore work situations in the form of question-answer interaction through conversations and discussions. There are several narratives and stories about how various community endeavours are carried out in the communities. They are found in Kweku Ananse stories and riddles. Kweku Ananse stories are folk stories in Ghana.   The children also eavesdrop and watch or listen-in conversations about work as third parties. This third-party posture of the children is considered as a form of observation. Egya stated this in the statement, "*We cannot tell children everything they need to know on one-to-one, they have to listen when we (adult) talk*". According to Rogoff, et al. (2003, p.195); "*Talk is used in the service of engaging in the activity, augmenting and guiding experiential and observational learning*".

4.2.4.7. Assessment

In the traditional communities, the children's interest and wilful desire to observe and participate in a work endeavour is used to assess their readiness to learn. Parents and adults expect children to initiate moves to work. Parents and adults look out for such behaviours in children throughout the various stages of the work endeavour. According to Egya (a parent), "*As a child you should not always be told what to do…they can start something before we join. Children should not be forced to work; it doesn't show readiness to work on their part*".

Also readiness to learn is considered as a criterion for further learning. Experienced people use their assessments of children to understand and estimate the amount of help the children will need. If children do not voluntarily pitch in work activity, it is construed as laziness, which is quite problematic. Egya (a parent) alluded to this in the statement, "*Children have to know when they are supposed to join in work*; *you do not have to ask them. The children should know that they have to help. The lazy ones do not help us in work. They are just useless kids who be disciplined*".

4.3.   School: A Setting To Prepare Children For Their Future Lives

When I asked Kofi, (a child informant), about the role of school in life, he sharply responded, "*School has every role in my life. I think that school is preparing me for the future by giving me knowledge…. School will give me knowledge that can enable me get a good job to do in future so that I can help my family and community*". When Kofi says that "school has every role in my life", he seems to indicate that the children in their everyday lives are very future directed. This contributes to the impression that they see everything they do in a life span perspective. The next sentences introduce knowledge as the "magic" of school, and then the use he wants to make of it. Here we see that the life span perspective is not about individual development, but grounded in a strong sense of community and responsibility and a notion of being needed.

The idea of school rings economic benefits among members of the communities as they believe the children will be able to get jobs with better remuneration than traditional occupations after they have graduated. Children therefore go to school with the hope of acquiring knowledge for their later entry into mature activities. According to Emma (a child), "*If I am able to complete school, I will get knowledge that can get me a job in the future which will earn me a good income that I can use to take care of my mother and siblings.*

School knowledge makes life easy in future". Ama (child) affirmed Emma's response in the statement, "*The farm work does not pay much. I am determined to work harder in school so that I and my family will have a decent life in future…*

These statements represent subtle implications that schools are settings in the communities where information is transmitted to the children for the purposes of equipping them with skills and relevant knowledge to acquire lucrative jobs in the future. Ama implied this in the statement, "*I am studying hard so that I can get a good job in the future… I want to become an accountant or a marketing officer in the future to earn good income*".

The idea of schooling is also associated with high hopes and big dreams among the members of the communities. School graduates are always asked what they will be in the future. People expect students or school leavers to dream of becoming teachers, lawyers, physicians, bankers, professors, etc. Schooling was considered as an end in itself by parents and individuals in the communities; being in school is considered as the end of one's social and economic problems. It is believed that the children will be able to secure white-collar jobs and high salaried occupations as they complete school.

Regardless of the positive associations people have for school in the communities, schooling also comes with a risk for failure. In the communities, serious questions are put to individuals who have graduated from schools but have not been able to find themselves 'lucrative' jobs. Such situations are treated with strong abhorrence. For examples, Annan (parent) chided, "*You cannot graduate from school and idle about in the community…it is an abomination*".

The members of the communities overwhelmingly believe that in addition to preparing the children for white collar jobs, the school holds enormous information that can be used to substantially increase their farm yields. A reference to this fact was made by a parent when he alluded, "*…if you look at the extension officers here, they have a lot of information in*

farming that we are not aware of. They can make farm on a small piece of land and make so much yield. It is not about the size of the land you cultivate anymore; it is, rather, about the size of knowledge you have about farming..." (Theophilus). He further posed the question, "*Where is the knowledge in farming acquired*?" He answered "*...It's school, of course. School helps people to get knowledge that can be used to increase farm yields*". Maame, (parent) further supported this in the claim, "*Times have changed. Farming is not the same anymore…it is not about experience only…looking, umm, at the extension officers, these are young men, but they have so much knowledge about farming*".

Even though members of the communities overwhelmingly acknowledge the importance of school knowledge in their traditional occupations, they are not happy to allow their schooling children to make fishing and farming their occupations. Parents want their children to work for cultural and economic reasons; however, they are afraid that farming and fishing should become the future occupation of their children. Auntie Mansah (parent) shared her reasons on why she would not allow her children to join her in farming. She had stated' "*My children tell some impressive things they are learning in school about cocoa…I do not want them to work on the farm. Farm work is not for children who have been to school…*". Egya (parent) further implied this in the statement, "*I do not want the children to be fishermen. I think they cannot have a good career in fishing. The problem is that most fishermen are not respected. People also tease and say bad things about fishermen. This is not for children who are educated*".

Parents and adults in the communities think, however, that school children can contribute productively to their work by articulating the problems that are associated with their occupation in national discourses. According to Egya (a parent), "*You see, the children should go to school so that they would be part of the policy makers in the country…the children better understand our occupation, including what actually goes into it…Fishing is*

hard to do but the government does not help us at all, because they do not understand our work. We want our children to be part of the decision makers in the country. In this way, they can articulate and advance policies that will enhance the quality of our work".

The refusal of the community members to allow graduates to join in their occupations partly stems from their belief that traditional occupations are not accorded any respect in the Ghanaian society. They also believe that fishing and farming are the reserve of the uneducated members of the society.

Apart from the economic benefits that are associated with school knowledge in the communities, schooling or education in these communities also come with a rise in social status. Schooling is considered as a means to raise the status of the children. According to Annan (parent), *"You know, the educated children should have a better life than us. If they can read and write, they should be able to live in nice places and do good jobs. Fishing and farming are not respected. If you do these jobs you find it difficult to go to places. You cannot talk to high profile men and women. Our children should not join us in our work; this work is for those who have not been to school".*

When children raise their status, it also counts for their family and the entire community. Auntie Mansah (a parent) stated, *"It is good to educate the children. The families with educated members are revered and respected a lot".*

Proficiency in literacy and numeracy skills, in terms of reading, writing and counting, is highly respected. According to John, *"You are more respected if you are able to read "Graphic" and write letters".* Papa (a child) also remarked, *"Even though I do not earn any money from going to school, I am able to improve my reading and writing skills. The master drummer of ABC is very skilful and plays really well, but he is not respected because he*

cannot read and write. I think I am respected more, because I go to school". Papa was an informant who earned money from playing drums and dancing.

Children attending school are also associated with the European way of life in terms of dressing, music, dance, and food-habits. Graduates and students must always dress in a manner that befit their status; trousers with shirt tacked in and a shoe to match, and preferably, with a tie on it. This experience was related by some of the children in the following ways;

Yaw: "*The children who attend school respect and talk politely. They also dress nicely. They have to tack in their shirts all the time. Those children who do not attend school drink alcohol, go after girls and do not respect the elders. They talk "by-heart*".

Papa: "*School children are seen as gentlemen; they have good manners. The children and their families are highly respected*".

Ama: "*Children who go to school learn the right way of life…they are modern. They learn etiquettes and good manners. They behave well in society*".

Attending school also comes with an expectation to live in the cities or nicer places. Living in such places is associated with elitism. According to Kofi (a child), "*I am leaving for Accra immediately I finish school. Every child who goes to school wants to live in the city*".

Students and graduates are not supposed to get themselves involved in traditional culture. Their presence at or participation in traditional activities is not countenanced friendly. Any association with traditional festivities tends to be considered colloquial. For example, Jane (child) stated, "*traditional dancing is for the illiterates…those people are old-fashioned*'". The farmers and fishermen desire their schooling children or graduates to emulate the lifestyles of the elites in the society.

Furthermore, graduates are given special boost in their status as they are deemed authority figures. Graduates provide assistance to their families in resolving conflicts, they explain policies to their community members, and they are also given a role-model status. According to Auntie Mansah, "*The children who have finished school help us to solve our community problems…they are respected and knowledgeable*". Ernest (parent) also reaffirmed this in the response, "*School is really good. For example, the graduates help us to understand what the government is doing*".

These statements are in support of the communities' mentality of socializing its children in school. School knowledge is regarded as a powerful socio-economic tool that is effective for fighting poverty and increasing the social status of families and communities. Ama summarized this in the statement, "*We go to school so that we will become economically productive to tackle the poverty in our families and communities. Schooling will also help us bring respect and honour to our families and communities*". School is assumed to hold the answer to a dream about a better life in these communities.

4.3.1. Participant Observation at School

The children elegantly marched into their classroom. It was Monday, and the time was 08.30am. The children gracefully sat in pairs on their desks. Most of them were chattering boisterously. Suddenly, you could hear a pin drop; they class teacher had entered the class. The class teacher shouted; 'Good morning'. All the children, in a synchronized unison, stood on their feet and responded to the greeting, 'Good morning, Madam'.

In revising the children's previous knowledge, the teacher asked the children questions based on what they had learnt the previous week. The teacher randomly elected children to answer the questions. Some of the children were virtually ducking their heads under their desks; they were not ready! The children who had their questions answered correctly were clapped for.

Those children who could not answer their questions correctly were made to stand on their feet for two minutes.

The teacher wrote on the chalkboard, the title of the lesson they were going to learn. A child was asked to read the title of the lesson to the whole class. The teacher systematically explained, verbally, the concepts she wanted the children to understand. Intermittently, she would ask a child, "Keep quiet and pay attention". She also integrated questions with explanations. Those children who knew the answers to the questions she posed raised their hands while she called them to answer. You could not answer a question unless you were called. After she had finished teaching, she put up ten questions on the board for the children to answer. The children were persistently cautioned not to collaborate. Apparently, the children expended more effort on concealing their answers from their friends than the effort they put into thinking. They sat closely together in pairs; it was not conceivable how they could prevent their friends from peeping their answers! Anyway, no incident of cheating was reported. The teacher scored their exercises and awarded those who had perfect scores with Bic pens.

4.3.2. Organization of Classroom Learning

4.3.2.1. Participation Structure

I would describe the participation structure in the schools as hierarchical, with relatively less flexible role among the teachers and the students. In the classrooms the teachers are seen as leaders while the students are the subjects. The teachers manage the children's participation throughout the entire teaching session. For example, the teachers determine who is supposed to answer a question. The children's engagement in the lessons is done individually, whenever a child has a contribution to make to the instructional situation. The teachers give the children the rights to participate and there is no negotiation of responsibilities. The

teachers wield the power to decide what each child has to do. You cannot pitch in without having being given the authority by the teacher. The teachers decide who contributes to class activities, in terms of when and how long. The teacher also control the speaking turn of the children in the classes. Any attempts by the children to collaborate with their friends are often stifled by the teacher. Those who persist in showing their friends what to do are either warned sternly or punished.

4.3.2.2.   Roles of Teachers and More-Experienced Children

The teachers manage the children's behaviour and the contributions they can make in the lessons. The teachers outline the tasks to the children and direct how the tasks are supposed to be done. For example;

"*List two types of force*"

The teachers are the experts who transmit information by giving instruction to the children to follow in carrying out assignments and exercises. For example, from the participant observation presented, the children responded briefly to the teacher's quizzes by addressing her directly. Children's responses are evaluated by the teachers to ascertain the degree to which they have understood the lessons.

4.3.2.3.   Motivation And Purpose

The children are motivated to stay in school by focusing on what they believe they will become, such as teachers, nurses, bankers and doctors, if they manage to complete school.

In fact, the children cannot tell the exact utility nature of the lessons they are imbibing in the classrooms. An example situation, I asked a child, "*How are the Newton's Laws of gravitation applied in life*?"   The child responded, "*I do not know*".

4.3.2.3. Sources of Learning: Receiving Lessons

The teachers set up instructional situations for the children to learn. The children learn the lessons the teacher has prepared to teach. The teachers actually prepare comprehensive lesson notes on all the lessons they intend to teach for each week. The children basically do not have any idea on what they are going to study.

4.3.2.5. Forms of Communication

Words, songs and stories are used to describe situations to the children by the teachers. The usage of words dominates the instructional sessions. Usually, the information they share in the classroom is out of the context of real situations. The teachers employ known-answer questions to quiz the children. That is, every question the teachers ask, they already know the answer. Usually, the questions are already in teachers' lesson notes.

4.3.2.6. Role Of Assessment

The children are assessed to indicate the degree to which they have mastered the lessons they have received. The assessment focus on the objectives the teacher has set in their lesson plan. The children are happy when they receive praise, grades and rewards from the teachers. The children clap for those children who answer questions correctly.

4.4. Changing Functions of Work And School Knowledge

4.4.1. Changing functions of child work

In Ghana, the traditional value of work for children has been in the tendency to make them become competent in their traditional occupations which can enable them to contribute to their families' subsistence production (Boakye-Boaten, 2010). This is confirmed in the statements of the older generation (parents) in the present study.

However, this notion of children's engagement in work seems to have taken on additional functions as children's roles have expanded to embody economic functions. This is in line with Katz's findings in Sudan (2004).

In the case of this present study, these changes are reflected in the on-going social, economic and political changes that are sweeping through the country. For example, Annan pointed to the national budget. He said *"When the government presents the budget everything changes…including the price of Kenkey…"* Kenkey is a fermented maize meal. These harsh socio-economic changes can be traced to the removal of subsidies, emphasis on export-based agriculture, currency devaluation and reduction in public spending which underlined the conditionalities of Structural Adjustment Programme (Abebe, 2007). The activities that go on in these communities are not spared the influences that these changes exert. Theophilus (a parent) expressly captured this in the retort, *"Life has become very hard…You see, the children do not know what is happening in this country…we are standing between the country and the children…"*

In this way, the children's families and communities are functioning as an interface between traditional values and customs of work and on-going socio-economic changes in the country in order to make children's everyday lives functional (Katz, 2004). The traditional communities are therefore producing their future by trying to both conserve and change their traditional practices to make themselves relevant to the current socioeconomic demands of the country. Theophilus continued, *"…we must continue to live…we have to do more to contain the shocks that are coming…but the children must help us in this too…it is not easy"*.

Most families in the communities are impoverished. Incomes from the farming and fishing activities are not enough for households. Emma (child) states, *"My family is poor, my mother does not make anything substantial from her farming activities to care for me and my*

siblings". The children are now required to supplement their family income with regular labour in child work. Children have thus commercialized their labour. As Kofi stated, "*You can't always work for free…you have to be paid for some of the work you do …so that you can also meet other needs of yours and your family*".

Children work for people by clearing, planting, weeding and harvesting their lands. Kofi described some of the works he does for pay in this response. "*I clear the weeds on people's farm, I cart peoples palm fruits home, I harvest cassava, etc. What I basically do depends on the needs of the people who need my labour*".

Children also find remunerative work outside the farming and fishing activities. Some of the children work as independent sand winners and stonecutters in the interstices of their work. Katz (2004) found a similar pattern in Sudan.   Others also work as house helps, bakers or drummers. Emma stated, "*I am working more in a bakery now…*" Ama said, "*I work as a house help…*" Papa was earning money from "*dance performance*"

The money they make is their own to keep, however, most children give substantial fractions of their income to their parents/care-takers. Emma said, "*I give a good portion of my money to my mother…*" Ama had said, "*Even though the money I make from the work I do for my mistress is mine, I give some of it to my mother…to help keep the family*".

School has also become a strong lure pushing children into paid work. There is, generally, a strong desire among children to have education. With monetary demands of school, which place serious burden on children and their families to come up with money in order to get education, children are increasingly expanding their engagement in paid work. Ama said, "*I love school…I am working a lot for my mistress so that I can save money to buy my school stuffs…and to also help my parents pay for my education*". Emma reported, "*I am actually*

working in the bakery because I want to have education. I do not like the bakery work. Any day I get help for my education, I will quit the bakery…School is the reason why I am here".

I also found that the children save some of the proceeds from their working endeavours in anticipation of supporting their secondary education. John had left his uncle at XZP to OPE to work so that he could have education. He reported this in the response, "*My uncle would not let my go to school…I left him to come to OPE so that I can work to make money and go to school. I like school…*" He continued, "*I am able to buy all the books I need in school…I am also saving money in the bank for my secondary and tertiary education*". Jane also cited her intention of pursuing tertiary education as one of the reasons why she is working. She put this in the intimation, "*I want to become a nurse. I am saving towards it. When I complete secondary school and my parents are not able to support me fully, I could be in position to complement their effort*".

This general desire among the children to pursue higher education has brought about intensification and expansion of their work. According to Emma, because he thinks that secondary education is expensive he is now living his life in the bakery. He said, "*I am now living in the bakery…I have a small room in the bakery where I sleep. I work throughout the night. I hardly get sleep*". Apparently, Emma has only four hours of sleep each night based on the calculation of how he spends his time. Some of the children in the fishing communities also trek long distances along the shore to places where their assistance will be needed in work. Yaw had said, "*When the sea here becomes 'dry' I go to Elmina to work…*" Elmina is about five kilometres from Cape Coast. This shows the distance the children are ready to walk so that they can get education. Some of the children even sell their labour to their parents so that they can buy themselves the school materials their parents are unwilling to provide them. Agyei (a child) reported, "*I take money from my father when I work for him.*

My father is not ready to buy me my school stuff. I use the money to pay for my school expenses". He continued, "*I am also making savings for my secondary education*".

It is now a commonplace to find children demanding and being paid money for the work they do in these communities. They are selling their work skills. As aptly put by Ama (a child), "*We are sowing what we know...the money is the harvest…so we can invest in our future*"

4.4.2. Positioning of School Knowledge

The children and the community members see the school as a more formidable place that holds strong prospects to offset the shocks that current economic and social changes pose to their survival, both now and in the future. According to Annan, "*I believe the knowledge the children get in school is what will sustain them in future…and also their children. It is not very possible to rely on fishing in the future…they must go to school*".

Some of the community members believe that it is important for them to cede part of their responsibility to train children to the schools. Maame also said, "*Since we are not getting anything substantial from farming, we should allow the children to go to school to learn what they will need in future for their survival…they should therefore be allowed to be trained by the school…the school should be their home*". There is a general positive attitude on the parts of the parents to allow their children to go school.

 In the schools, tests and exams were used to select the children who qualify to progress to the next stage of learning. This, in the words of Lave & Wenger (1991), "commoditizes" learning. By this, they mean that tests and exams are used to allot marketing values to children's performance in class, where high performance accrue high values and vice versa. The same procedure follows how graduates are selected into occupations. According to a

teacher, "*You really have to get excellent grades to be able to get employment in a good company…you might become useless if you just scrap a pass in your final exams*".

This process of using test scores and grades to sort children into classes and occupations has built respect for the authority school holds in the community. According to Sisi (an informant), "*You have to be a whiz kid to stay in school…the best children are in school…the school is not for jokers…jokers can't pass their exams*".

Also the school curricula valorise careers that have no roots in the traditional communities. Some examples of these careers are banking, nursing, law, economics, medicine, engineering, computer science, etc. Traditional occupations like fishing and farming have no place in the classroom interaction between teachers and children. According to a teacher, "*You cannot go to school and become a farmer…even teaching is not so respected…you have to become an engineer, doctor, banker or a lawyer…These are some of the careers the children should dream of pursuing*". The schools in this way strive to commoditize learning by quantifying the value of school knowledge the children might acquire in terms of jobs and salaries the children stand to earn after graduation. When I asked the teacher about why teaching is not so much respected, he continued, "*Teaching has lost its respect because teachers are not paid any good salary…as a result, some teachers even engage in farming in order to meet their needs*". Any comment that centred on fishing or farming by the teachers was simply disparaging. For example, one day in class, a child was misbehaving; he would not stop pinching the child who sat next by him. The teacher spontaneously spited the child, "*Do not forget we are in a classroom…we are not catching fish here…wait, when you are with your fisher folks, you can do this*".

In the communities, people are paid differently for jobs that require similar skills. The disparities in salaries ensue from differences in educational qualification. When I asked Papa

(child) why he would go to university so that he could become a professional drummer, this was his response, "*If you do not go to university, you are not seen as a professional drummer. They do not pay you fairly. Usually, we do better than the group from university; however, they are paid better because they have higher education*".

The children also extol the importance of using the knowledge they will acquire in school to earn respect and increase in social status in their communities. For example, Papa reflected, "*Even though I am not paid for going to school, [he mused, 'I will be paid later'], I am respected a lot now. The master drummer of ATZ Footprint is very skilful and plays extremely well, he is not respected much because he did not go to school. I am able to notate some beats; the master drummer has no idea. He respects me so much for going to school. At least, school is paying me now with some respect now*".

These characterizations of school learning have labelled traditional learning activities as involving endeavours that have less monetary and social values. To secure the children's future in these changing times, children and many adults are upbeat about the better economic and social possibilities schools profess to offer.

4.5. **Contention Between Work And School**

The schools in the communities are engaged in constant contention with child work to dislodge the home and the community as the locus of social reproduction for the children. As a teacher put it, "*It's like a tug of war…both school and work are pulling the children…the children are caught in-between*". The contention is seen in the antagonistic interests of work and school, truancy in school and in the dilemma of parents, care-givers and children of what enrolment in school will bring.

4.5.1. **Antagonistic Interests of Work and School**

The household and the community learning settings of work and the learning settings of the schools introduce the children to different kinds of knowledge. There is a significant disconnection between what the children learn in school and what they do in their homes and communities. For example, a teacher mentioned, "*The school cannot be an extension of the home…if the children are supposed to learn farming, they should better stay at home*".

The formal content of the school curriculum introduces the children to knowledge that is abstracted from practice while the informal curriculum of the household and communities introduces the children to knowledge that is embedded in local modes of practices and production. The teacher continued, "*The school is preparing the children for the future…they will apply the knowledge they are acquiring later in work*".

The goal of the traditional learning for children is basically to usher the children directly into the daily practices of their homes and the community. Culturally, every child is deemed a useful and legitimate participant in adult productive enterprises of the communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to Ernest (parent), "*Every child is important here…they perform various roles, be it big or small, to keep up their families*". This aptly resonates with a quote by Katz (2004, p.489), "*what children learn about the environment and how they use this knowledge in their work are fundamental cultural forms and practices, shared in a social matrix and bearing a specific relationship to the prevailing social relations of production and reproduction*". The knowledge the children acquire from work does not terminate in the learning situation; there is no time or space differentiation between learning and practice. The children are supposed to put the knowledge they acquire into continuous practice in their traditional endeavours. It is believed that through continuous use of the knowledge, the knowledge would become homily to the children and thereby form an integral part of their

being. According to Egya, "*If you show the children something and they go and sleep with it, how they will remember…they have to show it to you by doing something with the knowledge…after a while, you can even wake them up from sleep and ask them to do something without they having any problems*". This is in consonance with what Bourdieu & Passeron (1979) termed "habitus". The children are required to preserve the practices that are taught them. Egya put this in a statement, "*The children are our future…they have to know what we do and keep the skills for posterity*".

The children do not describe their traditional endeavours of knowledge acquisition as learning; as the children could not remember when they had acquired the occupational skills they hold. None of the children who participated in the study could tell how they came to know their skills in work. Children do not see the process of learning taking place - the learning process seems to be unconscious to the children. This is captured in the way Bourdieu &Passeron (1979, p. 48), described traditional learning. They described it as, "*a familiarizing process in which the master transmits unconsciously, through exemplary conduct, principles he has never mastered consciously, to a receiver who internalizes them unconsciously*".

In the schools, the children are oriented to look forward to their reproductive endeavours later in life. The school learning is regulated by strict rules of discipline and predefined curriculum. A teacher had said, "*We already know what the children are supposed to know. Everything is stated in the teaching curriculum…we also follow goals that are set by the Metropolitan Education Office*". The schools' teaching curricula are mostly based on abstract concepts. Most instances of learning were based on the text book. The children hardly had the opportunity to practice what they studied. The most practical subject in the curriculum was agriculture, which mostly addressed issues that pertained to mechanized farming. You could not identify any mechanized agricultural enterprise in the area. This illustrates how the

schools strive to separate the children from the ongoing adult activities in the communities. According to the headmaster of a school, "*The children are now going through a process that will equip them with skills that will enable them to work later in life*".

4.5.2. Truancy in School

Another source of conflict was seen in how the children apportion their time over work and school. The result of the conflict was seen in poor school attendance as children have to engage in paid work to sustain themselves while they are in school. Kofi had said, "*I try to go to school every day*". When I prodded why he 'tried', he responded, "*I wish I could attend school every day, but circumstances at home do not permit me to be regular as I desire. It is not easy*". Nana (a child) also said, "*It is really difficult to make a decision to go to school. It is more tempting, haha, to go to the shore than to go to school. You get money if you go to the shore. However, I try to go to school*".

Sometimes, while in school the children have to prematurely curtail classes to attend to the calls of their work. This was Emma's experience, "*School officially closes at 14.30, but I leave school at 13.30. I have to be in the bakery at exactly 14.00. This means that I lose all the lessons that are taught in school after 13.30*".

Also, for the children who work at the shore, they usually have to abruptly leave school as most fishermen dock at the shore during school hours. John reported, "*Most fishermen dock ashore in the afternoon...I stay in school in the mornings...*" John had said, "*Anytime we hear that the fishermen have come...we run away from school to the shore to work...apparently we work in our uniforms when we are not able to escape school early*". The children use "runaway" as a slag for escaping school before school officially finishes.

The reaction of the teachers to the children's truant behaviour is mixed. Some teachers agree that the children can come to school briefly and leave for work; others are totally against such behaviour. One teacher reported, *"The children are not to blame…they should have the chance to attend to their work"*. This understanding of the children's situation by the teachers stems from the fact that some of the teachers also had to work and attend school at the same time. Kofi had remarked, *"The teachers appreciate our situation; some of them went through this. They had to work to support their families and keep themselves in school. They tell us their stories. Some of them even had it worse"*.

However, some of the teachers do not happily countenance the children's absence from school. Jane reported, *"Occasionally, we are punished for not attending school. Actually, it depends on the teacher in question"*. A female teacher also complained, *"The children's truant behaviour is disturbing…sometimes before you turn back from writing on the blackboard, all the children are gone…you cannot teach tables…you have no alternative than to end the entire class abruptly"*. According to John, *"My class teacher becomes mad when I run away from school. When I manage to stay throughout the school hours, he becomes fine with me"*.

To appease the teachers some of the children offer the teachers products from farming and fishing. According to John, *"To cool the teachers, I bring them big fresh fish…"* Jane also said, *"I give my teachers extra fish when they come to buy fish from me at the market; it's our way of making them feel happy"*. Further, some of the children "cool" their teachers by visiting them at home to run errands for them. For example, Kofi reported, *"I try to have good relations with my teachers. For instance, I visit my class mistress at home to assist her with her chores. I also weed around her house"*. Papa had said, *"Even though I do not attend school regularly, my class teacher likes me; we work on his farm often. That makes him reluctant to complain about me…I am always trying to do some work to please him"*.

The children are endlessly engaged in negotiating their choice to work and school concurrently by cajoling their teachers to understand their situation. These settings of learning as seen in work and school embody conflicting objectives and practices, which Bourdieu & Passeron's (1979), described as "antagonistic interests".

On the one hand, children must work more to be able to go to school; on the other hand, school and work have conflicting interests in terms of what children learn and how to learn it. Also, there is constant competition over how children should apportion their time over work and school.

4.5.3. **Parents/Care-Giver's Dilemma**

Parents and adults encounter dilemmas about how to act in the best interest of their children. The efforts of the communities to adapt to the socioeconomic changes that are taking place in the country come without producing dissonance in their beliefs about the best ways to make their children's lives sustainable. This was shown in what Annan (parent) had said, "*We do not want the children to take up our occupations in future; however, the expenses that are involved in sending children to school discourage us from making school the number one choice for our children. Also, some of you educated people, I do not want to mention names, come here and ask for fish. Some even join us in our work. It is very discouraging; such things make it really difficult to decide on the better option for our children- fishing work or school?*"

Sometimes the regard the people in the communities have for schooling seemed more ideal, rather than real. In some cases their idea about schooling also seemed ambiguous. According to Egya (parent), "*How is it possible for somebody like me to be able to push my children to places like the university? I think it would require me to sell everything I have…even myself…I do not know how I can manage the expenses in school. Notwithstanding, we are*

trying…" Auntie Mansah also chided, *"I am hearing that there is an association of university graduates who are not employed…it is not good…are there jobs really for our children?"* In fact, there is an Unemployed Graduates Association (UGA) in Ghana.

Also, lack of cultural capital in terms of social connections discourages parents from sending their children to school. Cultural capital is reflected in the connections parents have in sending their children to good schools, and also in finding jobs for their children after graduation. According to Auntie Mansah, *"if you do not know anybody, it is difficult to get a good school for your child. The same situation occurs in getting jobs for children after school…There is a boy here who has gone very high in education, he is just idling about. His father does not know anybody to help him get a job. It is hard for us…"*

Even though, there is a general disbelief in the parents' optimism about the possibilities school will offer the children, some parents and adults in the communities are resolute in their convictions to send their children to school. The parents and adults in the communities trace their resolve through the reality of production in their communities. For them, school is a luxury. Annan had responded to why he would do everything possible to get his children to higher levels of education in the statement, *"You know, the children should have better lives than us. They should be able to read and write. They should be able to live in nice places. Fishing work is hard and not respected. If you do this job you find it very hard to go to some places. You cannot talk to high profile men and women. I would be happy if my children could also go to school to higher level. I will do my best to get them there…"* Theophilus had also expressed his resolve in the statement, *"You see…hmmm, we do not make any significant returns from farming. We work all year round, but we do not make anything significant. I do not want my children to suffer the way I am suffering. I want them to have a better future"*.

In seeking a way out of their inability to totally support their children in school, parents and adults in the communities believe that children should be able to balance work and school. This fact was summarized in this response.

Ernest; "*I believe it is necessary that children balance work and school. They need to help us take care of them…they must also contribute to their upkeep in home and school*".

4.5.4. Children's Dilemma

The children did not hide their feelings of uncertainty about their ability to hone in the much espoused benefits school stands to offer them. The children's feelings of uncertainty were expressed through doubts they have about their ability to meet the financial demands of higher education. According to Kofi, "*It is possible to complete primary and junior high school because it is free; but, higher education is expensive. I wonder how I can manage that*". Jane had also reported, "*It is expensive to go to nursing school…my parents are not rich…let's see how I can manage that*".

The children are also dismayed about their parents' lack of social connections to get them into good schools. According to the children, you must go to a good school in order to get the grades you need to enter a tertiary institution. According to Papa, "*My parents do not know anyone who can help me go to a school like MANST…the schools that we can easily get admission into do not have good teachers and facilities. Learning is poor in these schools*". Nana had also said, "*There is no way I can get into any of the first class schools…the big men fill such schools with their children. My parents do not know anybody*". Ama repulsively intimated, "*It is difficult to pass in the less endowed schools…but these are the schools that have places for us…do not trust the computer system*". What Ama says refers to a computer selection system government of Ghana has introduced for senior high schools. The idea is meant to ensure that there will be impartial selection of students into secondary schools.

When I questioned the children about the impartiality of the system, they did not hide their lack of confidence in the system. These were some of their responses;

Ama; "*Who operates the computer? He is not my father's friend…Those who operate the computers select the people they know first into the good schools*"

Papa; "*How can we compete with the children in Accra? They get better education and therefore pass better…their parents are also closer to the computers…they will always get the best schools*".

These responses by the children resonated strongly with my experience as a teacher. We had contested the authenticity of the computer selection vehemently when most of the children in my school who had performed excellently in their final exams were placed in less endowed schools. We also had cases whereby children who had barely scrapped passes in prestigious preparatory schools were given places in first class schools. It is very evident that the computer selection system is highly biased.

Regardless of these uncertainties, the children continue to place school in a simple view of success. As aptly put by John: "*Go and get literacy and numeracy skills and you are on the threshold of obtaining high paying jobs…you are automatically successful*".

Drudgery of labour associated with traditional occupations and menial works also fuels the children's desire to negotiate a way out of their current situation into a better life which school promises. The children are caught in a dilemma of constantly contemplating whether to go to school or work. It is a difficult decision to make, as you cannot choose one and leave the other. Preferably, most children would choose school over work as they believe strongly in the good prospects that school holds for them.

However, the prevailing economic conditions at home and in the communities do not permit most of them to solely commit their time to school work. The children are left with no alternative than to balance school and work.

CHAPTER FIVE

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Overview of Findings

The present study specifically looked at children who were concurrently balancing learning with earning. The following five themes recurrently emerged from the data collected: intergenerational relations; work as the cultural tool for rearing children; school as a setting for preparing children for their future lives; changing functions of work and school knowledge; and contention between work and school.

The findings from the studies indicate that in Ghana the older generation see themselves in their children. The children are assumed to embody the future of their families and communities. Children are therefore reared through culture-specific practices which make them share responsibilities, in terms of care giving, with their parents, siblings, and elders. The cultural practices through which children are reared are premised on the values of intergenerational relations (Nukunya, 2003; Twum-Danso, 2009).

The values of intergenerational relations in the Ghanaian communities are reciprocity, responsibility and respect. Reciprocity sets the ideals that promote intergenerational relations. It emphasises the need for people to share collective responsibility for each other. According to the study, the ideals of reciprocity are communicated through traditional proverbs and maxims, and partly upheld as a substitute for ineffective social welfare system in Ghana. Reciprocity as an implicit contract in social relations impels children to reciprocate the care they receive from their parents and kins, in concrete or material terms.

From the study, responsibility is the second cultural value that underlies intergenerational relations. This intergenerational value is embodied in the contributions children make and the

roles they play to support their families. Children are purposely trained in Ghanaian communities to be responsible because they are assumed to be neither good nor bad (amoral) and are also predisposed to be lazy. Again, the cultural value of responsibility is used to transfer parental occupational skills to children. Children are trained in work to acquire the values of responsibility. The responsibilities children take are not related to age; however, the responsibilities are structured according to the gender of the children. From the study, children begin to take responsibility early in life. The responsibilities children take increase as they increase in physical development and competence. Generally, children determine their own responsibilities; however, as the children grow, parents and adults assign responsibilities to them based on the mental tally the parents and adults keep about the amount of work children are able to do.

Children participate in household activities, parental occupation or income generating activities in their communities. Children also show responsibility in the empathy they show to their parents, which demonstrates the understanding the children have for their parents' socio-economic circumstances.

Respect as the third value of intergenerational relations refers to the reward that children receive when they accept their intergenerational roles and live responsibly. Children earn more respect from the responsibilities they take.

From the study, specific measures of respect are carried in the work children do. Some of these measures of respect for children include the high regard parents and elders in their community accord them; the opportunity to make more friends; the blessings they receive from their ancestors; and the blessings they receive from God to live longer on earth. It could be inferred from the study that the changing position of children in Ghanaian families and communities is reflecting the way respect is earned by children currently. Even though

usual courtesies of obedience, honour, love, respect and humility which children must show their parents are valued in Ghanaian communities, the respect children earn from practical responsibilities they take are unparalleled. This is also shown in the works of Boakye-Boaten (2008) and Twum-Danso (2009).

As children affect and are also affected by the changes that occur in their society, social and economic changes that are taking place are invariably affecting the economic position of children in Ghana. Children are no longer perceived traditionally as vulnerable beings in need of protection and nurturing; who are supposed to be absolutely provided for by the father and nurtured by the mother (Boakye-Boaten, 2008; Twum-Danso, 2009). Children are now considered economic assets for their families (Boakye-Boaten, 2008). In the present study, children are active participants in their intergenerational relations with adults, as both children and adults are actively involved in the construction of economic and social realities in their communities.

The present study further indicates that work is used as a cultural tool for rearing children. Traditionally, the livelihood of the people depends on the resources they are able to appropriate from their environment. As a result of this, work provides the means through which the survival and continuity of the communities are ensured. According to the findings from the study, fishing and farming practices are very pervasive in the communities. Work is used to train or rear children because it serves as a means to inculcate socio-ethical values in the children. Also training children in work is easy to organize and evaluate as it clearly shows the developmental trends in children to parents and adults. Work further serves as a means to transmit occupational skills to the children. Finally, work is believed to be the best tool to stamp out laziness in children.

From the study, the everyday context of children's work reveals that children have unhindered access to observe and participate in the ongoing adult work activities in their communities. Also, the setting in which adult work takes place also serves as the arena where the children play. Children therefore play and work in the same settings in their communities. As a result of this, it is difficult to separate the norms and identities of peer groups from the working environment of children. As work is very commonplace and organized informally for the children in the communities, the children do not account for their experiences in work as a result of learning.

The findings from the study indicate that children in the communities see everything they do in a life span perspective. This life span perspective influences the children's perception of the school setting as a place to acquire knowledge for their later entry into mature activities. This illustrates how intergenerational values of responsibility and reciprocity are carried to the school setting. The children in the communities, as a result of this, go to school with the hope of earning economic and social benefits in the future to support their families and communities. The economic and social benefits that are associated with schooling in the broader sense have also influenced the high hopes and dreams that members of the communities associate with school. School is therefore seen as an end in itself, in the sense that it has the magic wand to solve all the problems of the communities.

This fits with my personal experience, as I continue to enrol in higher institutions of learning and the expectations from my family and kins keep going up as well. My responsibilities have expanded from my parents and siblings to include my aunties, nephews, nieces and neighbours in my community. For example, as I went home for the data collection exercise from Norway, there was a general perception among my kinfolks that I could solve the entire community-wide problems. This also showed in the data collection process prominently. I was on several occasions coaxed by the fishers and farmer to help them purchase canoes and

other things they needed for their work. This was because I was a master student abroad. Actually, it also applies to students in Ghana as well. I experienced it when I was collecting data for my undergraduate research project at University of Cape Coast. Failure to respond to these pleads positively usually results in the branding of individuals as a "hard-hearted persons" who are unwilling to help. These expectations from families and communities put enormous financial pressure on graduates. This often culminates in the refusal of graduates to return to their countries, towns or villages after school.

School is further believed to control substantial information that is useful for enhancing the productivity of fishing and farming. However, in spite of the special place that school occupies in fishing and farming, parents and adults in the communities are not interested in their schooling children to join them in their work after they have graduated. Instead, parents in the communities believe that the graduate-children can use their knowledge to help in the traditional occupations by articulating the problem they face in their occupations in national discourses. The lack of respect that is accorded traditional occupations primarily influences the reluctance of parents to allow their graduate-children to join them in their work.

Graduates enjoy high status in the communities; as a result, they are assumed to have no direct place in fishing or farming. In the communities, graduates are supposed to live like "Europeans", in terms of their dressing, dance and music habits. Graduates are supposed to live in the cities; by this, they are socially precluded from any involvement in the traditional culture. The study further uncovered that graduates enjoy special boost in their status as authority figures. This gives them special roles in resolving conflicts, explaining government policies and serving as role models in their communities.

Inference from the study findings indicate that the current socio-economic changes that are taking place in Ghana affect the previous purpose of training children in work to acquire

competence. Because most families in the communities are impoverished, children's engagement in work has currently taken on economic functions. This is meant to make the practices of work relevant to the current socioeconomic demands of the country. Children work for people on their farms and at the shore; they also find remunerative work outside their traditional occupations. Even though this is a recent phenomenon, it points to the evolution of children's work. As children begin to find their traditional occupations unsustainable, they begin to look elsewhere or migrate to places where they can find economically sustainable works to do. For example, I used to work on farms to get the things I needed in school when I was in basic school. When the earnings from the farms became unsustainable to enable me get what I needed in secondary school and beginning of training college, I was travelling to Accra to sell on the streets. Other studies in Ghana on child work have also noted children who had migrated to communities where found economically sustainable jobs to do (Agyei-Mensah, 2006; Twum-Danso, 2009). A similar pattern could be predicted for the children in the communities in Cape Coast where this present study was conducted.

The present study shows that the children give substantial fractions of the monies they earn to their parents or carers to keep up their households. Children also use part of the money they earn to finance their education. With the cost of tertiary education continuously rising, most of the children have started saving towards it. The rising cost of education is further pushing some of the children to even demand payment for the works they do for their parents. They demand payment so that they can buy the stationery their parents are unwilling to provide them.

There is a further indication in this study that the children express strong interest in school. This interest stems from their perception that schooling provides more formidable prospects to offset the shocks that current economic and social changes pose to their survival. Also, the

schools have valorised careers that have no roots in the communities. The children are therefore more upbeat about the better economic and social possibilities that await them after graduation.

The study found keen contention between child work and school in the communities. Inferences from the findings of the study found contention in the following areas: antagonistic interest of work and school; attendance in school; parents and guardians' dilemma; and, children's dilemma.

The study found that the settings of work and school introduce the children to different kinds of knowledge. Some of the disconnections in what children learn in work and school are seen in the following dimensions. The school introduces the children to knowledge that is abstracted in practice, while the knowledge children acquire in work is embedded in local modes of practices and production. In work, the children are deemed as legitimate participants (Lave & Wenger, 1991), while in school the children are considered subjects.

This subjective position of children in school does not give them any substantial agency in the roles they take. Because learning is organized informally for children in work, the process of learning is unconscious to them. This has led children to describe their engagement in work as not a learning endeavour. This is further reinforced by the fact that the children cannot remember when they acquired the skills and competence they have in work. There is also a disconnection in the time children are supposed to put their knowledge into practice.

Within the work setting, the children are supposed to act "here and now"; that is, they are required to put the skills they acquire into immediate practice. In the schools, the children are oriented to look forward to their reproductive endeavours later in life. This indicates the discontinuity between the school environment and the home environment. The source of this conflict could be traced to the school's formal regimental curriculum that is based on the

cultural values of the British (Boakye-Boaten, 2008). There is therefore disengagement between education in the schools and the children's home environment.

From the study, another source of conflict is seen in how the children apportion their time over work and school. The result of this conflict is reflected in the children's poor attendance in school as most children are required to earn to sustain themselves. Some of the children completely absent themselves from school to attend to work. Other children prematurely terminate classes so that they can attend to work. The teachers' reaction to the children's truant behaviour is mixed. The reasons are that some of the teachers think it is possible for the children to balance the two as they (the teachers) had done it; other teachers think otherwise. To appease the teachers who are against the children's decision to earn and learn at the same time, some of the children offer the teachers products from fishing and farming. Some of the children also run errands for the teachers on their farms and at their homes.

The parents and guardians of the children are also in caught in a dilemma about how to act in the best interest of their children. Lack of cultural capital by parents discourages parents from sending their children to school as the parents believe that they have a small chance of getting a good secondary school for their children. Another source of their discouragement stems from their utter disbelief in getting white collar jobs for their children after the children are able to graduate from tertiary institutions. Regardless of these issues, the parents in the communities continue to express strong desire in sending their children to school. The reality of farming and fishing makes it very imperative for parents to ensure that no stone is left unturned to push their children into schools. The parents believe that the children should balance learning with earning to support themselves in this regard.

From the study, the children in the communities have uncertainties about their ability to hone the benefits of school. The children are concerned about the rising cost of higher education.

The children also express worry about their parents and guardians' lack of social connections to get them into good schools. Regardless of these uncertainties, the children like their parents, are resolute about the unquestionable possibilities school offers them to overcome their socio-economic predicaments. Drudgery of labour associated with farming and fishing is further fuelling the children's desire to continue in schooling.

The study findings finally indicate that as the children do not see any possibility out of their current economic situation, they feel that the best possibility for them is to balance school with work. The children are thus caught in a dilemma of constantly contemplating whether to go to school or work. It is thus difficult for the children to make a decision, as they cannot choose one and leave the other.

5.2. **Limitations of the Study**

The study procedure helps to explore socio-cultural conception of child work and schooling; however, this did not go without flaws.

The intermittent interruptions that were experienced during interviews at the market interfered with the flow of knowledge exploration. It is believed that this affected the depth of information that could have been extracted.

Again, my multiple positions as a researcher, teacher, someone who had combined learning with earning throughout my studies in Ghana and an indigen of Cape Coast, place me in both positions as an insider and an outsider. It is difficult to assess how significantly I managed to put away all my personal dispositions and perceptions from bearing on the research.

Finally, the limited number of research sample used for the study makes it preposterous for the results of the study to be generalized.

5.3.   **Strengths of the Study**

Regardless of the aforementioned weaknesses in the study, this study presents significant insight into the phenomenon of child work and schooling. The study uses cultural, social and situational perspectives to explore these concepts. The study focuses on children who are concurrently balancing learning with earning. The study also includes parents and guardians who have children who are balancing work and school and the general communities' position on these issues. This makes the study very naturalistic. My position as an insider also helps to explore the issues deeper.

5.4.   **Implications and Recommendations**

5.4.1.   **Community Psychological Interventions and Praxis**

Work in the lives of children raises contentious issues (Bourdillon, 2006). As the core values and principles of community psychology stipulate, community psychologists are responsible for mainstreaming, integrating and developing social intervention and empowerment programmes that protect the economically and socially disadvantaged individuals in societies (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2009).

From the study, it can be inferred that the livelihoods of children would be threatened by policies that seek to abolish child work. From the study, vulnerable children are made more optimistic about their future by the benefit that accrues from the work they do. The idea that construes childhood as a period free of responsibility and a time to be absolutely cared for by adults is untenable in these communities in the study. In these communities, work is an integral part of child development practices as childhood is seen as a continuity of adulthood (Bourdillon, 2006). To separate children from the adult world in these communities would mean denying children the opportunity to develop their competences. This would also ignore

the choices children make and portray children as beings without any agency in their lives (Weston, 2005). However, this does not mean that children should be treated as adults who do not need any help and protection. It is therefore paramount that any community psychology intervention programme that is designed takes into attention the context of the children's lives and the possibilities that are available to them.

The study further indicates that work prepares children for adult life and at the same time helps children to continue in school. Children claim that they grow in confidence and become responsible when they work. Even though children report dilemma in how they should apportion their time over school and work, they do not think that work hinders, significantly, their school work. Instead, work eases the financial tension school imposes on them. The children further claim that the uncertainties surrounding their chances of entering good schools and gaining employment after graduation rather affect their interest in school, significantly. Inferring from this, instead of abolishing child work, community psychology intervention programmes should focus on improving the accessibility and quality of schools in the communities in which the children live (Bissell, 2005; Kabeer, Nambissan & Subrahmanian, 2003).

Interventions should also focus on reducing the nepotism that surrounds the modes through which graduates are employed. It is also important to synchronize the content of the school curricula and the resources in the children's home or community environment. In this way, the children's entire communities and the schools could grow together.

Finally, the study accounts for poverty as one of the main reasons why children work to support their families. The children see their effort to contribute to their family incomes as a way of building their self-esteem. This is seen in terms of the respect the children gain in their families and communities. For example, according to Bourdillon (2006, p.1220), "loss

of income involves not only material loss for the family and the children, but also loss in status and esteem for the children". Stemming from this, it is important that community psychologists focus on developing schemes that could compensate for incomes that might be lost in families as the children focus on schooling.

5.4.2. Research on the socio-cultural conception of child work and schooling

The present study offers empirical evidence on the socio-cultural conception of child work and schooling. Based on the views of children who are balancing learning with earning and parents whose children are doing same, the study has contributed to the debate on child work and school. To offer a holistic insight into the issues of child work and schooling, it would be more useful if policy makers and international organizations that work on issues of child-labour, child-right and education are involved in the study. It is hoped that these individuals have information that could broaden the understanding of these contentious issues. Again, to broaden the understanding of child work, it would be necessary if further studies could focus on the everyday context of children's work. Such studies could focus on the issues of friendship between children and the role of work in their identity development, as this current study found strong evidence of play activities in the interstices of children's work.

Finally, it is suggested that further studies should focus on the analysis of benefits and harm to children as they engage in work. Such studies could look into the precise factors in the working environment that result in benefit or harm. It is believed that such studies could help uncover the exact cost of preventing children from working.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Children's Conception of Work and School

i.   Could you tell me the value of work in your life?

ii.   Can you state some of the work you do, and how you learned them?

iii.   How does work contribute to your social, cultural and economic roles?

iv.   What is the role of school in your future life plans?

v.   What is the role of school in your social, cultural and economic obligations?

Contention Between Work and School

i.   What do you gain from work that you do not get from school?

ii.   How does school make up for the losses you incur as a result of your decision to forgo work?

iii.   How do you apportion your time over school and work?

iv.   How do you negotiate your life between work and school

Parental Perception of Child Work and School

i.   How do you see the work your do?

ii.   How do you envisage work to contribute to the achievement of your future plans for your child?

iii.   What is the contribution of work to your cultural identity?

iv.   How do you develop work skills in your child?

v.   Could you tell me how you sustain food/fish production as your child goes to school?

vi.   What is the function of school in your lives?

vii.   How do you expect school to compensate for the losses you incur as a result of allowing your child to go to school?

Teachers' Conception of child work and school

i.   How do you sustain the interest of children in school as they work?

ii.   How do you envisage the possibility of children combining school with work?

Do you have any comments?

Summary

Let's summarize the salient points in our discussion. The researcher presents a brief outline of the responses to the questions asked. Is the summary complete? Do you have any additions or changes you would like to make?

Appendix II

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMATION

I am Enoch Tawiah Sackey, a student of Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, studying Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Human Development. I am at the moment in Ghana collecting data on the chosen topic for my master research thesis. The topic of my research thesis is "**Children balancing work with schooling: Sociocultural conception of child work and schooling in Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana**". The study will involve interviews and focus group discussions with children and parents (with appropriate consent from their parents or guardians). The interviews and focus group discussions with be audio recorded to ensure accurate documentation of responses. This would also help with enhancing the quality of data analysis. Participation is possible if you are willing to have the interviews and the focus group discussions recorded.

AIMS

This study is intended to highlight children's conception of work and school, and the roles these play in their daily life endeavours and expectations. The study intends to verify how the children negotiate their lives between earning and learning.

Further, the present study is positioned to look into parents and the general community's conception of child work and education, and how they structure their lives around them.

I believe that the knowledge that will be uncovered in this study would be useful for NGO's and Government agencies that work to promote the life and well-being of children.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Participation is strictly confidential: you will not be identified by your name or institution of affiliation. Every information that will be provided in this study will be held in absolute confidence; the tapes will remain in the custody and control of the researcher, and will not be used for any other purpose apart from the one stated in the informed consent. The data will be handled in strict accordance with the procedures for data handling as stated by NSD, in Norway, and University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation is entirely voluntary. If you decide to participate you have the right not to answer any question(s) you feel uncomfortable with. Also, you can withdraw your participation from the study at any time you feel you do not want to continue.

CONTACT

If you have any unaddressed questions or concerns, please contact me at enochs@stud.ntnu.no., or by telephone +233243580750. You may also contact my supervisor, Prof. BeritJohannesen atberit.johannesen@svt.ntnu.no.

 (Signature of Researcher: Enoch Tawiah Sackey)   (Date)

CONSENT OF INFORMANT

I certify that the purpose of the study has been thoroughly explained to me in a language I understand to my satisfaction. I have also received a copy of the consent form. I understand that any information that will be obtained from me for this research will be kept confidentially. Further, I also have the option to use pseudonym. I understand that participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse participation at any time from the research. By signing, I agree to participate in the study.

(Informant: Signature/Initials/Thumb print)   (Date)

Appendix III

Letter Of Informed Consent To Parent/Guardian Of A Child

Dear Parent/Guardian,

<u>INFORMATION</u>

I am Enoch Tawiah Sackey, a student of Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, studying Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Human Development. I am at the moment in Ghana collecting data on the chosen topic for my master research thesis. The topic of my research thesis is "**Children balancing work with schooling: Sociocultural conception of child work and schooling in Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana**". The study will involve interviews and focus group discussions with children and parents (with appropriate consent from their parents or guardians). The interviews and focus group discussions with be audio recorded to ensure accurate documentation of responses. This would also help with enhancing the quality of data analysis. Participation is possible if you are willing to have the interviews and the focus group discussions recorded.

AIMS

This study is intended to highlight children's conception of work and school, and the roles these play in their daily life endeavours and expectations. The study intends to verify how the children negotiate their lives between earning and learning.

Further, the present study is positioned to look into parents and the general community's conception of child work and education, and how they structure their lives around them.

I believe that the knowledge that will be uncovered in this study would be useful for NGO's and Government agencies that work to promote the life and well-being of children.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Participation is strictly confidential: your ward will not be identified by their name or institution of affiliation. Every information that will be provided in this study will be held in absolute confidence; the tapes will remain in the custody and control of the researcher, and will not be used for any other purpose apart from the one stated in the informed consent. The data will be handled in strict accordance with the procedures for data handling as set out by NSD, in Norway, and University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

PARTICIPATION

Your ward's participation is entirely voluntary. If your ward decides to participate they have the right not to answer any question(s) they feel uncomfortable with. Also, your ward can withdraw your participation from the study at any time they feel they do not want to continue.

CONTACT

If you have any unaddressed questions or concerns, please contact me at enochs@stud.ntnu.no., or by telephone +233243580750. You may also contact my supervisor, Prof. BeritJohannesen at berit.johannesen@svt.ntnu.no.

 (Signature of Researcher: Enoch Tawiah Sackey)   (Date)

CONSENT OF INFORMANT

I certify that the purpose of the study has been thoroughly explained to me in a language I understand to my satisfaction. I have also received a copy of the consent form. I understand that any information that will be obtained from my ward for this research will be kept confidentially. Further, my ward also has the option to use pseudonym in the research. I understand that participation is voluntary and I ward has the right to refuse participation at any time from the research. By signing, I agree that my ward participate in the study.

(Informant: Signature/Initials/Thumb print)   (Date)

Appendix IV

A letter of Ethical Clearance from Norwegian Social Science Data Services(NSD).

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

(NSD)

Harald Hårfagres gate 29
N-5007 Bergen
Norway
Tel: +47-55 58 21 17
Fax: +47-55 58 96 50
nsd@nsd.uib.no
www.nsd.uib.no
Org.nr. 985 321 884

Berit Overå Johannesen
Psykologisk institutt
NTNU
7491 TRONDHEIM

Vår dato: 08.05.2012   Vår ref:30559 / 3 / KH   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 30.04.2012. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

30559	*Meaning in making: The role of sports in attracting and keeping children in school.*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Berit Overå Johannesen*
Student	*Enoch Sackey*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 10.05.2013, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

for Kjersti Håvardstun

Kjersti Håvardstun tlf: 55 58 29 53
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Enoch Sackey, Herman Krags Veg 5-21, 7050 TRONDHEIM

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TROMSØ: NSD. SVF, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47-77 64 43 36. nsdmaa@sv.uit.no

Appendix V

Ethical Clearance Letter from University of Cape Coast, Ghana

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

Telephone: 233-3321-32440/4 & 32480/3
Direct: 0332136037
Telex: 2552, UCC, GH
Telegram & Cables: University, Cape Coast

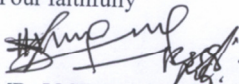**UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE**
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

INTRODUCTION OF RESEARCHER AND CONFIRMATION OF RESEARCH PROTOCOL

I hereby introduce Enoch Tawiah Sackey as the researcher on the topic "**Meaning in the making: working children balancing learning with earning**". A qualitative study of socio-cultural conception of child work and schooling in Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana.

He is a former student of University of Cape Coast, and now a Master of Philosophy Candidate in Human Development Program at the Department of Psychology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway.

This letter confirms that his research protocol has been duly evaluated, and approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) in Bergen, Norway and the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

Your cooperation is kindly implored.

Your faithfully

MR. JOSEPH KWARTENG OFOSUHENE-MENSAH
(LECTURER/ Research and Postgraduate Field Work Coordinator)
email: komensah@ucc.edu.gh tel 233 0246 155 822