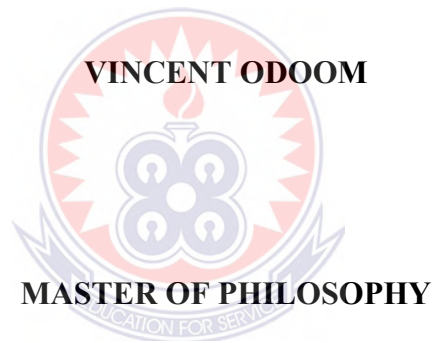


**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**EXPLORATORY STUDY ON PARALLEL MARRIAGE CEREMONIES IN  
WINNEBA IN THE EFUTU MUNICIPALITY**



**2021**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**EXPLORATORY STUDY ON PARALLEL MARRIAGE CEREMONIES IN  
WINNEBA IN THE EFUTU MUNICIPALITY**



**A thesis in the Department of Social Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences,  
submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Social Studies)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**SEPTEMBER, 2021**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, Vincent Odoom declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: .....

Date: .....



### Supervisor's Declaration

I, hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Isaac Eshun

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife, Miss. Dorothy Yeboah and my wonderful twin girls,  
Elsa and Elsie.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my profound gratitude to the Almighty God for giving me the wisdom and strength to bring this work to fruition. May His glorious name be praised, Amen. I am always grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Isaac Eshun of the Department of Social Studies, whose guidance and direction have helped shape this work.

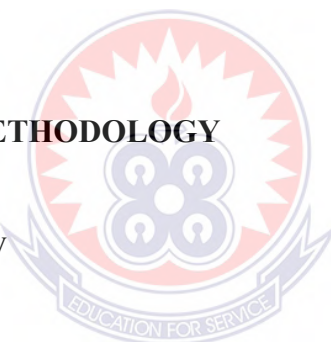
To my wife, Miss Dorothy Yeboah and my blessed twins Elsa and Elsie, Dr. and Dr. (Mrs.) Obeng, Madam Shirley Dankwa of the Center for African Studies (UEW), Bro Godwin Attobra, Bro Eric Ahor Adiei, my grandmother Maame Agyeiwaah, my parents, my in-laws, all the lecturers in the Department of Social Studies, UEW especially Dr. S. P. Frimpong and Dr. S. Poatob and my course mates, especially Eric Akosah. I am very appreciative of your support to me. Also, I am grateful to Elder Stephen Addom, all GHAMSU members especially NEG and Rev. Yaw Anokye Kyei Baffour (the GHAMSU National Coordinator) and every individual that has been a blessing to me in one way or the other. I say God bless you all for your support.

I say a big thank you to my former headmasters, Mr. Sagoe and the late Mr. Oduro-Larbi and my co-teachers especially Elder Maxwell Atia for their co-operation throughout this program. May God bless every individual who contributed in making this work a reality. I am very much appreciative for your supports.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CAP	–	(Latin- “capitulus”) Chapter
COP	–	The Church of Pentecost
CRDD	–	Curriculum Research and Development Division
CRVS	–	Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
GDP	–	Gross Domestic Product
GSS	–	Ghana Statistical Service
GSS	–	Ghana Statistical Service
ICCPR	–	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
MMDA	–	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly
NIV	–	New International Version
PHC	–	Population and Housing Census
PNDCL	–	Provisional National Defense Council Law
RCMA	–	Recognition of Customary Marriages Act
RGD	–	Register General’s Department
RGD	–	Registrar General’s Department
SOs	–	Standing Orders

## ABSTRACT

This research sought to explore parallel marriage ceremonies, the agents involved, challenges and their effects on the marriage institution in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality. A qualitative approach was used to provide a successful conduct of the research given the complexity of the phenomenon under study. The research design used for the study was case study. The targeted population for the study were married people who performed parallel marriage ceremonies, adults who have reached their marital age but are not married, parents, opinion leaders (pastors) and marriage counsellors. In all, fifteen individuals were involved in the study. The purposive sampling technique was used to select all the respondents that were involved in the research work. A semi-structured interview guide was used for data collection. One of the major findings was that although the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 is nicely carved, it is still far from the people it was made for. That is, most of the respondents did not know much about the Marriage Act 1884-1984, Cap. 127 and its demands. In addition, the customary ceremony is seen as that which starts the marriage process of which the ordinance ceremony (wedding) is the climax. Findings also showed that parallel marriage ceremonies are very expensive thereby discouraging young males from getting married. The study recommends that the concept of marriage contraction and the demands of the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 should be added to the Senior High School curriculum to help educate the youth about the dynamics in the marriage contraction and registration process.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The survival of society depends on the process of biological reproduction (Cabej, 2019). In fact, population is the foundation of all social structures. This is largely facilitated by the institution called marriage. According to Nukunya (2003), marriage is the recognized institution for the establishment and maintenance of family life all over the world. Marriage is a fundamental element of a society and a source of life for the family, as well as a means for society to spread and maintain itself (Ankrah, 2017; Horton & Chester, 1984; Naz, Khan, Rehman, Daraz & Hussain, 2011 cited in the works of Sheikh, Rehman & Naz, 2013). Also, marriage is one of the universal social institutions established to control and regulate the life of mankind (Sheikh, Rehman & Naz, 2013). Horton and Chester (1984) and Naz, et al. (2011) cited in the Sheikh, Rehman and Naz (2013) emphasized that aside the other reasons that influences people to go into marriage, the institution is biological based for family formation. This has been the greatest wish of most young adults (men and women) who have reached puberty.

The history of marriage is as complex and varied as the history of emergence of societies and culture, with its meaning having changed and morphed as generations go by. According to Onuorah (2013), marriage is an important aspect of human life because it is the foundation of society. According to Marrison (2006), all other relationships in society stem from the father-mother relationship, and these other relationships thrive most if that father-mother relationship is simultaneously a close and closed husband- wife relationship. Marriage is the bedrock of every society. Hahn

(2020) asserted that marriage and the family is seen as the building blocks of a society. Marriage is therefore very significant in the build-up or development of every society (Belcher, Claus, Davel & Jones, 2021). Marriage is an institution established by God. According Munroe (2004), God did not initiate the human race by putting a parent and child in the Garden of Eden. He put Adam and Eve there – husband and wife. That shows that the primary human relationship, the family, is husband and wife and they are the key to every other relationship.

Also, marriage is regarded as any union in which the couple has gone through all the procedures recognized in the society for the purpose of sexual intercourse, raising of a family or companionship (Nukunya, 2003). In the cultural setting of our society marriage union is only recognized when the two individuals (a man and a woman) have successfully gone through all the rules or customs sanctioned by the society (Nukunya, 2003). According to the report of the 78th General Convention of the Task Force on the study of marriage, the societal and cultural understandings of marriage have penetrated and shaped the understandings of marriage and its contraction in a lot of situations (Episcopal Church, 2015). The uniqueness of this institution has demanded for many legalities in the process of contracting it.

According to Owurasah (2015), throughout the world, marriage is regarded as a moment of celebration and a milestone in adult's life. These ceremonies have gotten much attention in various societies because of how the societies cherish marriage. This is because marriage occurs in all eras of history and in all cultures (Owurasah, 2015). Every culture seems to have her own theories about the origin of marriage and how it is celebrated. For instance, China Travel Discovery (2005) stated that in China the story about the origin of marriage is centered on the marriage of Nuwa and Fu Xi,

who were once sister and brother respectively. The story tells about how they invented marriage procedures to guide subsequent marriage celebrations after they have gotten married. It was said that in the use of fan by the women in China during their marriage ceremony was done by the Nuwa to cover her blushing face to hide her shyness. Every ethnic group may have many mythical stories about their marriage ceremonies of which Africans are not exceptions.

Iles and Roberts (2012) asserted that despite the historical existence of Christianity among this race, marriage ethics in many African societies can be traced back to Christianity. The world view or perspective of many cultures, ethnic groups or individuals concerning marriage and its celebration or contraction differ from one to another (Owurasah, 2015). In Ghana, the customs involve in contracting or celebrating marriage differ from one ethnic group to another (Nukunya, 2003). The Akans, Ga-Adangbes, Gonjas and Ewes, have differences in how their marriages are contracted or celebrated (Nukunya, 2003). This makes the contracting of marriage ethnic or culturally based (Nukunya, 2003). What makes marriage valid may also differ from tribe to tribe (Kuenyehia, 1986). Although different cultures have different marriage customs, many of these traditions symbolise the same thing; the couple starting a new life together (Agboka, 2008).

Marriages in African nations were severely touched and molded by the west's colonialism of Africa, and hence exist as an institution distorted by western beliefs and concepts (Omotoso, 1998). Furthermore, globalisation, modernisation, Europeanism, and notably foreign religion have added some dynamics to how Africans celebrate or contract marriages, particularly among Ghanaian Christians (Ritzer, 2011). Consequently, influencing the change in the laws governing marriage and the different cultural believes funneling marriages contraction and roles in marriage over time (Ajiboye, Atere, & Olufunmi, 2012).

At marriage, every African Christian couple, especially in mission-founded churches, is confronted with three 'worlds' the world of the traditional culture to which most parents of marrying age adults belong; the world of the civil or legal system under which the couple, like other citizens, live; and the world of the predominantly westernized culture that prevails in the church (Ibeka, 2009; Ngundu, 2011). The non-recognition of customary marriages has sometimes led to the regarding of wives and children of customary marriage as illegitimate and not accorded the same status as wives and children from civil marriage in terms of succession (Kaganas & Murray, 1991 cited in Herbst & Plessis, 2008). According to Hastongs (1975),

*“This perplexing situation has confronted many African Christian couple in the wake of church marriage rules and discipline. Lack of recognition of customary marriage by the mission churches for church and government purposes has resulted in numerous Christian dilemmas over marriage. Thus, it is not an exaggeration to say that at marriage, African Christian couples end up with a particular sense of being torn at the three corners of a triangle: the claims of African tradition, the claims of a new-found faith, Christianity, and the claims of the state” (Hastongs, 1975, p.45).*

The would-be couple at marriage has the family (which is considered to be very instrumental in the marital process), the church (which has been as the new family of the Christian) and the state which according to Crawford (2013) has become the third party in the marriage contraction process to satisfy. All of these, as well as others factors have prompted the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies by would-be couples in our societies these days.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

There are compelling moral and legal reasons to affirm and recognize the cultures and knowledge systems of peoples who were previously colonized, particularly African customary law, which is widely regarded as the bedrock of African culture and values (Chirwa, 2006 cited in Coleman, 2021). With the advent of modernisation, globalisation and Europeanism, many Africans and for that matter Ghanaians still cherish these customary laws. It is these customary laws that have been used in manning most of the institutions in our societies. For instance, the marriage institution and the chieftaincy institution (1992 Constitution of Ghana). It is out of the customary laws most societies set out rules or procedures for contracting marriage which is the bedrock of every society. Bogya (2014) asserted that customary marriage rite until recently, was a complete marriage ceremony after which a man and woman were recognized as husband and wife.

Globalisation, modernisation, and religion have all had influence on the way marriage is contracted these days (Owurasah, 2015). The marriage ceremony though a key element in the process of marriage has become a very fashionable events in many societies especially among the Christian (Onuorah, 2013). This has influenced would-be couples poorly prepare towards taking the marital roles as compared to how they prepare for the marriage ceremony (Booth & Edwards 1985; Amato & Previti, 2003 cited in Thiombiano, 2017). In our current societies the church wedding ceremonies have been seen as one of the complex transitions into marriage the would-be couples have to go through (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Kuper, 1984 cited in Erlank, 2014).

With the advent of globalisation, modernisation and religion, many young people have been brainwashed about the customs involved in traditional marriage rite



(Onyima, 2003). In 1753, Lord Hardwicke of Great Britain incorporated the marriage act, which stated that all marriages must take place in the Church to be valid (Rudd, 2003). This raises the question, 'is customary marriage rite idolatry and not valid when organized outside the church (Onyima, 2003). Although, African traditional marriage constituted a genuine marriage contract according to their custom (Ngundu, 2011). *Mariam Obeng Mintah vrs. Francis Ampanyin* Civil Appeal No. J4/18/2013 Judgment of Supreme Court of Ghana delivered on 25th March 2015 cited in (Ankrah, 2017), asserted that many would-be couples and for that matter most Ghanaians have been made to agree that the customary marriage rite is the 'engagement'. The question many people are finding answers to is "is the customary marriage truly the engagement?" According to Gesinde (2010) and Boomie (2010) cited in Owurasah (2015), although the customary marriage is usually referred to as the "engagement" it still remains very vital in the wedding ceremony. Also, which one of the marriage ceremonies (customary or church/civil marriage) is important (Onyima, 2003).

The debate on which one of these practices (customary or church/civil marriage) is acceptable and recognize by law is on-going. There was a news report on some of these confusions and the question pose was 'Traditional and or customary marriage, white wedding. Are they the same?' (Joy News, 11.1.2019). The question is "which of the two sanctioned marriages (thus Customary and church/ordinance marriage) is acceptable?" Obudho (1985), argues that the church does not recognize the customary marriage as a complete ceremony. This has led to the church indirectly forcing new convents to follow Christian system of marriage and discard the customary marriage ceremonies which they see as unclean (Obudho, 1985).

The society is also acculturated to think that people who perform only the traditional or customary marriage rite are poor or not civilized or unchristian, unfashionable (Obudho, 1985). As a result, would-be young couples are forced indirectly to undertake both the customary and the ordinance or church marriage (parallel marriage ceremonies) in order to avoid ridicule (Onyima, 2003). "Parallel marriage ceremony" refers to a situation in which more than one marriage ceremony is performed, usually by Christian would-be couples, whereas any of the ceremonies suffice to pronounce the couple married.

The question here is, at what point can a young would-be couple who has agreed to marry, be socially described as a married couple? Should it be after the performance of customary marriage rite or after the church wedding ceremony (Onyima, 2003). "Do the youth of today understand the dynamics in the parallel marriage ceremonies and their effects on marriage? Which of these ceremonies validates a marital union or both (Onyima, 2003)? What effects do the parallel ceremonies have on the couple and the marriage as an institution? Is it true that the parallel marriage ceremonies performed bring honor and respect to the couple, the parents and the family at large? Some of these issues have led to the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies among would-be couples especially Christians. Unfortunately, the process to marriage has become uphill task for many especially the youth to climb (Mensah, 2013).

Upon reading on parallel marriage ceremonies, it has been agreed as with Smith (1997), who asserted that the modern-day family sociologists concentrate more on marriages than the marriage ceremony. Although, it has been realized that many have written on marriage ceremonies. For instance, Obudho, (1985) wrote on "The impact

of Christianity on the Luo traditional marriage”. Onyima (2003) also saw the ceremonies as a clash in his work “Marriage: The clash between traditional marriage rites and western marriage.” In addition, Agboka (2008) in his write up “Is marriage becoming too expensive?” talked about how expensive the marriage ceremony has become, but did not address the issue of parallel nature of the marriage ceremony. Finally, Mensah (2013) in his work “Confusing engagement and wedding in Ghana” argued that he sees confusion between the church and the family on the marriage contraction process.

It is clear that all the above-mentioned authorities wrote on the marriage ceremonies as a separate ceremony with little or no consent from the other institutions involved in the marriage process. None of them talked about the ceremonies as a unit, even though there is some level of interdependency of the institutions involved in the contraction process, many see the contraction process as a complete ceremony. Thus, they did not see the ceremonies to be parallel in nature. This research seeks to fill the gap in literature concerning the parallel nature of marriage ceremonies. The dynamics that exist in the Christian marriage ceremonies and the registration of marriage. The performance of parallel marriage ceremonies has become a norm in many societies however, the dynamics and its effects on the institution of marriage are unknown. This has influenced the exploratory study on parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality.

### **1.3 The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore parallel marriage ceremonies, the agents involved, challenges and their effects on the marriage institution in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. explore the views of Christians on parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality.
2. examine the reasons for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality.
3. explore the agents that contribute to the challenges of performing parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality.
4. examine the challenges associated with the celebration of parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality.
5. analyze the effects of the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies on the marriage institution in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

The research questions for the study are:

1. How do Christians in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality understand parallel marriage ceremonies?
2. What are the reasons for the performance of parallel marriages ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality?
3. What are the agents that contribute to the challenges of performing parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality?
4. What are the challenges associated with the celebration of parallel marriages ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality?
5. How does the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies affect the marriage institution in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The relevance associated with my study includes the following;

Marriage although is an importance institution in our society, the perception of people about marriage contraction or celebration is not encouraging. This work has added to the existing knowledge about the concept of parallel marriage ceremonies.

Also, another significance of this work is that it has contributed to the understanding of the dynamics involve in the marriage process. The performance of parallel marriage ceremonies is very common in our society, the goal of this work is to help people understand the parallel ceremonies and the existing dynamics involved in the process of contracting marriage in the society.

The findings of this study inform and also calls for the attention of stakeholders and opinion leaders to educate populates on marriage contraction and or ceremonies. Although marriage celebration is very important in the marriage process, few individuals or leadership of the society take their time to educate their members. Marriage is integral part of the society hence demands for frequent wide range of research into it. This work serves as reference for any further research on this topic.

## **1.7 Delimitations**

The scope of the study was delimited in content/scope to the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies. Also, it was delimited in setting to Winneba in the Efutu Municipality. In addition, it was delimited to the Christian community only. This work focused on the Christian marriage as religious institution.

## 1.8 Definition of Terms

**Marriage:** Marriage is a universally used word which basically mean the joining together of two or more individuals. Marriage is any union in which the couple has gone through all the procedures recognized in the society for the purposes of sexual intercourse, raising of a family, or companionship (Nukunya, 2003). Also, marriage is a state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or a wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law (Nagpal, 2011).

**Customary Marriage:** Encyclopedia Britannica (2020), sees marriage as a legally and socially sanctioned union, usually between a man and a woman, that is regulated by laws and rules, customs, beliefs and attitudes. Also, Nukunya (2003) sees marriage as any union in which the couple has gone through all the procedures recognized in the society for the purposes of sexual intercourse, raising of a family, or companionship.

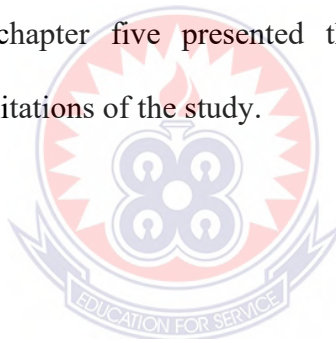
**Parallel Marriage Ceremony:** "Parallel marriage ceremony" refers to a situation in which more than one marriage ceremony is performed, usually by Christian would-be couples, whereas any of the ceremonies suffice to pronounce the couple married.

**Converted marriage:** According to Crawford (2013) customary law marriage and Marriage under the Ordinance are mutually exclusive. This simply means that the two cannot exist at the same time. To him customary marriage is potentially polygamous while ordinance marriage is monogamous in nature (Kamanabi, 1983). When couple celebrate their marriage customary and require to contract a marriage under the ordinance, the customary law marriage ceases to exist. According to Graphic online (2020) marriage under such circumstance therefore converts into marriage under

ordinance. Thereby changing the marriage from a polygamous nature into a monogamous marriage.

### **1.9 Organisation of the Study**

The whole study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one, provides the introduction to the study which includes the background of the study leading to the statement of the research problem, the objectives, research questions, relevance of the study, definition of terms and the organisation. Chapter two focused on the literature review on parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba. Chapter three, presenting the methodology, the philosophy behind the method chosen, trustworthiness and the ethical issues of the study. Chapter four consisted of the data presentation, analysis and discussions while chapter five presented the major findings, conclusions, recommendations and limitations of the study.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Overview

This chapter presents the review of relevant literature related to the study. It was organized under the theoretical review and its application to the topic and conceptual framework.

**Theoretical Review:** The study of parallel marriage ceremonies can be understood best if it is looked at from a theoretical point of view. Although there are many theories that can be used in looking at the issue under consideration, the researcher based this discussion on one of them. This topic can best be understood when a sociological theory is used. The structural functionalism theory was considered.

#### 2.1 Structural Functionalism Theory

The structural functionalism theory which is also known as functionalism sees society as a structure with interrelated parts designed to meet the biological and social needs of the individuals in that society. Functionalism is a brain child of Hebert Spencer (1820–1903) cited in Weinstein (2019) who saw similarities between society and the human body. He argued that just as the various organs of the body work together to keep the body functioning, in the same vein various parts of society work together to keep the society functioning (Spencer, 1898).

The parts of society that Spencer referred to as the social institutions, or patterns of beliefs and behaviors focused on meeting social needs, such as government, education, family, healthcare, religion, and the economy. According to Spencer (1891) the state's responsibility is to protect the citizens and also punish evil doers.



The society in its corporate capacity must exercise a rigorous control over its individual members, to the extent needful for preventing trespasses one upon another (Spencer, 1879 cited in Offer, 2019). This makes the institutions develop means to address the changing trends in the society. Although Comte and Spencer shared some differences in the way the term “social organism” was used, according to Park (1921), society exists for the benefit of its members, not its members for the benefit of society. The institutions in the society function for the benefit of the members of the society.

Institutions are orderly sets of relationships whose function is to maintain the society as a system (Goldschmidt, 1996). Durkheim’s concern with the question of how certain societies maintain internal stability and survive over time made him to apply Spencer’s theory to explain how societies change and survive over time. According to Durkheim, the society is a complex system of interrelated and interdependent parts that work together to maintain stability (Durkheim, 1893 cited in Merton, 1994; Radcliff-Brown, 1933). According to Durkheim (1893) cited in Merton (1994) and Mauss (1924) cited in Mallard (2011), the society is held together through the sharing of values, language and common symbols of which marriage is one.

The argument above makes it clear that the society is managed through a set of institutions within it. The institutions are there to govern the activities of the individuals in the society. These institutions are there to bring about equilibrium or balance in the system. The availability of the social, religious and civic structures is to help bring balance in the society. In recent times, marriage would contemporarily be considered a social, cultural, religious and even a legal institution. This means that for marriage to be valid it has to meet the modalities set by the social, religious and or the

civil laws in the society. That is why the functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions and institutions. A common analogy, popularized by Herbert Spencer and Comte, presents these parts of society as "organs" that work toward the proper functioning of the "body" as a whole (Urry, 2000; Levy-Bruhl, 1903 cited in Park, 1921).

### **2.1.1 Relevance of the theory**

The society though seen as a unite comprises of different parts. According to Park (1921), the society is composed of parts that have the power of independent locomotion. The society has been seen to be with parts for over centuries now. According to Simon (1960), the idea of society as an organism is centuries old. The institutions in the society operates separately but are interrelated to make society function effectively. This theory is still relevant because society is continuously becoming complex and for that matter needs the effective functioning of its institutions. The institutions are to work for the benefits of the members of the society and because society has not ceased to exist so is the organs or institutions in it. Just that some are changing as years go by.

### **2.1.2 Application of the theory**

Marriage is seen as a social institution which needs societal structure for its effective administration (Kertzer & Barbagli, 2001 sited in Gallagher, 2002). Also, marriage to Gallagher (2002) is a social institution based on public legal act and not just on private romantic vibe or one's religious rites. This means that the society is very key in marriage matters. The structural functionalist theory is applicable to the study of marriage in general. This is because marriage cuts across many institutions in the society and also affects many other institutions. For this reason, marriage ceremonies

cannot be studied as a unite. In relation to the parallel marriage ceremonies, there are a lot of agents or actors who play important role in the marriage contraction process. This has informed the use of the structural functionalist theory to underpin this study. This is to help us understand how the society, the church, the family and others influence the marriage contraction processes and also contribute to the understanding of the dynamics involve in the marriage process.

**Conceptual Review:** The conceptual review was done under the following themes;

- i. The concept of marriage.
- ii. The concept of parallel marriage ceremonies.
- iii. Reasons for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies.
- iv. The agents that contribute to the challenges of performing parallel marriage ceremonies.
- v. Challenges associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies.
- vi. The effects of the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies on marriage as an institution.

## **2.2 The Concept of Marriage**

How people understand marriage have great influence on how they decide to celebrate it. The universality of marriage should have influenced how one generally accepted definition can be used for it. This assumption has never been the case, thereby making a universally accepted institution like marriage difficult to be defined (Nukunya, 2003). The definition of marriage can be looked at from different angles. Thus, the socio-cultural view point, the religious (Christianity) and the civil or the state's point of view. Looking at the definition of marriage from these view-points make it clear that although marriage is considered universal, not all definitions can meet the socio-

cultural, religious and the national constitutions of all societies or culture (Sheikh, Rehman & Naz, 2013). Thus, the concept of marriage in this study is looked at from three perspectives. Namely; Customary (socio-cultural) concept of marriage, the Christian and civil concepts of marriage.

### **2.2.1 Customary concept of marriage**

In considering the socio-cultural concept of marriage, its dynamics is also looked at in this session. For example, monogamy and polygamy. The definition and understanding of customary marriage are dependent on the customary laws of a given society. In Ghana, every community or tribe has its own customary laws that are used in governing their activities of which marriage is key (Nukunya, 2003).

Marriage is seen as a social institution which needs societal structure for its effective administration (Kertzer & Barbagli, 2001 cited in Gallagher, 2002). Marriage to Gallagher (2002) is a social institution based on public legal act and not just on private romantic vibe or one's religious rites. This means that the society is very key in marriage matters. Nukunya (2003) asserted that marriage is any union in which the couple has gone through all the procedures recognized in the society for the purposes of sexual intercourse, raising of a family, or companionship. According to Johnson (1960), marriage is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted without loss of standing in the community and to have children. The definition of marriage by Nukunya and Johnson suggest that marriage is socially constructed in line with the customary laws of the society. Although Nukunya's definition fits well in the customs of many Ghanaian society, his definition did not consider the gender of the couple. This can be dangerous considering the advent of same sex marriage issues in our community.

Embers (1978) as cited in Onyima (2003) looked at marriage as a “socially approved sexual and economic union between a man and a woman which is presumed, both by the couple and by others, to be more or less permanent, and which subsumes reciprocal rights and obligations between spouses, and between spouses and their future children”. In addition, marriage according to Encyclopedia Britannica (2021) is seen as a legally and socially sanctioned union, usually between a man and a woman, that is regulated by laws and rules, customs, beliefs and attitudes. The above definitions of marriage make it clear how the society and various cultures see and cherish the marriage institution. To these authorities, marriage is socially constructed.

In addition, Westermarck (1981) asserted that, marriage is a durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of offspring. Although Westermarck did not state emphatically clear in his definition the involvement of the society in the marriage process, the key words he used (durable connection, male and female, beyond the mere act of propagation) in the definition makes the definition socio-culturally fit in the Ghanaian context of marriage. In addition to the above discussion, Kuenyehia and Ofei-Aboagye as cited in the work of Fenrich and Higgins (2001) asserted that marriage under customary law confers certain asymmetrical rights and obligations to the husband and wife. First, the husband gains complete and exclusive sexual rights to his wife.

In the Western societies like Rome, Greece and others marriage is seen as a means of providing legitimacy for children (Ingoldsby, 2006 cited in Harrington, 2016; Jarnkvist, 2019). A definition by Zeligman and a committee of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland cited in the work of Tambiah (1966) says that marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children

born to the woman are recognized legitimate offspring of both parents. This particular definition has made authorities asked questions about marriage being used to determine the legitimacy of the children born in the marriage by the wife (Nukunya, 2003; Leach, 1971). Are all children born in marriage legitimate children of the couple? Also, Max Weber defined marriage as a “stable sexual relationship” allowed and legitimized by the larger kin group and used to determine rules about property rights for children (Collins, 1986). To these authors, marriage is the means by which the society can be preserved through procreation. The above authorities have also asserted that marriage is socially constructed. Hence it needs to be contracted to meet the needs of the society that oversees it (Ngundu, 2011). According to Gallagher (2002) every society has some form of marriage.

Notwithstanding these, according to the Models of marriage laws in the work of Gallagher (2002), marriage cannot be socially constructed rather marriage is created by the couples and for themselves. This also affirms that the socio-cultural concept of marriage is changing due to enlightenment age we found ourselves. This might not be the case in most African states. According to the South African law, Recognition of Customary Marriages Act of 1998 (RCMA) cited in Moore (2015), customary marriages can be monogamous or polygamous (Nukunya, 2003).

### ***2.2.1.1 Monogamous marriage***

Monogamy according to Lewis, Murray, Crosbie- Burneth and Silvey (2011) is a form of marriage whereby a man marries one woman at a time. The customary laws of Ghana do not frown on monogamous marriages. Considering the available literature, no man was and has been forced to marry more than one except in extreme cases where duty demands. For instance, with the Akan tradition some chiefs are

made to marry in addition to their wife after their enstoolment. These women given to the chiefs in marriage are called “Nkunguayere” literally meaning stool wife. This means that whoever becomes a chief is obliged to marry any of such women assign to the stool. Some of the men who marry more than one wife are customarily influence by some factors which have been discussed under polygyny.

### ***2.2.1.2 Polygynous marriage***

Polygamy is an umbrella term for ‘polygyny’ and ‘polyandry’. Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (2019) asserted that polygyny is a form of marriage whereby one husband simultaneously marries two or more wives, and polyandry is where a wife marries many husbands simultaneously. Polygamy is a broad term which is often used interchangeably with polygyny so will it be in this work. Hammer, Fernando, Murray, August and Jeffrey (2008) stated that genetic analysis in some times past, few men mated polygynously and enjoyed a large reproductive success. Polygynous mating eventually became polygynous marriage.

According Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (2019) polygyny is recognized by the customary laws some countries in West Africa of which Ghana is one but since the colonial days it has been singled out as form of marriage that is against the Western morals and the right of women (Bowen, 2013). This was evident in the 1884 Marriage Act which sort to band polygamous marriage in the then Gold Coast (Arku, 2019). Although the Marriage Act 1884 was somehow against polygamy, Nukunya (2003) asserted that in most of the Ghanaian societies it is customary right for the wife to ask the husband to take additional wife to help her in managing the home. To him some women even go to the extend to woo a girl she is pleased with for the husband.

According to Nukunya (2003) the following are some of the reasons that will compel an African man to marry more than one.

- Some men claim that women in monogamous marriage are not obedient as those in polygamous marriages.
- Some men also choose polygyny for economic benefits. That is more wives, more children for farm work.
- Some may marry more than one woman as a means of getting an assistance for their wives.

Finally, according to Sahel (2019) most of the West African countries' civil laws also recognise and regulate polygamous marriage and allow a man to marry up to four women under certain conditions. Some of these conditions to Sahel (2019) includes the financial capacity of the man to support multiple wives and families. This is in agreement of the Laws of Ghana which have it that all marriages contracted under the customary laws are potentially polygamous (Ermakova, Protopopova, & Pukhart, 2019). Although the Marriage Act 1884-1985 makes provision for the registration of customary marriage, its polygamous nature still persists (Graphic Online, 2019).

This argument above show that any would-be couple who decides to perform only the customary marriage and also registers it under the customary laws has accepted to engage in a potential polygamous marriage. This is simply because marriage under our customary laws is polygamous in nature (Graphic Online, 2019).

### **2.2.2 Christian concept of marriage**

The laws of Ghana touch on two religions when it comes to marriage. That is the Christian marriage and the Islamic or the Marriage of Mohamadans (Marriages Act, 1884-1985 Cap. 127). This work focuses or is limited to the Christian marriage as



religious institution. This will also make all the religious concepts of marriage be limited to Christianity. First of all, since the Bible is the manual for Christians, the study considers what it says about marriage. According to Brooks (1999-2000), marriage was not man's idea, it was God's. In the book of Genesis 2:20b-24 and Genesis 1:28 marriage was fully defined there.

*“But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So, the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man and He brought her to the man... For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh.”* (Genesis 2:20b-24. NIV)

*God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it...* (Genesis 1:28 NIV)

Also, both Jesus Christ and Saint Paul, the most prolific and famous first century Christian, emphasized marriage as an image of the Kingdom of God, analogizing the love and sacrifice that spouse offer one another to the love and sacrifice offered by God to God's "bride," the Church (WITTE, *supra* note 21, at 18 cited in DeSimone, 2003).

In the early church history, marriage was considered to be a sacrament (Yalom 2001; Thornton et al. 2007). In addition, the establishment of the autonomous Roman Catholic Church through the papacy of Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) emphasized the sacramental value of marriage (DeSimone, 2003). Christians see marriage as God ordained and He had a plan for it. Christians know that marriage is a solemn covenant, and marriage vows are forever. Christian doctrine teaches that marriage is a covenant and for that "God hates divorce" (Malachi 2:13-16; Proverbs 2:16-17 NIV). These suggest that marriage is not just a social institution but a covenant between a

man and a woman and God who instituted it (Brooks, 1999-2000). Also, Harper (1949) added that the consideration of marriage as a sacred contract is part of Hebrew and Christian religious traditions. William (2002) asserted that the purpose of marriage for Christians are procreation, and also serve as remedy against sin and fornication and mutual affection.

According to Witte (1997) cited in the work of DeSimone (2003), his examination of marriage from different religious constructs in the West, it was pointed out that the Christian Church's early construction of the law and theology around marriage became the "cornerstone of the Western tradition of marriage for nearly two millennia. Based on the argument above, principles of Christian marriage have been the benchmark on which the civil or ordinance marriage was carved. Finally, the group that produced the "I Will Bless You and You Will Be a Blessing" document believed, it was imperative that for all persons desirous of living in a Christian marriage note the relationships be characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God (Meyers, 2013). Because Christianity endorses monogamous marriage many would-be couples prefer to marry under such conditions to secure their marriages (Chireshe & Chireshe, 2011). According to the National Academics of Sciences Engineering Medicine the changing trends in the nature of marriage especially from the polygamous nature to monogamous nature is as a result of the educational, economic and urbanised nature of our societies (Hayase & Liaw, 1997).

### **2.2.3 Civil concept of marriage**

According to Afrim-Narh (2008), Article 23 (1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) approved the family as an essential basis of society therefore it is entitled to protection by state and society. The right to marry and to found family in Article 23(2) of the ICCPR, to Afrim-Narh (2008) provides direct link of marriage to family establishment. Therefore, the state's keen interest in the marriage and family issues of her citizenry is in the right direction. Ghana as a state has had many issues in terms of marriage contraction. Since colonial days, many marriage acts have been enacted to help solve some of these marital issues in our societies. In this study the Marriage Act, 1884-1985 Cap. 127 is looked at.

Considering marriage as the society's most vital and primary institution, Dobson (2012) has helped the state to develop stringent measures to build this very institution thus marriage for its survival. This, according to Joamets (2012) has made marriage to be seen as more of a social phenomenon which has been reformed immensely in the last few decades. These perspectives have influenced even the way marriage is been defined. The meaning of marriage from legal and or the state perspective implies that marriage is a binding contract between a man and a woman who join together their income, possessions and lives. Marriage is recognized by the law and dissolution of marriage can only take place through legal process of divorce. Marriage is an institution extremely bound up with the structures of civil society as a whole (Joamets, 2012).

Marriage is a state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or a wife in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law (Nagpal, 2011). Also, to Gallagher (20012) the state sees marriage as an essentially private, intimate,

emotional relationship created by two people for their own personal reasons to enhance their own personal well-being. According to Gallagher, marriage is created by the couple, for the couple. Each person has the right to express socially his or her own inner vision of family, sexuality and intimacy, on an equal basis. Finally, Dvorske (2012) cited in Joamets (2012) asserted that marriage is generally considered a civil contract differing in notable respect from ordinary contracts, but it is also and specially a status or personal relation in which the state is deeply concerned and over which the state exercises exclusive dominion. These are some of the few definitions through which marriage is looked at by the state though they differ to some extent.

Currently there are two broad views of marriage competing in the public square. This to Gallagher (2012), has caused most Americans and others nations to draw their understanding of marriage from these streams. These streams are “A Normative Social Institution and the Relationship View.” These streams are and have also influence how the nations and the state laws look at marriage in recent times. According to Joamets (2012) many countries limit marriage, while some allow forms of polygamous marriage, others recognize same-sex marriage. For instance, the 1992 Constitution of Ghana endorses marriages contracted under the customary laws. This has influenced the acceptance of polygynous marriages but does not recognize same-sex marriage because it is not part of the customary laws and practices of the people of Ghana.

According to Schmadel (2009) as cited in Joamets (2012) marriage is an essential human relation and this could be controlled by the people who have influence over the rules and regulation governing marriage specially the church and the state. Although people marry for many other reasons the presumption of the law is that people marry

to create families and cooperate with each other assisting the state in creating cells and partnership of good citizenry (Joamets, 2012). This is one of the core value or reason for the enactment of the PNDC Law 111 (Interstate Succession Law 1985). The state since the days of colonisation has had laws to regulate the marriage institution. These marriage laws often reflect the moral views of certain period and or social class (Joamets, 2012). According to Joamets (2012) marriage is recognised by the state, the church or other religious groups and the local community.

### **2.3 Parallel Marriage Ceremonies**

Celebration of marriage is a ritual in every given society (IvyPanda, 2018). This has led to the society having means of ensuring that marriage is celebrated in line with the societal procedures (Nukunya, 2003). In Ghana, the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 has made provision for the celebration and registration of three kinds of marriages. Although to Crawford (2013), the three kinds of marriage are mutually exclusive, almost all would-be couples especially those in Christian religion celebrate more than one marriage ceremonies most at times. This is what has been termed as “parallel marriage ceremonies.”

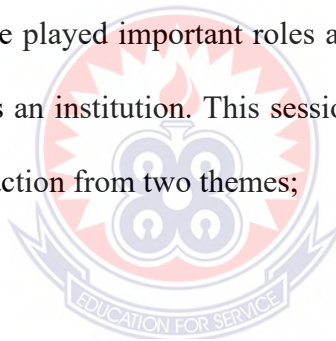
According to the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD, 2007), as stated in the Syllabus for Junior High School Social Studies, parallel culture is when two culturally different ways of doing the same thing is adopted while only one way could suffice. From this analogy, the term "parallel marriage ceremony" can be referred to as a situation whereby more than one marriage ceremony is performed, usually by Christian would-be couples, whereas any of the ceremonies suffice to pronounce the couple married. This practice is seen often in our societies because of the shape the marriage institution has now taken. The marriage institution according

Nukunya (2003) use to have only the family as a third party when it comes to its contraction, but now the emergence of the church and the state as the third party in addition to the family has contributed to the would-be couple having many group interests to satisfy in the marriage contraction processes. Under this topic, subtopics that have been considered are; brief history of marriage and the components of parallel marriages ceremonies.

### **2.3.1 Brief history of marriage contraction**

The debate on the history of marriage contraction seems to be distorted because most tribes did not record the instances that led to the organisation of their marriages. Who owns marriage? Is it the church or the state? According to Everitt (2012), both the Church and the State have played important roles at different times in the carving of the history of marriage as an institution. This session of the work looked at the brief history of marriage contraction from two themes;

- Alliances
- Consent



#### **2.3.1.1 Alliance**

Marriage to some is a means of social alignment, where people strategically align themselves to particular class or category in the society. According to Everitt (2012), marriage is a well calculated tool use to establish diplomatic and trade ties in the year,s past. Grimes (2000) also alluded to this same fact. According to Daniels (1965) and Twene (2019), marriage in Ghanaian custom is considered to be contracted between two families and not only the two individuals. In almost all the ethnic groups of Ghana, marriage is seen as not only a union between the man and the woman but also marriage creates a permanent relationship between the families of the couple

(Obudho, 1985; Agyekum, 2012). Also, Omobola (2013 p139) asserted that “in Yoruba culture, marriage is not the sole responsibility of the couple but that of the communities because it is the joining of two or more families”.

According to Twene (2019), the couple in African marriage are not obliged to only themselves. This culture practices according to Woods (2021) has encouraged many parents in the times past and even now to give their wards in marriage to people and families they think are wealthy and are well connected in the society (Everitt, 2012; Grover, 2009; Coontz, 2005; Gocking, 1990). The reason being that it is not only the child that will benefit from the alliance (marriage) but the family at large.

According to Lorne and JO Fletcher (2015), love becomes the initial requirement one has to meet when it comes to selection of partners in contemporary Africa. They asserted that the individuals making the choice do not take the interest of the family into consideration. Meanwhile Aborisade (2013) argued that marriage is used to build networks between families, which implies the family becomes key in mate selection. Wimalasena (2016) also asserted that by marriage especially in Ghanaian societies, the relationship of the couple to their families change.

According to Wimalasena (2016,) new social relations are created, not only between the husband and the wife, and between the husband and the wife’s relatives on the one side and between the wife and the husband’s relatives on the other, but also in a many great societies, between the relatives of the husband and that of the wife, who are on the two sides. To support this, Haviland *et al.* (2011) cited in Apalowo (2014) argued that marriage is a socially or ritually recognized union or legal contract between spouses that establishes rights and obligations between them, their children, and their

in-laws. This definition also sees marriage to be beyond the man and the woman in the marriage, rather it is a relationship between families.

According to Apalowo (2014), each family owes each other some kind of responsibilities. In some Ghanaian cultures in case any of the parents or close relation of the couple dies, the success of the funeral organisation becomes the responsibility of the whole family. This means that marriage is not only between spouses but a family affair (Hareven, 1991). This belief makes many parents and or families in the times past to get much interest in the kind of family or home their children marry from.

Also, when a family does not wish to lose its property, a marriage arrangement is made for the family's young people (Weisberg, 2009). This type of marriage is commonly referred to as cousin marriage (Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa, 2005). Although cousin marriage in some Ghanaian societies is accepted the rules of exogamy is keenly taken into consideration (Nukunya, 2003). This is normally seen in matrilineal system of inheritance but also practiced in the Islamic communities in the Northern religions of Ghana (Nukunya, 2003). It is normally done to aid in the preservation of the family's assets. Although there is alliance in marriage, modernity has prompted a progressive change in way we go about things in our societies these days, particularly in respect to mate selecting and the marital process in general (Ritzer, 2011). But the church and the family still show interest in who their members go into marriage relations with.

### ***2.3.1.2 Consent***

Consenting to a marriage used to be primarily the responsibility of the will-be couple's parents or family. Hareven (1991) claimed that the family is extremely



important and is intertwined with all other social institutions in our society, including marriage. Hareven (1991) asserted that the family is very key and for that matter is connected to all the other social institutions in our society of which marriage is one. The marriage process starts from a point of deciding on the mate to select. In most cases the would-be couples were excluded from the mate selecting procedures (Adinkrah, 2011).

Arranged marriages are considered as centered on the parents (Kishwar, 1994 cited Grover, 2009; Awake, 1996). According to Ahmadi (2017), most parents betroth their girl-child to marriage before they even grow up to marriageable age to legally get married. This practice does not give the girl that right to decide for herself the kind of man, family or class she would like to marry from. According to Bowan (2013), human right advocacy groups are still fighting against some of these rights violations in our societies. Through modernisation, urbanisation and industrialisation, aspects of marriage decisions have penetrated into the Ghanaian culture, especially when it comes to mate selection (Manuh, 1997 cited in Addia, Opoku-Agyeman & Amanfu, 2015). This is as a result of the *gemeinschaft gesellschaft* shift phenomenon.

According to Guttman (2012), these days parents who even tried to choose partners for their children seek the consent of the children. Although the consent of would-be couple is considered, Bates (1942) asserted that the family still plays important role in whom their child gets married to. Children who send their own chosen partners home in most cases have to wait for the approval of the partner by their parents and or families before the marriage process can commence (Nukunya, 2003; Addia, et al. 2015).

In the situation where one family disapproves the marriage, its processes are held until all doubts are cleared (Nukunya, 2003). This is evident in how the ceremony is carried out. One of the means through which a family may be considered to have consented to a marriage is through the acceptance of the gifts that the man (husband to be) will present to the woman's parents and or family (Rattray, 1929; Sarbah, 1968). This gift has many names in our Ghanaian culture. For instance, "Tsir nsa" in Fanti literally means (Head Drink), the Ashanti called it "aseda" meaning (Thanksgiving), etc. According to Addia, et al. (2015), the family has always been key in refereeing the marital process. A sentence in the section C of the Methodist liturgy and book of worship for the Methodist church Ghana under the sub-theme "Order for the Solemnisation of Holy Matrimony" asserts that the parents and the family are key in the marriage process. "Who gives this Woman to be married to this man? The father of the woman or his representative shall answer" (The Methodist Church, Ghana, 2014, p. 181).

This particular demand of the ceremony accepts that the parents and or the family cannot be sidelined in the marriage process (Tembo & Keeler, 2013). The children who do not go through the customary rites to get married are mostly considered to be disobedient to parents and or family. These are some of the reasons why (Nukunya, 2003) considers marriage as a family affair.

### **2.3.2 Components of parallel marriage ceremony**

Parallel marriage ceremony has now been the order of the day. The practice though considered by many as a unit ceremony in the marriage process, parallel marriage ceremony can be looked or considered to have many components. Parallel marriage

ceremony basically consists of the three components. Namely; customary marriage, ordinance marriage and church marriage.

### ***2.3.2.1 Customary marriage ceremony***

Customary marriage is usually celebrated based on the customary laws of a given tribe or society. This makes customary marriage ceremony exceptional from each other tribe or society. This is because in Article 11(3) of the 1992 constitution; Moore (2015), the customary laws of Ghana are considered to be the rules which by custom are applicable to particular communities. The customary laws are traditionally observed among the indigens of the society. In South African law; the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act of 1998 (RCMA) cited in Moore (2015) for instance sees customary marriage as a marriage in accordance with customary law. Nukunya (2003) asserted that the Akans demands in customary marriage ceremony is quite different from that of the Ewes, the Ga Adengbes and vice versa.

The Akans like any other tribe has a special way of handling their marital processes. According to Griffiths (1997) cited in Moore (2015), the process can take a number of month or to some extent years depending on the relationship that exist between the families involved. Through the socialisation process members of the clan or the society are even made to know of the clans they can marry from (Wimalasena, 2016; Rattray, 1229). This and others in times past influenced mate selection process which was mainly done by parents. Owusu-Boateng and Twintor (2015) stated in their work that the mate selection exercise has been influenced by education and Christianity making parents not playing key role in the selection process. In some cases, the customary marriage ceremony starts from infant betrothal which is gradually phasing out of our Ghanaian society (Owusu-Boateng & Twintor, 2015; Nukunya, 2003).

Under this heading topics like marriage list and validity of customary marriage have been discussed.

**Marriage List:** The marriage list in Akan customary marriage rite has no specific date of its inception but most of the items included in the list like the ‘tsir nsa’ meaning head money has been there since. The preparation of the marriage list is influenced by a lot of factors that is; the tribe and the class of the parents and or family, the status of the woman, the trade of the woman, etc. (Nukunya, 2003). Also, according Dekker and Hoogeveen, 2002 cited in Siwan (2007) there are a lot of factors that influences the wealth of the pride price the grooms and his family are made to pay.

The items on the list are grouped in many cases under three themes; parents and siblings, family and witnesses and the woman (Manoukia, 1950). That is items that go to the parents and siblings, the family and the witnesses who come to grace the occasion and the items that are given to the woman herself. Some of the key items that are generally listed in the Akan’s marriage list include father’s cloth, money and sandals, mother’s cloth, money and scarf ‘duku’, brother(s)-in-laws money ‘akontan sekan’, family money, witness money, tsir nsa.

The marriage list has now become integral part of the marriage ceremony. The bride-price is a very important element on the marriage list in the customary marriage ceremony. According to Hague, Thiara and Turner (2011) cited in Mubaiwa (2019,) the purpose for the payment of pride-price is to ensure the stability of a marriage. According to them the bride price is the seal of a marriage. This argument by Mubaiwa (2019) confirms that the young would-be couple who knows and respect traditional customs is made to satisfy the family in addition to the other institutions in the marriage process.

***Validity of customary marriage:*** In Article 11(3) of the 1992 constitution of Ghana accepts the customary laws in our traditional set ups. This means that marriage contracted under the supervision of the customary laws of the societies in Ghana cannot be undermined. According to Kamanabi (1983) and Mawere and Mawere (2010) until one completes the traditional ceremony the marriage is not considered to be valid. In other jurisdiction, the validity of a customary marriage comes only after the bride price has been paid although the payment may differ from society to society (Slos, 1983; Nukunya, 2003).

These payments according to Rattray (1929) and Nukunya (2003) are dependent on the status of the woman, whether she is a princess, commoner and a slave. To some tribes, the payment of the bride-price is a form of compensation paid to the parents of the bride for all they have done for their daughter before marriage (Awake, 1996). In addition, according to the Report of the Commission of Marriage, Divorce and the Status of Women (1965) cited in Nsereko (1975), the purpose for the payment of bride-price is to ensure the stability of a marriage. According to the report bride price is the seal of a marriage.

Finally, the state also through the Marriages Act, 1884-1985 Cap. 127 accepts customary marriage and has stated the measures under which customary marriage can be registered. This simply means that any customary marriage that has gone through all the socially recognized procedures for marriage according to Nukunya (2003) is considered valid. Before the customary marriage laws were amended in 1991, PNDC 263 of 1991, the Marriage Act has a session that made even the registration of customary marriage mandatory and that the failure of couple to register their customary marriage within a said period after marriage was an offence.

### **2.3.3 Christian marriage ceremony**

The church has means of celebrating marriage to fit their doctrines and teachings. Christian marriage is a complicated topic that has been debated throughout African mission's history (Falen, 2008). The church wedding ceremonies has been seen as one of the complex transitions into marriage that the would-be couples have to go through (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992 cited in Meekers, 1992; Kuper, 1984 cited in Erlank, 2014). Although the Christian concept of marriage has been influenced by the advent of modernity, education and industrialisation, the Christendom still hold on the basic element of Christian marriage which is monogamy.

According to Chireshe and Chireshe (2011), the monogamous nature of Christian marriage has made many young would-be couple especially the women to prefer bringing their marriages under the Christian marriage laws (Lewis, et al., 2011). For instance, the practice of fidelity (The Methodist Church, Ghana, 2004). The Christian community has ways of contracting their marriage in accordance with their beliefs and doctrinal practices. This has influenced the difference in the way some churches celebrate or go about their marriage ceremonies as means of accepting the marriage of their members. This session of the work looked into the dynamics in the Christian marriage ceremonies.

#### ***2.3.3.1 The dynamics of Christian marriage ceremonies***

According to the constitution of the Methodist Church Ghana (SO) 742(2) there are three types of marriage but this session of the work seeks to look at the two forms of the Christian marriage celebrations stated in the liturgical book of the same church (The Methodist Church, Ghana, 2001; The Methodist Church, Ghana, 2014). They are; church blessing and solemnisation of holy matrimony

Christian marriage ceremonies though are all guided by the Cap. 127, every church in Ghana has her own rules that guide the celebration of marriage. The Catholic Church for instance requires the converts to change and adapt the Christian marriage system (Obudho, 1985). One of these documents chanced on was that of The Methodist Church Ghana's liturgy and book of worship. The celebration of marriage in the liturgy and book of worship of the Methodist Church Ghana has two form of marriage celebrations. These are; the blessing of marriage previously solemnized or customary contracted and the solemnisation of holy matrimony.

***The blessing of marriage:*** The blessing of marriage is one of the forms of marriages celebrated by the Christians (the church). The Section C of the Methodist liturgy and book of worship for the Methodist Church Ghana under the theme; The blessing of marriage previously solemnized or customary contracted general directions provides a guideline for the ministers to follow in blessing marriages that are customary contracted. The following are the guidelines.

- The Minister whose responsibility is to prepare the couple for Christian Blessing must first satisfy himself/herself that the people have been customarily married.
- Each party must have two witnesses who will sign the Marriage Register.
- This service normally takes place in the church but, when necessary, it may take place at the Manse with representatives of the Leaders' Meeting including the couple's class leaders, and the members of the society Marriage Committee (The Methodist Church, Ghana, 2014).

According to Graphic Online (2020), the blessing is regarded as religious practice that is said to be done in any church but not ordinance marriage. This argument makes it

clear that although one of the purposes of celebrating marriages in church is to ask for God's blessing on the marriage, some of the marriages celebrated in church are not recognised by the laws of the state and that, the laws are not binding on the marriage but they are just considered as religious practice. Also, the dress code for the couple is not spelt out when it comes to blessing of marriage (The Methodist Church, Ghana, 2014). So, would-be couples who decide to go into such marriage ceremonies are not put under intense financial pressure to get expensive wedding costumes. Also, the numbers that can be invited to the ceremony are not huge, this can also reduce the number of mouths that would be fed at the programme. Some of these modalities in the blessing of marriage in church makes it less capital intensive for young would-be couples who prefer to make their marriage blessed by the church in this regard.

***The solemnisation of holy matrimony:*** The solemnisation of holy matrimony though a form of marriage ceremony celebrated in church, is to some extent seen to be different from the church blessing form of celebrating marriage. This is because there is a separate programme the churches have designed for such marriages (The Methodist Church, Ghana, 2014; Graphic Online, 2019). Also, this form of marriage is usually contracted under the guidance of the Marriage Act, 1884-1985 Cap. 127.

The Cap. 127 has made provision for every step that has to be fulfilled when officiating this kind of marriage. It must be emphasized that the ordinance marriage certificate is provided to the couple who celebrate solemnisation of holy matrimony which is not done for couple who have their marriage blessed at church (The Methodist Church, Ghana, 2014). The details of the laws concerning the solemnisation of holy matrimony has been discussed below under the Marriage Act, 1884-1985 Cap. 127. Simply put, solemnisation of holy matrimony is a form of



ordinance marriage (court marriage) organised in the church premises other than the court. This is because the requirement to be met when the marriage is registered at the law court are all pushed on the individual who performs the ceremony in church and even with greater responsibilities being added. For instance, the marriage should be organized by a gazetted official and in a gazetted building (The Marriage Act, 1884-1985, Cap. 127). Would-be couples are at times made to transport all their well wishes to a gazetted church premises nearby in order for their marriage to be considered valid at additional cost and risk.

***The validity of Christian marriage:*** The Marriage Act, 1884-1985 has made it clear on the issues that makes a Christian marriage invalid. The general rule is that any marriage celebrated at church which does not conform to the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 is in itself invalid. The following are some of the conditions the Marriage Act stated which guides church celebrated marriages to be valid.

- The appointed minister who will officiate the marriage should be Gazette
- The place of worship where the marriage will be celebrated should be licenced.
- The marriage should be solemnized under the authority of a registrar's certificate, a marriage officers' certificate or a special licence from the Registrar.

#### **2.3.4 The concept of civil marriage ceremony**

To bring uniformity into marriage and its related issues, the state has taken the center stage to help avert all the issues that are in relation to marriage contraction. According to Crawford (2013) traditionally, in the times past the extended family was seen or recognized as the third party to Ghanaian (Akan) marriages. According to him, now

the state is considered to be the third party to all marriages contracted in Ghana. This means that the state has assumed an important position on the issues concerning marriage and its contraction. The state now being the third party has to be involved in the marriage contraction process directly or indirectly. This is because the state through the law courts has the power to adjudicate marital cases based on existing laws. Also, when the family is not able to stand in for the couple in case of demise or mishandling of any of the couple and the children in the union, the state assumes the position of the family to help such individuals. According to Graphic Online (2020), individuals can register their marriages in court without the consent of their parents especially when the parents are not in agreement of the union. This example shows that the state has become key in the marriage contraction processes of her citizens.

According to Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), the Registrar General's Department (RGD) is the institution mandated by law to register marriages in Ghana. The law that established the Registrar General's Department is Cap. 127 and has been in force since the colonial period. According to Graphic Online (2019), this was due to the introduction of Christianity into Africa, specifically Ghana. It was created to get around the customary demands of that time. This is because people who had converted to Christianity found it difficult to marry from traditional religious and cultural families. So, the marriage ordinance was passed to get around the demands of the customs (Graphic Online, 2020). According to GSS, Ghana's Marriage Acts which was enacted in the 1884 has gone through series of amendments. The Marriage Act, 1884-1985 Cap. 127 is the law the state has accepted to use to govern the registration of marriage.

### **2.3.5 Marriage registration**

According to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) (2017), document with the title “Standard Operating Procedures for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics” (CRVS), the Registrar General’s Department (RGD) is mentioned to be the institution mandated by law to register marriages in Ghana. The current law on marriages is the Marriages Act, 1884-1985. (Cap. 127). According to GSS (2017), this law has been amended extensively.

#### ***2.3.5.1 The Marriage Act, 1884-1985, Cap. 127***

The Marriage Act, 1884-1985 Cap. 127 has three parts. Namely;

- Part 1: the Customary Marriage,
- Part 2; Marriage of Mohammedans and
- Part 3; Christian and Other Marriages.

The law is to regulate the registration of marriages in the state. Based on the Marriage Act, 1884-1985, all marriages in Ghana can only be registered under these three forms of marriages stated above. According to Ghana Statistical Service (2015) Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System in Ghana’s Comprehensive Assessment Report, the Marriage Act 1884-1985 (Caps 127, 129), has its primary focus on providing guidance for the management of the marriage process with some requirements for marriage registration.

According to GSS, in the current laws, all the three types of marriages the law currently indicates that only men and women aged eighteen years and above, who are not closely related by blood or through marriage are eligible to lawfully enter into a marriage. Marriages performed under the Act must also be performed on premises with the doors open between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. on working days,

excluding Sundays and public holidays, and in the presence of two or more witnesses in addition to the officiating ministers and anyone else who may wish to attend the ceremony (Graphic Online, 2020). This work is focused on the part one and part three of the Marriage Act. That is; the customary marriage and the Christian and other marriages.

**Customary marriage:** Customary marriage is the commonest type of marriage contracted in Ghana. According Awusabo-Asare (1990) cited in Afrim-Narh (2008) about 80% of marriage in Ghana are contracted under the customary laws. He asserted that even marriages intended to be celebrated under the ordinance are first celebrated under the customary law. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) document with the title “Standard Operating Procedures for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics” (CRVS), before the customary marriage law was amended in 1991, PNDCL 263 of 1991, the law enacted in 1985 made the registration of customary marriages and divorce mandatory and this was to be done within three months of contracting such marriage.

Also, there is no legal limit to the number of customary wives a man may have, nor is there any limit to the number of such marriages that can be legally registered under the Customary Marriage and Divorce Registration Law, 1985 (PNDCL 112). The Section 14 of the of PNDCL 263 of 1991 requires that customary marriage must be legally contracted indicating that all customs and traditions to obtain parental consent must be exhausted.

In addition, according to Afrim-Narh (2008) the provisions of the Intestate Succession Law PNDCL 111(1985) Section 15(1) shall apply to any spouse of a customary marriage registered under this Law. Although according to Graphic Online (2019) the

customary marriage under the Marriage Act 1884-1985 is still polygamous, a sort of protection is given to the spouses and their children that are born in the union (PNDL 111). So, would-be couples who marry under the customary laws and wish to register their marriage would have to convert their marriage from the customary marriage to the ordinance marriage.

***Christian and other marriages/ordinance marriage:*** Marriage under the ordinance (Cap. 127) according to Crawford (2013) takes within its ambit Christian and civil marriages. It was first enacted in 1884 and was based basically on English Marriage Acts preceding that date (Crawford, 2013). Ordinance marriage enables a man to marry only one woman and is based on Christian principles of monogamy meaning that unless the man or woman dies or the marriage is legally dissolved, neither party cannot marry another person (Crawford, 2013).

There are three different certificates that are provided under the ordinance Marriage Act. According to Crawford (2013) the couple may choose to marry under any of the three kinds of ordinance marriage based on the three certificates. According to the Section 41 of the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 a marriage can be celebrated under the following three certificates. This work will briefly discuss these types of marriage certificates issued during marriage registration. These certificates are;

- A Registrar's Certificate issued by the MMDAs, District Courts and the RGD themselves.
- A Marriage Officer's Certificate issued by licenced churches and licenced ministers of religion.
- A Special licence provided by the Principal Registrar of Marriages.

***Marriage under Registrar's Certificate:*** When couple intend to marriage under the Authority of a Registrar's Certificate, any of the parties wishing to marry shall sign and give the Registrar of the District a Notice of Marriage (Marriage Act, 1884-1985, Cap. 127). The Registrar upon receipt of the notice shall enter the particulars in the marriage book and publish the notice on the Notice Board outside the office for twenty-one (21) days or for three months to elapse.

The Registrar after this period issues a Registrar's Certificate or Licence to marry within three months with the twenty-one (21) days inclusive. The marriage is then celebrated if the couple has met all the conditions including payment of the set fee after the twenty-one (21) days. Being satisfied with the banns of marriage, if any caveat has not been entered, the marriage officer shall at any time within the three (3) months, issue a marriage certificate after the celebration of the marriage.

***Marriage under a Marriage Officer's certificate:*** Marrying under a Marriage Officer's certificate is when a properly licenced minister of a religion (Christian) who is gazetted to perform marriage, officiate the marriage ceremony in a licenced place of worship. This type of certificate is applied for basically when the parties intend to get married in a church. In such case the Pastor is the one the law authorizes to perform the marriage ceremony. With this type of marriage ceremonies, there is the need for the announcement of the banns. The crying of banns according to Finnell (2018) has been in existence since Elizabethan Era (1558-1603). This announcement is made thrice in the churches the would-be couple attend. According to Knight (2008) the situation where marriage is celebrated without announcement of banns the marriage would be considered illegal. This was done to help anyone who has any objections or

evidence of anything that might affect the union of the two to come to light and be dealt with before the ceremony (Finnell, 2018)

***Marriage under a Special Licence:*** In the Session 55 of the Marriage Act 1884-1985 a provision has been made for persons who will wish to marry under a Special Licence. With this, the Registrar issues a special licence which will be on the premise that the Registrar is satisfied by an affidavit that there is no lawful impediment to the proposed marriage. For instance, if any of the party is married to any person at the time of applying for the special licence, then we can say there is a lawful impediment to the proposed marriage (Graphic Online, 2020).

With this form, the licence given shall be in a form of authorizing the celebration of the marriage between the parties named in the marriage may be celebrated in a place other than a licenced place of worship or a Registrar office if the Registrar so authorize (Graphic Online, 2020). The Registrar may authorize the celebration of the marriage at a particular location the parties may choose. This means that the Registrar waives certain conditions for an Ordinance Marriage such as the length of time for notices or permits a venue (other than the Registrar General's Office, MMDA or Church). According to Graphic Online (2020) it is advisable to apply for the Special Licence from the Principal Registrar of Marriages.

All the above authorities wrote on the conceptual knowledge people have about the marriage registration and the existing dynamics. Do the youth have knowledge of these differences in the marriage registration and certification? This work seeks to get empirical literature to support the assertion talked about by other authors.

### ***2.3.6 Conversion of marriage***

According to Crawford (2013), customary law marriage and marriage under the ordinance are mutually exclusive. This simply means that the two cannot exist at the same time. To him customary marriage is potentially polygamous while ordinance marriage is monogamous in nature (Kamanabi, 1983). When couple celebrate their marriage customarily and require to contract a marriage under the ordinance, the customary law marriage ceases to exist. According to Graphic Online (2020) marriage under such circumstance therefore converts into marriage under ordinance. Thereby changing the marriage from a polygamous nature into a monogamous marriage.

It is necessary to state that the law that governs the conversion of marriage is the Part Three of the Marriage Act, 1884-1985. This means that most of the Christian marriages celebrated are converted marriages. Converted marriage is the situation whereby a couple decide to change their customary marriage status by registering their marriage under the ordinance marriage to be recognized as an ordinance marriage other than customary marriage. This is the situation most Christian marriage are in now. It can be said that all Christian marriages celebrated after the customary marriage ceremony can be considered to be converted marriages. This is due to the fact that the Marriage Act of 1884-1985 establishes three distinct types of marriage with each being independent of each other (Graphic Online, 2019). Do people know that after they have gone through the parallel marriage ceremonies, their marriages have been converted and that some of the marital laws are not binding on the marriage?



## 2.4 Reasons for the Performance of Parallel Marriage Ceremonies

The reasons that lead many would-be couples into performing parallel marriage ceremonies are enormous. These reasons range from personal interest through to religious factors to social and legal demands of the society or state.

One of the misleading information about the word “wedding” is one of the major reasons why many would-be couples celebrate parallel marriage ceremonies. In general terms, the church has made it that “wedding” is only done in church and any marriage organized outside the church is not wedding. According to Edwards (1987), wedding is a rite of passage. In addition, it represents a rite of passage for two individuals who want to make their relationship legally established in the eyes of the law and of everyone around them (Appadurai, 1997, cited in Adebola, 2016). The ceremony in which marriage is enacted and announced to the community is called a wedding (Kalmijn, 2004)

Wedding is a class of rituals all over the world which marks the transition of person(s) from one social status to another (Edwards, 1987). Leeds-Hurwitz (2002) asserted that weddings mark the beginning of marriage. Wedding occurs in almost all societies and can be simple or elaborate depending on the individuals involve (Adebola, 2016). This is influenced by the socio-cultural context of the couple (Baron & Byrne, 1987, cited in Kalmijn, 2004). This simply means that any socially recognized means of celebrating marriage can be termed as wedding and not only that which is held at church. Christian and civil marriage ceremonies are considered to be foreign practices.

According to Adebola (2016), these foreign marriage ceremonies have been incorporated into contemporary marriage ceremonies and has become an integral part

of our marriage process these days. This inflow of foreign marriage practice has made many would-be couples to think that the wedding is the replacement or redefinition of the traditional customs and rituals in the marriage process (Adebola, 2016). This notion has to some extent led to the tagging of the customary marriage as “the engagement” in our days. To many young Christian would-be couples, most of the traditional practices and marriage rituals are outmoded hence they have lost their values and even those that still exist are seen to have lost their importance in our societies (Adebola, 2016). This notion has also made many would-be couples who want to be seen as civilized, current and educated to opt for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies. That is after “the engagement” they have to have their wedding (being it Christian and or civil marriage).

Also, the individuals involved in the marriage process use the occasion to show off their wealth. According to Finnell (2018), wedding celebration has these days become a way to show off the couple’s status both socially and economically. Would-be couples who are educated most especially graduates feel that the wedding day is their special day and that they have to get a wedding planner to give them the best of service in order to secure a kind of status in the society (Finnell, 2018). Erlank (2006) emphasize that the practices many people associate with marriage ceremony had little to do with faith rather, many take it as a time to tell the world what they have and who they are. To many Christian would-be couples, the performance of these parallel marriage ceremonies offers them the opportunity to show how famous they are by inviting many people to their marriage ceremonies (Finnell, 2018). To most would-be couples the number of people that makes it to your marriage ceremony shows how famous you are in the society.

Additionally, many would-be couples perform parallel marriage ceremonies not because they willed it but they do that to satisfy the demands of the church and all the other parties involved in the marriage process. This according to Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life report (2010) cited in Twene (2019) is as result of the claim that many Africans who are Christians live a life incorporated with the elements of the African values. According to Heider (2007) cited in Adebola (2016) marriage and its ceremony is an important event which is not only meant for the two individuals involved but for the society and the group the couple may be affiliated to. At marriage the young Christian would-be couple are torn between their customary laws, the civil laws and the demands of the denomination (church) they belong (Ibeka, 2009).

According to Obudho (1985), in the church it is expected that a leader or potential leader have to be properly married in the church. The constitution of the Methodist Church Ghana alluded to this same assertion (The Methodist Church Ghana, 2001). The church has made it that valid marriage is that which has been solemnized before the priest (Obudho, 1985). The would-be couple who is a leader or wish to serve in the leader position of the church is made to meet these demands (The Methodist Church Ghana, 2001). Although to Hastings (1967) cited in Falen (2008), the Catholic Church has always been strict about marriage, the Protestant churches tended to be more tolerant.

Hastings (1967) explained that being married as a Catholic meant having only one true Church marriage, whereas Protestant churches would frequently legalize customary marriages and the children born of them (Falen, 2008). Despite this, some churches refuse to give communion to would-be couples who have not had a wedding or blessing but just a customary marriage ceremony (Obudho, 1985; Graphic Online,

2019). Due to this, many young Christian would-be couples who desire to have a good standing with God and the church are made to satisfy the demands of the church after the customary marriage ceremonies. This has left many Christian would-be couples to go through the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies not that they willed it but to satisfy the demands of their respective churches.

The society cannot be left out in the issue of parallel marriage ceremonies. According to Finnell (2018), in some societies the successfulness of one's wedding is dependent on the number of guests that were present at the wedding and the money that went into its organisation. People who want to protect the image of their families because of the societal expectations raise huge sums of money to perform these parallel marriage ceremonies to prevent the society from looking down on them, ridicule them and their families (Finnell, 2018). Also, according to Twene (2019) performing church wedding in addition to the customary marriage serve as honor on the couple in the society. Gradually, the society is making it look like the successfulness of one's marriage is dependent on the elaborative type of marriage ceremonies you organize.

The state through its laws has been seen especially by most women to be protecting their interest hence their (women) preference for marriage under the civil laws (which is purely monogamous marriage) in addition to their customary laws (customary marriage) (Abraham, 1962; Reyburn 1967; Goody 1990, cited in Falen, 2008). Barlow et al. (2005) cite in Afrim-Narh (2008) asserted that the state practices however indicate that marriage is often taken to be the key determinant of family protection. This is evident in the provisions made in the Cap. 127 of the Marriage Act. Marriage celebrated under the Marriage Ordinance, 1951 (Cap. 127) is considered to be strictly monogamous such that the section 44 of this law places strict limitation on

married person who would wish to contract another marriage even under native law or customs. This was one of the reasons why the act was rejected by many especially the chiefs and other opinion leaders.

Afrim- Narh (2008) added that, the right a spouse has to share in the intestate succession law is largely dependent on the system of marriage contracted when the deceased was alive. Where the deceased is survived by a spouse married under Cap. 127, order 2 rule 7 of the Probate and Administration Rules (1991; LI1515) cited in Afrim-Narh (2008) puts the surviving spouse in the first priority for the administration of the estate. The situation where the deceased married under the customary law all the surviving spouses share in the spouse portion of the estate (Afrim-Narh, 2008).

According to the Center of Excellence for CRVS 2019 conference report, a marriage certificate serves as legal proof of the couple's union. It can be used by women to protect their property and inheritance rights, as well as their social security, in the event of their spouse's death or divorce (Silva, Snow, Andreev, Mitra, & AbouZahr, 2019). Although there is no evidence to support this assertion, some women who are aware of the provisions of the statute prefer to, and in some cases demand for an ordinance marriage celebration in addition to the customary marriage celebration in order to secure their marriage and children.

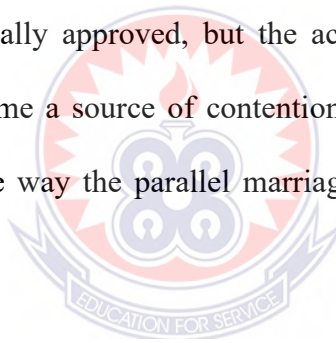
One important reason that cannot be over looked is the religious nature of woman. Miller and Stark (2002) asserted that women are more religious than men. According to Twene (2019) this perception is one major reason for women always wanting to have church marriage. Twene (2019) added that marrying at church strengthens once

faith and that he/she would be allowed to partake in the religious activities of the church.

## **2.5 The Agents that Contribute to the Challenges of Performing Parallel**

### **Marriage Ceremonies**

The marriage institution like any other institution is not immune to challenges. The challenges in marriage can be seen in all levels of the marriage process. That is from the selection of partner through to the divorce or demise of a partner. The definition of marriage according to Embers (1978) cited in (Onyima, 2003) implies that every marriage union is to be socially approved. This was emphasized in the definition of marriage by Nukunya (2003) and many others. It then implies that any marital union must and should be socially approved, but the acceptable process and medium of social approval has become a source of contentions, conflicts and disagreements in recent times. In the same way the parallel marriage celebration has been bedeviled with some challenges.



This session of the work looks at the agents that contributes to the challenges of performing parallel marriage ceremonies. Agent is that active element that has the power to produce an effect. The challenges that have bedeviled the performance of marriage ceremonies can be said to have been facilitated or fueled by some agents or factors. These agents in one way or the other contribute to the challenges associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremony. These agents are; the family, the church and the society.

#### **2.5.1 The family**

The family is very important agent in the marriage process in this part of our world. The family is considered to be an integral partner in the planning of the marriage

ceremony (Thiombiano, 2017; Nukunya, 2003 & Ganusah, 2004). Although the family seems to be losing its essence due to modernisation and urbanisation, with marriage the family still stands tall in our part of the world. The family may not arrange a partner for its members as it used to be but it still has the power to decide or influence whom their members get married to (Nukunya, 2003). This to some extent influences the kind of marriage ceremony the would-be couples may decide to perform. In the Ghanaian context, the family plays an important role in the marriage contraction process (Nukunya, 2003). This is the reason why the customary marriage is celebrated based on the customary laws of the tribe of the would-be couple especially the bride. Many families of the brides' based on these powers given to them by the constitution to demand some items from the groom's family. These demands by the bride's family mostly put a lot of financial burden on the would-be couples especially the men.

Also, some families go to the extent of deciding on the type of ceremony they want for the would-be couples especially if they are Christians and the woman happens to be the first to get married. In the situation where any of the couple happens to be a pastor or leader of the churches' child, the would-be couple are encouraged by the family to perform the Christian marriage in addition to the customary marriage rites. These demands directly or indirectly put a lot of pressure on the would-be couples to perform parallel marriage ceremonies.

### **2.5.2 The church**

The church has always played an important role in the celebration of marriage especially in the twentieth century. As the state is governed based on its constitution so is the church. According to Falen (2008), Christian missions did not operate in a

vacuum. Colonial governments frequently worked with missions to create legal laws governing civil marriage and inheritance, all of which greatly encouraged or enforced monogamous Christian marriage (Vellenga, 1983 cited in Falen, 2008). This has influenced how marriage is contracted in almost every church. The Methodist Church Ghana for instance, has it in her constitution and Standing Orders (SOs) that every leader should have his/her marriage performed under the ordinance either in Church or seek blessing of the marriage in church shortly after customary marriage (The Methodist Church Ghana, 2001). This to the church should be done in consonance with the Marriage Act 1884-1984, Cap. 127. Although the church accepts all the marriage ceremonies (SO 742(2)) it also makes it mandatory for pastors and leaders in general to have their marriages strictly under ordinance. Also, the Church of Pentecost encourages the registration and solemnisation of customary marriage (Church of Pentecost, 2016). This implies that every member of the church can be directly or indirectly influenced to perform parallel marriage ceremony.

In addition to the above, the Catholic Church has always been strict on her marital laws (Hastings 1967, p. 166 cited in Falen, 2008). According to Falen (2008), any Catholic who wants his or her marriage to be recognized by the Catholic Church is to have one true Church marriage. This practice by the Catholic Church has it that customary marriages and the children born of them are all illegitimate (Falen, 2008). This practice by the church directly or indirectly demands that couples are to perform parallel marriage ceremonies if they want their marriages and children born out of customary marriage to be recognized by the church.

This practice stresses and even put financial burden on the would-be couples in their quest to satisfy all the parties during marriage. Many would-be couple who wishes to



follow the order has to go extra mile financially to get their marriage celebrated in accordance with the demands of their religion. Some of these practices of the churches have propelled many couples to perform parallel marriage ceremony. The problem is that, the churches or religious institutions that are expected to ease the fears of the youth about this procedure are not making things easy as supposed to be (Agboka, 2008).

### **2.5.3 The society**

The definition of marriage according to the following authorities Nukunya (2003), Kertzer and Barbagli (2001) cited in Gallagher (2002) and Johnson (1960) shows that marriage is a social institution which operates effectively through societal structures. According to Twene (2019), Africans are noted to be communitarians. The Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops of Africa and Madagascar reported that marriage is more communitarian in Africa (Cardinal, 1981). Twene (2019) asserted that, this makes most of their practices collectively motivated. This has influenced the establishment of institutions in the society to function effectively for the stability of the society. The work of these institutions is to maintain the society as a system (Goldschmidt, 1996).

The argument above shows that the society is very key in how marriage is contracted within its confines. According to Smith (1997), every society has its rituals and these rituals ensure that marriage ceremony followed a particular pattern. Baskauskas (1981) cited in Smith (1997) attest that the various rituals enacted by the society work effectively to show the uniqueness of the group and also to preserve the identity of the group. According to Shorter (1977) and Collins (1988) cited by Smith (1997) the individuals who directly or indirectly deviate from the social norms which are seen as the elements of rituals are mostly subjected to some kind of punishment.

The members of the society especially would-be couple and their relations would like to keep the societal rituals in order not to be considered as deviant by the society. Hence the encouragement by the relations for the performance of parallel marriage ceremony. This according to Collins (1988) cited in Smith (1997) the performance of the marriage ceremony enhances the emotional energy and confidence of the individuals who partake in the marital rituals. This means that the society has a great influence on marriage and its celebration. That is from proposal of marriage to divorce could be influenced by the society.

This societal influence on marriage has affected how marriage is celebrated in every society in Ghana especially Christian dominated societies. Finnell (2018) added that, the societal expectation for would-be couple places financial burden on the couple. This is because many would-be couple prefer to incur huge cost in celebrating their marriage than to loss their emotional energy and confidence. In conclusion Smith (1997) has asserted that the wall between the family and the community is permeable leading to the community's control over the activities of the individuals. Nevertheless, he also attests that the community in one way or the other no longer plays important role and its ability to control societal members keeps decreasing.

This simply means that though the society or community has great influence on its members, the decision as to which kind of marriage ceremony to choose is dependent on the would-be couple in question.

## **2.6 Challenges Couples Face in the Performance Parallel Marriage Ceremony**

The parallel marriage ceremony performed by Christians can be said to be one which is financially demanding (Agboka, 2008). The financial cost of marriage ceremony can be looked at in three different ways depending on the preference of the would-be

couples as to which one of the ceremonies they would perform. These are; the cost involved in the customary marriage, the court registration and or marriage and church wedding.

The customary marriage celebration is one of the financially demanding marriage ceremonies in the marriage process. According to Nukunya (2003) the items on the list given by the bride's family are influenced by a lot of factors. The cost involved in the customary marriage ceremonies is culturally accepted and demanded from the groom's family (Nukunya, 2003; Rattray, 1929). Some families see it to be normal and even expect more than what is stated in the list given. According to Finnell (2018), the cultural expectations can cause a huge financial burden on families as many people do not want to be looked down upon by not having the elaborate celebration. This mindset has caused many would-be couples to incur huge cost in an attempt to please the masses.

Also, would-be couples who wish to register their marriage under the Marriage Act (Christian marriage and others) have to incur additional cost because such marriages can only be done after the customary requirements have been met by the couples (Arnaldo, 2004). Also, according to Arnaldo (2004) the performance of civil marriage is expensive. The practice of having parallel marriage ceremonies has become very expensive especially in the African Christian societies (Agboka, 2008).

These are considered as financial burden because most of the young people living in the sub-Saharan Africa are unemployed. The unemployment situation has caused most of the youth to live in poverty. This situation put a lot of financial burden on the young people who have reached their marital age but have not found well paid jobs (Agboka, 2008). Also, those who are employed have to take years to save huge sums

of money to prepare for their marriage ceremonies. According to Arnaldo (2004) and McDonald, Lovemore, John, Fion de, and Robert (2000) some young men in some communities even migrate to cities to work and save money for their marriage ceremonies. This is as a result of the demand for the performance of parallel marriage ceremony by the society.

One other challenge many would-be couples go through prior to their marriage is stress. According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2007), stress is the continuous feelings of worry about your work or personal life, that prevents you from relaxing. Preparation towards occasions is stressful in itself, but preparing towards two or more occasions within the same period can be said to be more stressful. The marriage ceremonies these days stress many would-be couples than the marriage life itself.

The would-be couples get stressed about which of the ceremonies to choose, the venue for the programme, distance of the district and or the court and the amount that will be involved in the wedding ceremony, the number of best men and maid of honors to choose and the societal expectations (Finnell, 2018). For instance, some would-be couples face challenge in choosing of venues for their marriage. This happens in the situations where the bride and her family live at different places. In situations of such, the would-be couple are made to have the marriage ceremonies at different places. That is, custom demands that usually the customary marriage should be organize at the woman's father's house. So, in a situation where the bride is living separately from her parents and or the father has divorced the mother, then the would-be couples would have to choose different venues for the marriage ceremonies. This is as a result of the bride's respect for her parents (father) and their customs.

In addition, a bride who wants to have church marriage at all cost but is not staying together with her parents or family would have to choose different venues for their church wedding. Also, marriage registration has its own stress would-be couple who choose to convert their customary marriage to ordinance marriage go through. According to Cherlin (2010) cited in Amato (2010) due to the bureaucratic procedures would-be couples are to go through to get licence for the celebration of their marriage, would-be couples who live in remote areas or far from the registration center go through difficulties or stress to get the licence for their marriage celebrations. This, to some extent is as a result of inadequate registration offices within a reasonable distance.

Another challenge would-be couple can face is the disagreement between the parties involved in the marriage process most especially the church and the family or the couple. According to Obudho (1985), some churches see some of the list the brides' families give to the groom to be demanding hence preventing the young men in their churches from going into marriage. Also, some churches consider some customary marriage practices as one impeding the growth of the Christian faith of their members (Obudho, 1985). Although some churches like the Methodist Church, Ghana (2014) and the Church of Pentecost (COP) (2016) accept customary marriages, according to Agboka (2008) they always encourage their members especially leaders to have their customary marriages converted to ordinance marriages (Church of Pentecost, 2016; The Methodist Church, Ghana, 2001) hence leading to the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies.

Finally, ignorance is one of the key challenges many would-be couples battle with in their preparation towards marriage. According to the Longman Dictionary of

Contemporary English (2007), ignorance is lack of knowledge or information about something. Many would-be couples who wish to go into marriage mostly have no or inadequate information about the concept and or the processes involve in getting marriage. According to Arnaldo (2004) marriage is seen as a difficult concept in the African communities. As a difficult concept, the ignorance level of many young people about it is alarming, this is because many would-be couples see marriage as an event other than process which involves rituals and negotiations that can take place over a period of time (Arnaldo, 2004).

Also, due to the religiosity nature of Africans Mbiti (1999) many refuse to find answers to most of the religious question on marriage and its celebration. Many young would-be couple prefer and are comfortable taken their marriages to the alter. This exercise to them is a privilege to take their marriage to God for His blessings. The Methodist Church, Ghana (2014 p.172) in the Section C of the Methodist liturgy and book of worship for the Methodist church Ghana assert that the church also accepts marriage under the customary law of Ghana. “The Minister whose responsibility it is to prepare the couple for Christian Blessing must first satisfy himself/herself that the people have been customarily married.” Although the churches accept customary marriage, her members have directly or indirectly been influenced to perform the parallel marriage ceremonies without any questioning the process.

In addition, the legalities involved in getting one’s marriage registered is opaque to many young adults who have reached their marital ages and even those who are in marriages already. Many would-be couples go through the thick and thin lines to perform parallel marriages because they do not know or know little about what the laws of the state says about the legitimacy of which of the marriage ceremonies. Even

though the state and the religious authorities have been given the authority to officiate marriages, there is still doubts over what exactly constitute a legal marriage (Thornton, Axinn and Xie, 2007).

## **2.7 The Effects of the Performance of Parallel Marriage Ceremonies on Marriage**

Marriage celebration in itself has some elements which in one way or the other have affected marriage as a whole. In this work, the effects of parallel marriage ceremonies are looked at in two ways. These are: the positive and negative effects of the performance of parallel marriage ceremony on the marriage institution.

### **2.7.1 The positive effects of the performance of parallel marriage ceremony on marriage**

The parallel marriage ceremony in one way or the other has come in to contribute to the stability of the society. This is evident in the enactment of the PNDCL 111. The law was then promulgated to have solve the partners dying interstate. For these problems of who takes what to end the state enacted the laws to first protect the partners especially the women children after the demise of their husbands. In African and some Western societies, marriage is a recognized institution that confers or seen as a means of providing legitimacy for children (Twene, 2019; Jarnkvist, 2019). So, at marriage the performance of the customary marriage (which is purely polygamous) before the ordinance makes the customary marriage laws defiant. Meaning the customary marriage has been converted into ordinance marriage.

This new marriage laws thus the ordinance marriage laws give protection to the partner and the children. This to the Center of Excellence for CRVS 2019 conference report, the marriage certificate issued serves as legal proof of the couple's union. It

can be used by women to protect their property and inheritance rights, as well as their social security, in the event of their spouse's death or divorce (Silva, Snow, Andreev, Mitra, & AbouZahr, 2019).

### **2.7.2 The negative effects of the performance of parallel marriage ceremony on marriage**

Marriage as an institution has been affected negatively due to the parallel nature of the ceremonies involved. One major impact the parallel marriage ceremony has had on the institution marriage is the issue of cohabitation. Cohabitation is a relationship where the would-be couple consent to cohabit for some time before going through the customary, religious and civil marriage formalities (Arnaldo, 2004). This situation is influenced by many factors. According to McCafferty (2011) financial difficulty is a major factor that influences cohabitation.

Many would-be couples who want to marry but lack the financial resources to hold the parallel marriage ceremony they prefer end up cohabiting for a period of time before they officially marry. According to Oppenheimer's marital time theory, unemployment, insecure, low-status jobs and the expense of living have all contributed to the cohabitation situation among would-be couple (Calves, 2016). Cohabitation has influenced the marriage formation process making it complex (Thornton, et. Al., 2007). Despite the fact that cohabitation is frowned upon in Ghanaian society, "mpena aware" as popularly known Twene (2019) attested that most young people prefer that because of the high cost in performing parallel marriage ceremonies.

Also, according to Agboka (2008) marriage have simply become too expensive for many young people to venture. Erdei (2018) argued that in rare situations, some



wedding ceremonies might cost more than a small country's GDP. Weddings for the elite, according to Erdei (2018) should be rich and grand. According to financeonline.com some expensive weddings have cost between USD 2 million and USD 100 million. Agboka (2008) asserted that the drinks and presents (known as dowry), is a sign of support used to compensate the parents for loss of their daughter's services are no more sufficient in recent times.

The marriage institution which was and still considered to be an important societal institution has now been considered as an expensive venture. Agboka (2008) said that the process leading to the marriage is just as costly as the one following the wedding, hence the lavish party to commemorate the occasion. For instance, the pre-wedding pictures and decorations. According to Lynch (2021), some individuals believe that you need to spend extra money on details like decorating and dressing up in costume to make the experience even more unique and personalized. Agboka (2008) asserted that some people believe that the marriage ceremony, particularly the wedding, is a once-in-a-lifetime event, therefore one should not care about how much money is spent organizing it. Meaning, spending much in organizing your marriage ceremony shows the importance you accord the ceremony.

Many people, especially the youth, face the dilemma of not getting married as soon as they would like, but instead risk meeting the enormous expectations set by society (Agboka, 2008). This has led some to take loans to organize lavish marriage ceremonies which later burdens the couple (Agboka, 2008). Even for low-income families, he believes that costly weddings have virtually become a necessity.

Finally, the celebration of marriage has become more fashionable neglecting the significance of the union and the vows (Mensah, 2013). The fashionable nature of the

occasion has taken the significant people attach to the marriage institution these days (Mensah, 2013). Many young people prepare towards the occasion than the marital life they will live after the occasion.

## **2.8 Summary**

The literature was review based on the five research questions with sub-topics developed to give deeper understanding of the concept parallel marriage ceremonies. The following topics were developed. The concept of marriage, parallel marriage ceremonies, reasons for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies, challenges associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies and effects of the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies on marriage.

According to Nukunya (2003), the society and the family are very key in the marriage contraction process. Also, the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 has given some power to the church to help facilitate the marriage contraction process. This has led to the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies by would-be couples who wish to satisfy all the parties involved in the marriage contraction process. There are many reasons people give to the celebration of the parallel marriage ceremonies. According to Finnel (2018) the major one among them is the honouring of the couple and their families. Although there are many individuals practicing these marriage ceremonies, Agboka (2008) and Lynch (2021) have asserted that the marriage contraction has become very costly because of the form the ceremonies have taken.

Moreover, the ceremony has been influenced by three key agents which are difficult to by-pass as a would-be Christian couple. These agents are the family, the church and the society. Finally, Twene (2019) and Jarnkvist (2019) alluded to some of the positive effects of parallel marriage ceremonies on marriage. Thus, the legitimacy of

the marriage and the children born into it are guaranteed. According to McCafferty (2011) the practice has contributed to the rising numbers of cohabitation unions in our society because of the financial burden many would-be couple face in an attempt to perform parallel marriage ceremonies.

The efforts of the numerous authors on marriage as an institution and its related issues are duly acknowledged. Although the numerous authors have written on marriage and the state agencies also having laws to govern the marriage institution, the performance of the parallel marriage ceremony has not been explored in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality. Also, all the literature reviewed were conceptual knowledge so this research work is conducted to get empirical literature to support the claims.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methods that were employed in the research process and how they were applied. The items under this chapter included; the philosophy, research design, research approach, study area, Population, sample size and distribution, sampling techniques and procedure, research instruments, trustworthiness of research instrument, data collection procedures data analysis procedure and ethical considerations.

#### 3.1 Research Philosophy

This study is based on the epistemological branch known as interpretivism. Interpretivist research paradigm state that reality is multi-layered and complex. The interpretivist believe that people are creative and actively construct their social reality. The interpretivist further note that the social world should be studied in the natural world, through the eyes of the participants, without the intervention of the researcher (Dammak, 2013). Interpretivist believe that understanding of the context in which any form of research is conducted is critical to the interpretation of data gathered (Willis, 2007). According to Willis (2007), interpretivism usually seeks to understand a particular context, and the core belief of the interpretivist paradigm is that reality is socially constructed.

According to Schurink, Fouche, and De Vos, (2011) and Neuman (2011), interpretive social science can be traced to Weber (1864-1920) and Dilthey (1833-1911). Dilthey argues that there are two fundamentally different types of science; the natural sciences

and the human sciences. The former is based on abstract explanation. The latter is rooted in the understanding of the lived experiences of people (Schurink, *et al.*, 2011; Neuman, 2011). Weber (1864-1920) maintains that all humans are attempting to make sense of their worlds and by so doing, they continuously interpret, create, give meaning, define, justify and rationalize daily actions (Rubin & Babbie, 2010).

Interpretivism thus focuses on exploring the complexity of social phenomena with a view of gaining understanding. The purpose of research in interpretivism is understanding and interpreting everyday happenings (events), experiences and social structures as well as the values people attach to these phenomena (Collis & Hussey, 2009; Rubin & Babbie, 2010). In order to explore understandings of participants, an interpretive methodology provides a context that allows the researcher to examine what the participants in the study have to say about their experiences. Following this, Creswell (2009) states that qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

Interpretivists believe that social reality is subjective and nuanced, because it is shaped by the perceptions of the participants, as well as the values and aims of the researcher. Gephart (1999) describes interpretivism as being directed on meaning, and understanding the social interactions between humans. Consequently, the mind interprets experience and events, and constructs meanings from them. Meaning does not exist outside the mind. Willis (2007), as well as Fouche and Schurink (2011) agree with Gephart (1999) when they reject the notion that the social sciences should apply research principles adopted from the natural sciences. Interpretivists believe that the subject matter of the social sciences is fundamentally different from that of

the natural sciences. Consequently, a different methodology is required to reach an interpretive understanding and an explanation that would enable the social researcher to appreciate the subjective meaning of social actions. Reality should rather be interpreted through the meanings that people give to their life world. This meaning can only be discovered through language, and not exclusively through quantitative analysis (Schwandt, 2007).

Interpretivist further hold the view that the social world cannot be understood by applying research principles adopted from the natural sciences. The social sciences require a different research philosophy (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2011). The three basic principles of interpretivism as postulated by Wisker (2008) are;

- The social world is constructed and given meaning subjectively by people. Human beings are subjects that have consciousness, or a mind;
- Human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world, which exists only in relation to human beings;
- The researcher is part of what is observed. Research is driven by interests.

Interpretivists argue that simple fundamental laws cannot explain the complexity of social phenomena (Blumberg *et al.*, 2011). Interpretivists claim that an objective observation of the social world is impossible, as it has meaning for humans only, and is constructed by intentional behavior and actions. Livesey (2011) explains interpretivism as a method that sees the social world as something that can only be produced and reproduced on a daily basis by people. Something that holds true for the moment (now) might not necessarily hold true tomorrow, or in another society (social environment). Knowledge is developed and theory is built through developing ideas from observed and interpreted social constructions. As such, the researcher seeks to

make sense of what is happening. This can even generate findings beyond the common scientific knowledge (Rubin & Babbie, 2010; Blumberg *et al.*, 2011). So, interpretivists try to understand subjective realities and to offer explanations, which are meaningful for the participants in the research.

In so far as research methodology is concerned, Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit, (2004) hold that the interpretive understanding is grounded in an interactive, field-based inductive methodology, which in turn is intertwined in the practice within a specific context. Livesey (2011) also proposed that the best methods within the interpretive research paradigm are those of observation and interpretation. As a reason, he advances that the researcher should understand how human beings experience and interpret their world.

Gephart (1999) mentions that interpretivist views tend to show a preference for methods, which do not only produce facts, but analyses and describe the meaning of the social world (situation). He continues to show that the primary analytical methods used in interpretative research are grounded theory and expansion analysis. The use of these methods points to the use of qualitative data-gathering methods, which suggest that the data are generated mainly through interactions like conversations and interviews.

Interpretivists hold a realist, anti-foundationalist ontology. Relativism is the view that reality differ from person to another (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Interpretive researchers believe in multiple realities Crotty (1998) and Pring (2000) and that reality is socially constructed. Interpretivists adhere to a subjectivist view in that subjective meanings and subjective interpretations have great importance (Pring, 2000). Crotty (1998) states that the object “cannot be adequately described apart from the subject, nor can

the subject be adequately described apart from the object.” Therefore, the relationship between the knower and the subject to be known is not of detachment, but rather of involvement interaction.

Central to all interpretivists is the concern with subjectivity, which in a sense seeks to show how variations in human meanings and sense-making generate and reflect differences in reified or objective realities, that is when one becomes detached from and lose sight of connections or relationship to something created by researchers (Neuman, 2006). The interpretivist research accepts the notion that knowledge and meaning are the results of interpretations. There is no objective knowledge which is independent of human thinking and reasoning.

In other words, the idea of subjectivity is acceptable to interpretivists, and is supported and endorsed amongst others (Gephart, 1999). Hence, the approach to social phenomena for the current study should also reflect the currently common construction of knowledge; it thus implies the following assumptions: The social world is observed by seeing what meanings people give to it and interpreting these meanings from their viewpoint; and social phenomena can only be understood by looking at the reality.

In addition, the interpretive approach is the foundation of social research techniques that are sensitive to context, that get inside the way others see the world, and that are more concerned with achieving an emphatic understanding than with testing legalistic theories of human behavior. The conclusion could be drawn that quantitative methods of generating data are more suitable for the positivist paradigm, while qualitative methods are more suitable for the interpretive paradigm. According to interpretivist, qualitative methods are approachable means for examining reality. Hence,



considering concept of marriage and the issues concerning parallel marriage ceremonies, qualitative methods is the best methods to be used. In the interpretive paradigm, the crucial purposes of researchers are to get ‘insight’ and ‘in-depth’ information based on the understandings, and experiences of people through a series of interviews.

The topic under study falls within the human science and that, to get the understanding of the concept the choice of this philosophy was in right direction. This is because this study seeks to explore to understand the experiences of people in their natural phenomena. Considering the issues of marriage ceremonies as one that have different perceptions by society and the legalities and validity misunderstood and seen by people in different ways, it deems it reasonable to position this study of exploratory study of parallel marriage ceremonies in the interpretivist paradigm.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

A qualitative approach was used to provide a successful conduct of research given the complexity of the phenomenon under study. “Qualitative research is empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers” (Punch, 1998 p.4). Qualitative researchers use a variety of methods to develop deep understandings of how people perceive their social realities and in consequence, how they act within the social world (McLeod, 2017). In qualitative research, the researcher has several methods for collecting empirical materials, ranging from the interview to direct observation, to the analysis of artefacts, documents and cultural records, to the use of visual materials or personal experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1994 p.14).

The aim of qualitative research is to understand the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it. Thus,

people and groups, are studied in their natural setting (McLeod, 2017). Qualitative interpretations are constructed, and various techniques can be used to make sense of the data, such as content analysis, grounded theory, thematic analysis or discourse analysis (Glaser et al., 1968; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Research following a qualitative approach is exploratory and seeks to explain ‘how’ and ‘why’ a particular phenomenon, or behaviour, operates as it does in a particular context (McLeod, 2017). The qualitative approach is an inquiry of understanding based on distinct methodological tradition of inquiry that explores a social or human problem whereby the researcher builds a complex holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 2009).

Notwithstanding, qualitative research is time consuming and costs involved, and do not generally draw samples from large-scale data sets. The issue of validity or reliability is a major criticism of this approach because of the subjective nature of qualitative data and its origin in single contexts. For instance, because of the central role played by the researcher in the generation of data, it makes it impossible to replicate qualitative studies. In addition, contexts, situations, events, conditions, and interactions cannot be replicated to any extent nor can generalisations be made to a wider context than the one studied with any confidence. The time required for data collection, analysis and interpretation are lengthy. Analysis of qualitative data is difficult and expert knowledge of an area is necessary to try to interpret qualitative data, and great care must be taken when doing so (McLeod, 2017).

In this study, qualitative approach was adopted. This is because it is a research approach that focuses on describing, interpreting and exploring the parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality. The qualitative approach used in

this study helped the researcher to hear the opinions and understand the feeling and experiences of the people of Winneba about the parallel marriage ceremonies with their town as reference. In order to employ the right technique to enhance data collection on the views or opinions, feeling and experiences of the people of Winneba who are the automatic participants of the study, the researcher adopted the qualitative research approach.

### **3.3 Research Design**

According to Jahoda et al (1986) cited in Mouton (1996) see research design as the arrangement of condition and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. De Vaus (2001) added that research design is the overall strategy that you choose to integrate the different component of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring you will effectively address the research problem as unambiguously as possible.

Based on the research topic a case study design was used to provide a successful conduct of the research given the complexity of the phenomenon under study. According to Yin (1984) case study research method is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. In other words, a case study is a unique way of observing any natural phenomenon which exists in a set of data. By unique it is meant that only a very small geographical area or number of subjects of interest are examined in detail (Yin, 1984). Case study research, through reports of past studies, allows the exploration and understanding of complex issues by helping to explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon through complete observation,

reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation (Tellis, 1997). Through case study methods, the researcher is able to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and understand the behavioral conditions through the actor's perspective.

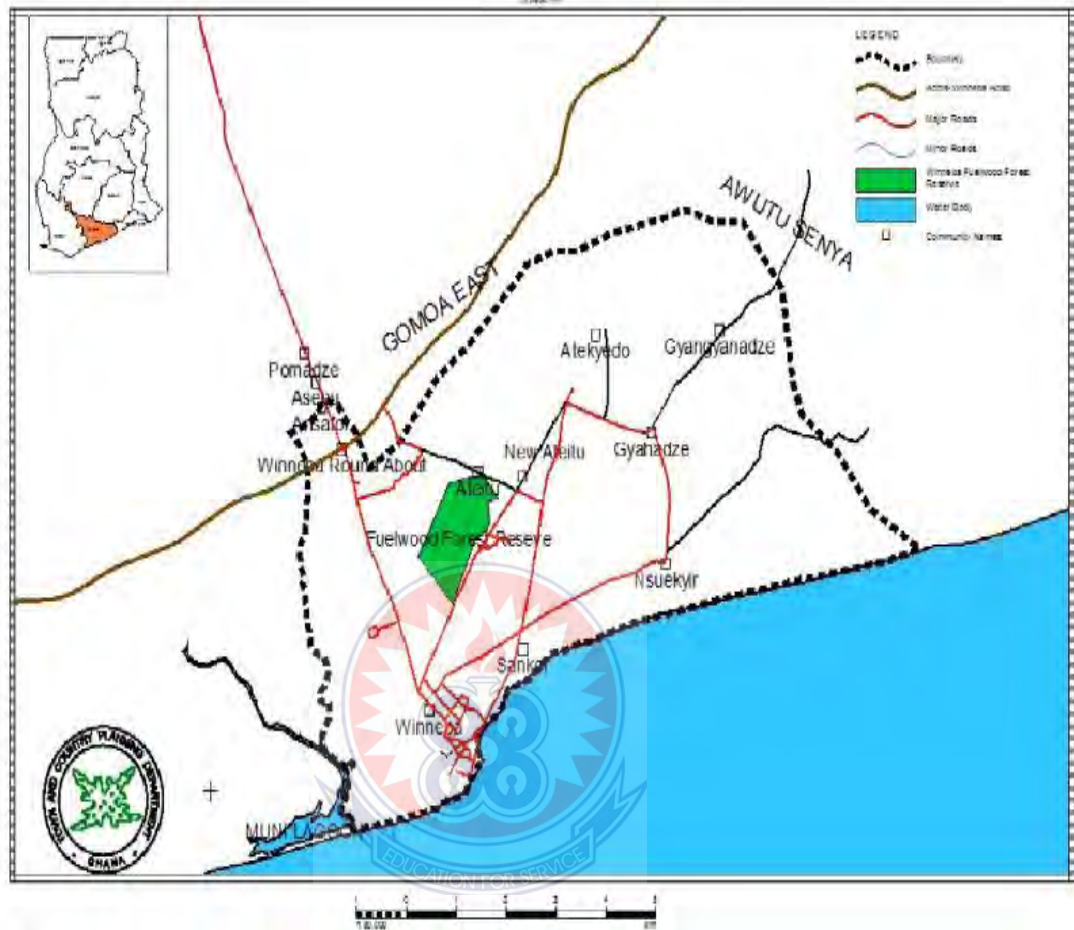
Case studies design being of different categories, the descriptive category of a case study was adopted. Descriptive case studies set to describe the natural phenomena which occur within the data in question as they occur (Zainal, 2007). The reason for this research design is to help the researcher get the views of the participant on parallel marriage ceremonies as they have experienced it in their community. The design is consistent and is flexible dealing with the topic that occurs in its natural phenomena like marriage.

### **3.4 Study Area**

The setting for this research work was Winneba which is known traditionally as Simpa. It is a fishing community in southern Ghana, lying on the south coast, 140 kilometers (90mi) east of Cape Coast, 56km (35mi) of Accra. It coordinates 5° - 21'00"N 0° 37'30"W/5.35000°N 0.62500°W. Winneba is the capital of the Efutu Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC) Efutu Municipality had a population of is 68,592; made up of 49% males and 51% females. The population of the Municipality constitutes 3.1% of the total population of the Central region. The figures also shows that 93.3% of the Municipality's population resides in urban localities, which is considered to be the highest in the region (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

According to the 2010 PHC reporting 36.9% of the population were married and 12.4% were in consensual unions. Also, a higher proportion of the males 47.0% have

never been married as compared to the 31.7% of females (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).



**Figure 3.1** A map of the Winneba Metropolis

**Source:** Town and country planning, Winneba

### 3.5 Population

The target population for this study were all married individuals who have performed parallel marriage ceremonies, all adults who have reached their marital age but are not married, all parents, opinion leaders (pastors, leaders of family and or clan) and professional marriage counselors in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality.

### **3.6 Sample Size and Distribution**

Out of the huge population of Winneba, my sampled population for this study was twenty (20). In all fifteen (15) individuals were involved in the work. This was because some individuals refused to participate in the research work. Some of the reasons for their non participation was that, they were not available for the interviews. Some finally confessed that they cannot make time for the 30 minutes interviews. These fifteen (15) participants consist of five (5) married individuals who performed parallel marriage ceremonies, four (4) unmarried adults who have reached their marital age, two (2) professional marriage counselors, two (2) parents, two (2) opinion leaders (Revered Ministers/Pastors of any well recognized church).

### **3.7 Sampling Techniques and Procedure**

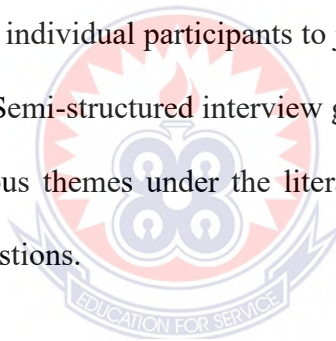
Dawson (2002) explained sample as a smaller and manageable number of people, place, event, etc. that are chosen by the researcher to be part of his or her research. Also, according to Webster (1985), sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole. This simply shows that the samples involve in a research work are to be chosen carefully. Researchers take sampling decisions in overall planning of a piece of research based on some factors. Some of these are expense, time, accessibility (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison , 2011).

Basically, purposive sampling technique was used in carrying out this research work. According to Adzahlie-Mensah, Agordah and Gyamfuaa-Abrefa (2017), purposive sampling is used when the researcher identifies characteristics of the population of interest and selects the elements or subject with those characteristics. The purposive sampling technique was used because it is a sampling method where the researcher

carefully selects the sample that reflect the purpose of the research work. The purposive sampling technique was used to select all the respondents that were involved in the research work.

### **3.8 Research Instruments**

The researcher uses a semi-structured interview guide for data collection. Denscombe (2007), state that with semi-structured interviews, the interviewer still has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered. According to Johnson, Patton, Scott, Daar, Petric, Smith and Burter (2004) the importance of using an interview in qualitative research is that, participants' thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivation and feelings are better obtained. With this, the researcher gets the opportunity to engage the individual participants to jointly create the understanding of the concept under study. Semi-structured interview guide was used and the items were structured from the various themes under the literature review which have a direct link with the research questions.



#### **3.8.1 Trustworthiness of research instrument**

Speziale and Carpenter (2011) describe trustworthiness as establishing the validity and reliability of qualitative research. Qualitative research is trustworthy when it accurately represents the experiences of the study participants. Credibility, Dependability, Transferability and Confirmability are the four criteria used to measure the trustworthiness of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These criteria were used to evaluate the study's overall Truth value, Applicability, Consistency and Neutrality. Because it is theoretically well developed and widely used by qualitative researchers, this model for determining the trustworthiness of qualitative research was chosen.

Participants' recognition of the reported research findings as their personal experiences demonstrates credibility (Speziale & Carpenter, 2011). Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that in order to obtain trustworthy information from participants, an investigator must engage in a prolonged engagement with a site and become involved with it long enough to discover and account for data distortions that could otherwise occur. As a result of this, an ample time was spent with the interviewees to build a good and trusting relationship with them throughout the interview.

Holloway (2005) sees dependability as that which relates to the consistency of the findings. The responsibility for examining the data, findings, interpretations and recommendations in order to attest that they were supported by data was carried out by the supervisor of this study and this was meant to establish confirmability of the research. Confirmability is a neutral criterion for measuring the trustworthiness of qualitative research, therefore, if a study demonstrates credibility and fittingness, then it is said to possess confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Speziale & Carpenter, 2011).

According to Speziale and Carpenter (2011) transferability refers to the probability that the findings have meaning to others in similar situations. In ensuring the trustworthiness of the study, the transcribed data were given to the respondent for validation and also exposed the study to the supervisor and other researchers for constructive criticisms.

### **3.9 Data Collection Procedures**

An interview guide was used by the researcher to interview the people involved in the study. The researcher first of all identified the people that were involved in the interview and arranged time to meet them. Their personal contact numbers were



taken for good rapport building. The rapport building was very important to this study, because the aim of the researcher was to explore participants' views and experiences on the parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba. The purpose of the interview was explained to the interviewees showing the introduction letter received from the Head of Department of Social Studies Education. This was to ensure their maximum cooperation. The researcher recorded and wrote down the important or necessary information that was used later in compiling the research findings.

### **3.10 Data Analysis Procedure**

Quantitative and qualitative research uses different techniques for their data analysis. According to Williaman (2011), quantitative research traditionally uses quantitative (positivist) analysis. However, qualitative researchers found it impossible to quantify the subjective human feelings, hence, qualitative analytical method evolved. A qualitative study, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990), entails a continuous interplay between data collection and data analysis. According to Taylor and Gibbs (2010), qualitative data analysis is the range of processes and procedures whereby researchers move from the qualitative data that has been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situation they have investigated. Caudle (2004) agrees that qualitative data analysis means making sense of relevant data gathered from sources such as interviews observations and document analysis and then responsibly presenting what the data reviews. This means that qualitative data analysis is based on the interpretive philosophy and the idea is to examine them meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data (Renner, 2003).

Qualitative data analysis includes the systematic approach of coding, categorising and interpreting data to provide explanation for a single phenomenon (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2006). This means that the process of data analysing, starts with the organization, coding and then categorisation of the data in search of patterns, critical themes and meanings that emerge from the data (Taylor and Gibbs, 2010).

This study adopted the qualitative thematic analysis to analyse data from the interviews that were conducted. Warren (202) asserted that thematic analysis is useful for finding out about people's experiences, views, and opinion. Thematic analysis is a method for analysing qualitative data that entails searching across a data set to identify, analyze, and report repeated patterns (Braun and Clarke 2006). It is a method for describing data, but it also involves interpretation in the processes of selecting codes and constructing themes. Thematic analysis is an appropriate and powerful method to use when seeking to understand a set of experiences, thoughts, or behaviors across a data set (Braun and Clarke 2012). In this study a range of qualitative data was collected using semi-structured interview guide. The interview data was recorded and transcribed for direct coding: responses from interview were recorded and manually coded. The codes from the interview were grouped into different categories and subsequently developed into themes. The themes were then use to present the research findings.

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

Researchers must take into account the ethical considerations that must be taken into account when doing human research (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). Enough protection has to be given to the participants to ensure that they are not known by other individuals. This was done by giving them codes instead of giving them names and address. Their consents were sought before they were interviewed.

Seeking their consent was to help them decide whether to partake in the interview or not. According to Bhutter (2004), the informed consent provides full and transparent information since it offers the participant the opportunity to question the researcher. This greatly aided the researcher in removing all types of coercion and ensured that the participants had complete choice in their decision to participate or not. Confidentiality of information provided by participants was highly adhered to.

The participants were told that their identities would be kept private and that they could opt out of the study at any moment they so wish. In achieving confidentiality, I decided to represent the respondents with numbers on the interview protocol instead of their names which made it difficult for outsiders to identify the respondents.

### **3.12 Positionality**

Positionality “reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013 p.71 cited in Holmes, 2020). According to Holmes (2020), positionality requires the researcher to acknowledge and allow their views, values, and beliefs about the research design, conduct, and output to be located. It influences both how research is conducted, its outcomes, and results (Rowe, 2014) According to Savin-Baden and Major (2013) the researcher may identify and develop their positionality through acknowledging their personal positions that have the potential to influence the research.

I am a Christian married man. Thus, I have some experience of marriage life, the processes and procedures of marriage and difficulties that come with the procurement of marriage. I cannot therefore say I am an outsider in this research. I am aware that I am researching in an area that I am familiar with. I am also aware that my experience and preconceived views about marriage could influence my study. However, I

addressed that going into this research. In addressing that I bracketed my thoughts and preconceived views and feelings about marriage and the processes of contracting it. I also questioned myself and reflected throughout the research process and this helped me to do away with my biases and to maintain some critical distance from the issue I am researching. Also, during the data collection, I was tactful in my questioning to prevent me from asking leading question to influence the responses of the respondents. This made me had good interacted with the research participants and consequently allowed their views to inform this work.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings of the study. The first part focuses on the biographic characteristics of the respondents and the second section focuses on the data analysis and discussions. The data was gathered through a semi-structured interview guide. The interview data was collected through direct one-on-one interview with 15 interviewees. In attributing the various quotations to the interviewees, numbers were given in order of respondent beginning from 1 to 15 and these numbers were used to represent them.

The biographic characteristics of the respondents were as stated above. That is 15 participants participated in the interview; these comprises eight (8) males and seven (7) females representing 53% and 47% respectively. Concerning the ages of the respondents, the youngest respondents were between the ages of 20 and 30 whilst the oldest were between 40 years and 60 years. In relation to their academic qualification, one (1) PhD holder, three (3) master degree holders, six (6) graduates, six (5) students.

The second section focuses on the presentation of data for the research questions which was divided into five parts. The first part focuses on how people understand parallel marriage ceremonies. The second part also considers the reasons for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies while the third part looks at the agents that contribute to the challenges in performing parallel marriage ceremonies. The fourth session considered the challenges associated with the performance of parallel

marriage ceremonies and the final part deals with the effects of parallel marriage ceremonies on marriage as an institution. The data was present, analyze and discuss in accordance with the various parts as stated above for easy understanding of the data as gathered from the field.

#### **4.1 How People Understand Parallel Marriage Ceremonies**

Data was gathered to explore how people understand parallel marriage ceremonies. It is important to note that the knowledge and perception of people on marriage and its celebration influences the level of assessment made by the interviewers. For this reason, many themes emerged based on the responses to the interview questions. The following are the themes that were developed; Views on parallel marriage ceremony, Components of parallel marriage, Awareness of the marriage act, Dynamics in Christian marriage ceremony and Dynamics in marriage registration and certification.



##### **4.1.1 Views on parallel marriage ceremony**

In trying to find out the views of people on what parallel marriage ceremony is, almost all the respondents exhibited some level of understanding of the concept just that most of them at the first time of hearing the word “parallel marriage” made it sound like they have not heard of the word before. Most of the answers the respondents gave were in a form of questions. These were some of the responses from the respondents.

Respondent 2, one of the opinion leaders had this to say about parallel marriage ceremony;

*“Parallel marriage ceremony, please is it about the performance of both engagement and wedding? I think is the performance of engagement and later climaxing it with the wedding in church”*

Respondent 3 (married) also added;

*“Parallel marriage is performing both traditional and state marriage and where your religion also demands you do that one in church. It is where a man goes to see the family of a suppose wife to identify himself to them and do the engagement and then further adds the state marriage or religious marriage to the engagement”.*

Another respondent (10) a counselor answered in this way;

*“Parallel marriage ceremony is when one performs the customary marriage ceremony in addition to the ordinance marriage ceremony. So, to me if you are doing two types of marriage to confer a marriage then it is parallel marriage ceremony”.*

All the above respondents had some level of understanding of the concept of parallel marriage ceremony. One statement that runs through all the responses except few was the perception people have that the customary marriage is “the engagement.” This perception has influenced many to see the customary marriage ceremony as not a complete marriage ceremony. This is as a result of the influence by Christians leaders through indoctrinations, which have made it sound that until marriage ceremony is done in church or by the church one will not receive God’s blessing on such union. This supports the saying of DeSimone (2003). The above notion has made especially the youth not to perceive the performance of both customary and ordinance marriage ceremonies as parallel but anything customary in the marriage process as that which commence the marriage process of which the ordinance ceremony is the climax.

#### 4.1.2 Components of parallel marriage ceremonies

All the respondents interviewed knew the components that make up parallel marriage ceremony. Also, they were all able to talk about what goes into each of the components especially the customary marriage rite. From the data gathered the respondents addressed the issues of customary and ordinance marriage ceremonies which most of them referred to as wedding. Under the components, two main themes emerged. Thus, the customary marriage ceremony and the Christian or ordinance marriage ceremony.

#### 4.1.3 Customary marriage ceremony

Almost all the respondents displayed some level of understanding of the customary marriage. Some went further to say that it is the African way of getting married and did not show any doubt of its authenticity or genuineness. Although almost all the respondents accepted the authenticity of the customary marriage ceremony, few talked about it being a complete means of getting married. Also, people see it as form of marriage that permit polygamous marriage.

A respondent (11) unmarried individual had this to say;

*“Customary marriage is what we call engagement or traditional marriage is the marriage that is done in the homes where the two families come together to perform the marriage rite”.*

Another respondent (7) parent added that;

*“Customary marriage is a marriage ceremony conducted traditionally with all the laid down laws where the parents of the lady officially hand her over to her suppose husband to permit other ceremonies to be done or continue. To me the customary marriage ceremony is the primary ceremony, without it you cannot continue with the rest of the processes so it is very important every would-be couple perform that before any other ceremony. Even during the*



*wedding, the Pastor will inquire whether they have finished with the customary rite. This simply means that it helps you to go through the marriage celebration processes with ease”.*

Respondent 6 unmarried individual also said;

*“Customary marriage is that type of marriage that gives the legal licence to marry as many as you can as a man. We are Africans and that is our way of marriage”.*

From the responses of all the respondents interviewed, none of them disregarded the customary marriage ceremony but they showed a level of distrust in it because most of them were in doubt whether there are laws to protect the individuals that go into it. This shows that the Part 1 of the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 which comments on customary marriages is not known to many married, unmarried individuals and even opinion leaders. The question is, “is it the church that is hiding it from their members because of their personal interests or the education on the Marriage Act has not gotten down to the citizens? This also revealed that although people are taken through the counselling sessions, most of them are not exposed to the Marriage Act for them to decide on what to do. Many are counselled for the purpose of the church wedding. One of the disturbing observations made was that, the church does not provide counselling services to her members who decide to go to the court of law to register their marriages but not necessarily have a church wedding. This is what is termed as “No church marriage, No marriage counselling”.

#### **4.1.4 Christian or ordinance marriage ceremony**

The responses from the interviewees revealed that people ascribe some religiosity and legality to the church marriage more than the customary marriage. Most of the female respondents wished to celebrate their marriages in church than any other

place except few. The interesting thing was that, most of the male respondents revealed that if they have had their way, they would not have performed wedding. Others claim they would not do it but if the need be, they will.

The following are some of the responses the respondents gave;

Respondent 13, a parent said this;

*“Christian marriage is a marriage ceremony organized after customary marriage with the consent of the couple at their proposed chapel especially the ladies church with the idea of the church blessing their marriage.”*

Respondent 11 unmarried individual said that;

*“Ordinance marriage is when a man marry one wife as the laws of the state says.”*

Respondent 15 an opinion leaders added that;

*“Ordinance marriage ceremony is the marriage rite performed after the customary marriage rite which is either done in court of law or in church.”*

Respondent 8 married said this;

*“Ordinance marriage ceremony is organized to bring the marriage unto the presence of God and to bind them together forever.”*

Respondent 7 (a parent) said this;

*“Ordinance marriage ceremony is the ceremony performed to valid the marriage and also to officially made the church aware that the two individuals are legally married.”*

All the above responses show that the individuals attach some kind of believe to the performance of the church marriage. Also, most of the respondents believe that the ordinance or church marriage is backed by laws of the state (Cap. 127), therefore

making it authentic. Thus, the state endorses it and God also through the church leadership finally blesses the union.

One thing the society has lost sight on, of which the respondents fail to talk about is that, not all marriages organized especially in church is recognized by the laws of the state if the requirements of the Marriage Act are not entirely satisfied. For instance, according to the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 if these three basic requirements such as gazetted chapel and officiating minister is not met, the marriage though organized in church is not recognized by the state.

They are; the appointed minister who will officiate the marriage should be gazetted. The place of worship where the marriage will be celebrated should be licenced. The marriage should be solemnized under the authority of a registrar's certificate, a marriage officers' certificate or a special licence from the Registrar. If these basic requirements are not met, marriage organized in church is still under the customary marriage laws. The conversion of such marriages cannot be said to have been successful.

#### **4.1.5 Dynamics in Christian marriage ceremony**

Another interesting thing noticed during the interviews was the awareness of the respondents on the dynamics that exist in Christian marriage ceremonies. The question was to find out whether the respondents are abreast with the difference in the church blessing and the solemnisation of holy matrimony.

##### ***4.1.5.1 Church blessing***

Some of the respondents did not know the differences between the two. Some also revealed that the church blessing is a marriage ceremony organized for only the aged

couples or people who have finished giving birth and also for people who could not afford the wedding or are just not modern. The following are some of the responses.

Interviewee 14 unmarried said;

*“The blessing of marriage is after the customary marriage; the couple are blessed by the pastor. This can be done anywhere. So, if your pastor follows you to the customary marriage ceremony and blesses your marriage there, it is the church blessings you have had”.*

A respondent (8) married added that;

*“With the blessing, the church has its own certification which to me is not recognized by the laws of the state. To me, I think that certificate ceases to work when any other couples leave the church”.*

Another respondent (4) married had this to add;

*“Church blessing is for people or families who have some financial challenge organizing the wedding. So, after the customary marriage they go to church for the Minister to bless their marriage for them. This can even be done in the midst of the Sunday service or even during normal church service with few family members of both families being present without them having to organize a different programme for the ceremony”.*

Also, this respondent (3) unmarried said a similar statement;

*“I know church blessing to be a ceremony that is done by the church after the customary marriage has been organized. With the blessing, the officiating ministers do not join in the engagement. it is usually organized on Sunday service or during morning devotions and even at the mission house with the involvement of the families of the would-be couples and some few church leaders. Just that it usually organized for the aged couples and guys who do not have money for the wedding. I would not wish for such a ceremony and I do not think any young lady will wish her marriage be organized like that in these modern times”.*

The responses from the interviewees tell a story of how people have been misinformed about the church blessing of marriage. Does the church take the pain to explain to their members what the church blessing of marriage means? It is true that the church blessing is an internal arrangement made by the church to officially give recognition to the marriages of their members especially leaders (who had customary marriage ceremony before becoming leaders). And also, to present the marriage to God for His blessings on the union but a picture has been painted that all young couple who opt for it are poor and cannot afford the wedding. One shocking response from one of the respondents (11, unmarried) was that “*church blessing is for those who have had sex before the marriage and the Holy matrimony is for virgins.*” It is time the church takes keen interest in the matters regarding marriage ceremonies and address them.

#### ***4.1.5.2 The solemnisation of holy matrimony***

The question was to know how the respondents understand solemnisation of holy matrimony and what they think makes it different from other marriage ceremonies celebrated in church. Almost all the respondents sounded positive about their knowledge on the solemnisation of holy matrimony which most of them referred to as wedding.

Respondent 1 (unmarried) commented that;

*“To me the ordinance marriage ceremony is the marriage ceremony that takes place at the church premises and there are laws to back it. You see, with that one the couples have to sign marriage certificates and also go through a lot of activities like counselling before the marriage finally comes off.”*

Also, a respondent (12) who is married said this;

*“Blessing of marriage can be done by any Pastor but solemnisation of holy matrimony is done by a registered Pastor by law and the place the marriage is done must also be gazetted. With this the church has keen interest in it and organizes it very well. I will add that it is a marriage ceremony that the church gets much involved. This is because they will let you go through everything you need to do before the ceremony is done. For instance, organizing counselling for the couple and making them run blood test.”*

Respondents 9 (married) said this;

*“With the holy matrimony, you have to set a day aside to go through all the rituals set aside by the church for people who want to marry through such means to have your marriage done for you.”*

The responses from the respondents show that almost all of them had some kind of knowledge about the holy matrimony usually called wedding. Due to the churches interest in this kind of ceremony and the attention the society give to it, many people think it is the only approved marriage rite. Many young ladies want that kind of marriage ceremony because they think it is the only marriage ceremony the state has laws to protect it (Knight, 2008). Some of the respondents also admitted that most of the young people do not attach much importance to the religious exercise or aspects of the marriage ceremony but they see it to be the order of the day. This perception has made many young people attach importance to the fashion and the entertaining part of the marriage celebration process then it used to be in some times past. This supports the saying of Finnell (2018).

#### **4.1.6 Dynamics in marriage registration and certification**

Marriage registration is one of the technical areas the questions sought to know the views of the respondents on. Though it is the integral part of marriage contraction these days, the responses from the interviewees did not show they know much about

the registration and certification of marriages. All that they know is, we went to court of law and a certificate was issued to us. The question is, “which one of the three certificated were the couples given?” Was not well answered by most of the respondent. Many were talking about ordinance certificates. Meanwhile there is no certificate in the marriage act known as ordinance certificate.

One of the respondents (8) who is married had this to say;

*“We went to court and informed them of our intentions and they told us to pay a fee but they did not explain anything to us. Our marriage was registered under the ordinance, I do not know there are difference in the certificates. I cannot tell whether what they gave me was the right one but our Minister observed it and gave it back to us.”*

This respondent (11) unmarried individual also stated that;

*“I know you go to law court to register but I do not know what goes on with the issuance of the certificates. When I am ready to marry, I will go and inquire before but for now I do not know anything about the marriage certificates.”*

The sixth respondent (unmarried) emphasised that;

*“We have those who go to court of law to do the registration and those who go to the district assembly where the marriage is to take place to register. That is all I can say in relation to the marriage registration and the certificates. I do not know much about it please.”*

One of the respondents (5) who is a marriage counselor expressed this;

*“I make it known to them but most of them do not give attention to it when I am explaining it. A couple once said “Maa, let us go on, all that we want is that the marriage should come on, the rest will take care it itself, he added, it is not the certificate that makes the marriage work or Maa?”. So, I had to continue. Some of them also want only the church wedding so after explaining the certificate (marriage under a Marriage Officer’s certificate) to*

*them they just tell you to move on to other things. They do not say it but their actions will let you move on.”*

The responses above show that there are couples who do not even know the certificate under which their marriage was registered. Also, most of them do not care to make inquire about the certificates they claim they registered their marriage under until there is an issue before they will inquire to know the authenticity of the marriage certificates they have. But the would-be couples should be in agreement with what Crawford (2013) asserted to. To him marriage under the ordinance (Cap. 127) take within its ambit Christian and civil marriages. With this, the church and the state have a greater responsibility when people go to church or the court of law to register their marriages. They have to help the would-be couple get well informed about the type of licence the couple may need to get their marriage registered. The data, shows clearly that there are a lot of people who are ignorant about the marriage certificates available to people who wants to register their marriages. This act of ignorance has influenced the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies especially by the young people.

#### **4.1.7 Awareness of the Marriage Act**

The researcher wanted to know from the interviewees whether they were aware of the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127. Most of the responses sounded that they have heard of it but they could not speak to it. Most of the respondents also said they had no idea of the Marriage Act, 1884-1985.

A respondent (11) who is not married had this to say;

*“Yes, I have heard of it. In fact, I have not bothered to know what it is about. I heard of it somewhere that is all”.*



Another respondent 1 (unmarried) also said;

*“No, I know it talks about ordinance marriage. that is all I can say”.*

Respondent 7 (parent) had this to say;

*“Yes. I know the customary marriage is recognize by the Marriage Act 127 but now it has become the order of the day or a ritual that we are all to go through by having two or more ceremonies. After going through the two, it will prevent you from going into any other marriage with anyone because it becomes biding on you. Once you are in it you cannot go about with any other woman as your wife”.*

Another respondent (12) married added that;

*“Yes. I have heard of it. Although I am married, I was not taken through it so I cannot speak to it that much. All I know is that, it is the state laws that governs marriage and its ceremonies”.*

Most of the people who said they do not know much about the Act were the unmarried interviewees although most of them were having plans of getting marriage soon. The question is, when will they be aware of the Marriage Act to help inform them decide on which of the marriage ceremonies to perform? Or have they decided already? The responses from the respondents made it clear that although the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 is nicely carved, it is still far from the people it was made for. Meanwhile, thousands of marriages are contracted every week in our churches and societies. Whose responsibility has been shelved? Until people become familiar with the marriage act and its demands, the contradiction in the marriage contraction process cannot be solved.

## **4.2 The Reasons for the Performance of Parallel Marriage Ceremonies**

In exploring the reasons for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies with the aid of a semi-structured interview guide through one-on-one interview with the respondents, the following themes emerged through the gathered data. These are; readiness for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies and factors that necessitate the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies.

### **4.2.1 Readiness for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies**

The noise about the parallel nature of marriage ceremonies has recently gained public attention. Although people are complaining about this practice of parallel marriage ceremony, the act is still practiced and widely accepted in almost every society. Also, most of the would-be couples gladly go into the parallel marriage ceremony. Something might have necessitated the behaviour of would-be couples going into parallel marriage ceremonies. On the readiness of people for the performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies, most of the respondents' responses revealed that they have made up their mind to do it because they have no option. Who will take the initiative to do something different? This can only be done when the youth get right information about marriage and its contraction. About their readiness for parallel marriage ceremonies these are what some of the respondents said.

Respondent 14 (unmarried) had this to say;

*“Yes. I am a Christian, I live in a society and I have a family. So, I have to satisfy all these institutions being it the church, the family and the society for me to be free from their ridicules. It will be better to be indebt than for the society to scoff at you. Even if I am to work for years to get the resources to do it why not?”*

Another respondent 6 (unmarried) said this;

*“I would like to do only customary marriage but my girlfriend is also demanding for the performance of wedding in addition to the engagement. The reason for I wanting to perform only customary marriage is that I am a Ghanaian and wish to respect my customs which recognizes the customary laws. The wedding is a foreign practice but she says all the friends are expecting her to perform the ordinance ceremony (wedding) so she cannot fail them. Also, to her it is an honour to the couple and their families. I will only do the two if the family and the woman are able to conceive me and when I also see the need for it why not.”*

Another respondent (12) who is married talked about her readiness for the parallel marriage ceremonies in this way;

*“I have always wished or wanted to do both in order to be secured in marriage. Also, to protect my children when any of us is no more (dead) or are not together any more (divorce). I have always wished for that so I prepared towards it before I even met my husband. I did not want any stories. I started saving towards my wedding when I started working. My husband was also interested in that so we did not struggle at all. Just that I will not encourage any individual to perform the parallel ceremony if she has not plan and saved enough towards it. It was demanding though but I did it and I am proud of it.”*

Respondent 1 (unmarried) also put it in this way;

*“I will perform parallel ceremony. The reason being that my church advises and admonishes that after the engagement we are to have the ordinance marriage (wedding) in church and even if not in the church ‘koraa’ we should go to court to register so that the marriage will be binding and very legal. We have been told the benefits that comes with it so I have started preparing towards that long ago. Please, do you not see that it will be some way better if a whole graduate like me decides to do some “kolo” marriage ceremony?”*

The data presented above fits in the structuralist theory. How people see the structures to be dependent to the extent that one cannot deal with only one of the institutions and leave the rest when it comes to marriage and its ceremonies. These rituals involved in marriage ceremonies have influenced the readiness of people about the performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies. The data is in agreement with Awusabo-Asare (1990) cited in Afrim-Narh (2008) that even marriages intended to be celebrated under the Ordinance are first celebrated under the customary law. This is also in agreement with Goldschmidt (1996) functionalist view that the relationships that exist within the institutions are for the maintenance of the society. From the data it confirms that every individual except few wanted to do or have done the parallel marriage ceremonies to satisfy the various institutions that are involved in the marriage contraction processes. Also, the intentions of companionship in marriage are now not well hammed these days. Many young people are thinking of what they would get from their partner other than what they can offer their partner. The young people need to be helped to understand some of these ceremonies so that they can celebrate their marriages in moderation or seek proper counsel in their quest to celebrate their marriages.

#### **4.2.2 Factors that necessitate the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies**

There are many reasons that make people go into parallel marriage ceremonies. The data gathered have revealed the pertinent issues that influences people to perform the parallel marriage ceremonies. The following themes also emerged during the interviews. It is an honour to both couple and families, it provides both partners and the children security and religious factors.

##### ***4.2.2.1 It is an honour to both couple and families***

The performance of parallel marriage ceremonies according to the data gathered is seen as a means of honouring the parents and families of the couple especially the bride.

One of the respondents, 11 (unmarried) had this to say,

*“It is good to have the parallel ceremony. This is because not all family members and friends can make it to the family house for the engagement (customary ceremony) so at the church many others can be around and witness. Also, it is an honour to be able to wed someone. It is good you go through the parallel ceremony for your wife and her entire family to know that you cherish and respect them. It true the engagement (customary marriage ceremony) also honours the parents and the family but brother, you know that some families will not appreciate it when you do only that but immediately you add the wedding to it then you the man ‘naa’ you also feel big. You can also talk when you meet friends. Brother, I think I have to honour the woman I will marry.”*

Another respondent 3 (married) added;

*“To get a good name and reputation. At least you are highly honored in both church and society if you are able to perform the parallel ceremony as couple. This reputation also affects the parents or family members of the couple in question.”*

The interviewees according to the data gathered had a notion that in performing the parallel marriage ceremonies you are honouring the woman’s family and the couples themselves. This confirms what Twene (2019) wrote that marrying in church in addition to the customary marriage serve as honour on the couple in the society. This belief that one has to do everything possible to please the people around them is really leading many young people to do what at times is not even within their means. The burden is on the society especially the church to educate her members on some of these activities which do not build up the individual in marriage. The excesses

should be dealt with by the church leadership to clear such beliefs and practices by her members.

Also, parents should think of the future of their wards in marriage than thinking of how their in-laws would honour them through the extravagant weddings they organize for their daughters. The youth in the churches, the society and the parents or the families should be educated to understand what Adebola (2016) wrote which says that wedding can be simple or elaborate. It depends on the individuals involved in it not every young person should be made to honour the in-laws and the wife to be through extravagant weddings ceremonies.

#### ***4.2.2.2 It provides both partners and the children security***

Another hard truth almost all the interviewees commented that, it will influence them to organize or request for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies was the issue of security for both partners and their children. Why will one do everything possible with the intention of performing parallel marriage ceremonies to protect the children? Is it that people are losing trust in the social institutions?

The respondent 1 (unmarried) had this to say;

*“Performing parallel marriage ceremonies will make me stick to one woman, and also to have my peace of mind from the pressures from multiple partners. It will even protect you from contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Also, if you try not to do it, your wife will always suspect you. Brother, it will be better you do it and have your peace of mind from the pressures of your wife. In addition, it will help me secure the legitimacy of my children so that when I am no more, no one will take their possessions from them as it happens in some marriages contracted under the customary laws. And also, it will help me to be faithful to my wife to be.”*

Respondent 7 (a parent) also said this;

*“I have been advising them to perform the parallel ceremony. It serves as a form of security for the partners and the children in case any of them or both are no more. These days some people are always ready to fight over properties of others. It will be better to secure the future of your partner and children through the registration of the marriage. It will also, help check polygamous marriage. The times we are in are not favorable at all, so I have and still encourage my daughter or any young woman to do the ordinance in addition. At least, the man will be careful when he wants to be unfaithful in the marriage.”*

The data gathered from the responses of the interviewees made two important assertions. The first one was on faithfulness in marriage and the second one was on the security and legitimacy of the children born in the marriage. The data gathered show that the individuals and the society in general have been misinformed on the marital laws and the intestate succession laws of the state. The individuals in the church should be made to understand that the ordinance marriage does not deal with the issue of unfaithfulness in marriage rather it prevents polygamous marriages. Also, the PNDC law 111 (interstate succession law) has been in place to protect the couple and the children when any or one of the partners is no more. Most of the respondents were not aware of these social interventions made by the state to protect couples and children born in such unions. The church should get resource persons to educate their members on the demands of the laws of the land especially when it comes to the demands of the Marriage act 1884-1985, Cap 127.

#### ***4.2.2.3 Religious factors***

The data gathered made a serious revelation about the issue of religion and beliefs during the interviews. The religious beliefs have influenced a lot of people to do

things which to some extents are against their will. Most of the respondents alluded to this as a reason for their performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies.

Respondent 12 (married) said this

*“I am a Christian, so I have to bring my marriage before the Lord and with that I have to follow the detects of the church which also recommend that I must register or legalize my marriage before they can bless it for me. This is to enable me as a leader to continue to serve my maker in my own small way. In our church if you are a leader and you fail to perform the ordinance (which they usually encourage us to be wedding) then you cease to be a leader. In our traditional belief too, if you do not honour your parents or that of your wife-to-be for them to bless you, the marriage would not work. So, on these grounds I did the two. I want God’s blessings from the church and the parental blessings too.”*

Another respondent 11 (unmarried) added this;

*“My Christian beliefs also demand I do the parallel ceremony. So, I am preparing towards that. My parents are church leaders and I do not think they will understand I go to court to register instead of doing it in church. My mother would not even agree so I have made my mind to do the two. I am not going out now, but I am praying to God that my would-be wife will also be someone who likes the wedding, else I will be torn between her and my parents.”*

This was added by a respondent 9 (married);

*“I was demanding that my husband to be should only let us go to the court after the engagement (customary marriage) and register for the ordinance. This was because I was not working and I did not want him to incur much debt after wedding but we were made to understand that we belong to a church community so we have to let them also become witnesses of the marriage and also receive blessings from God even as we enter into the marriage. We were made to understand that we need God’s blessings to succeed in our marriage. I was a leader in the children’s ministry so I was*



*told to be a good role model for the kids. This they argue that if I only do the customary marriage and go to court to register, the children will even think I am pregnant that is why I do not want the church to come in. Brother, the leaders of our church made this a big issue oh, but although I was not working by then, we have to squeeze water from stone to get things done. So, we did the two. But truth be told, it was difficult times for us during those periods.”*

In finding out the reasons for the performance of the parallel ceremony, the data revealed that the church has indirectly contributed to the performance of the parallel ceremony. Is it that the church is no more sensitive about the plight of their members? The data shows that it is only the people who have gotten married and few who are close to the leadership of the churches that are aware of this influence. Although it is a practice going on, it seems to be under tone. This is because most of the unmarried respondents did not talk about the influence from the church in the performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies. Many of the married respondents claim they accepted to do it because they wanted the hand of God in their marriages.

The question is “Does God bless people in only the church premises?” The assertion of Mbiti (1999) that the religiosity of Africans, has caused many not to ask questions on issues boarding on faith and beliefs or religion. Also, Falen (2008) and the Methodist Church Ghana (2001) attested to these claims that because they were leaders (either one of them or both) at the time they were getting married and the churches constitutions demanded they perform the parallel ceremonies.

### **4.3 The Agents that Contribute to the Challenges of Performing Parallel**

#### **Marriage Ceremonies**

From the data gathered, there were three major issues that came up during the interviews to find out the contributive factors to the challenges associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies. These factors were: the influence from the church, the family and the society at large. These three factors are powerful institutions one has to satisfy before he/she can be ascribed to as married. This is what according to the structural functionalist Durkheim (1893) and Radcliff-Brown (1933) the society is a complex system of interrelated and interdependent parts that work together to maintain stability. In the data gathered, it seems these institutions are related and interdependent to the extent that one cannot avoid any of them in the process of getting married as a Ghanaian Christian.

#### **4.3.1 The family**

The family is one of the powerful institutions one cannot ignore as an African especially when it comes to marriage and its contraction. This is because the Africans see marriage to be between family and not only the individuals involved (Wimalasena, 2016; Daniels, 1965; Obudho, 1985; Twene, 2019 & Agyekum, 2012). The family has a great say in how an individual would wish to have his/her marriage celebrated. All these and many other African scholars have attested to this in their works. These are some of the responses given by the respondents in line with the above statements.

Respondent (5) a married counselor said;

*“I will say the family is one. This is because at times you look at the couple and you can see that they cannot or are struggling in organizing the wedding but they still want to do it. I do meet the parents of the couple as part of my*

*counselling sessions and you realize they are the brain behind everything. You will try to explain to them but they will tell you that they will get back to you and you would not hear from them till you see their wedding invitation. A lady's family were demand for wedding all because she is the first born so the whole family want her to set good example. The families also did not contribute to it. Sorry to say, they do not have anything. But they insisted and the couple has to squeeze their resources and do it for them. It was the guy who suffered because by then the lady has just completed university."*

Respondent 6 (unmarried) had this to say;

*"The families because there are couples who are pressured to do the ceremony in a special way with specifications meanwhile some do not even contribute anything towards the organisation of the program. This is due to the kind of family the partner might be coming from or the standards they have set for themselves. A friend's mother-law prior to their marriage demanded for wedding. This was because she is the market women president in her area and to her, she has been attending people's wedding so it now her turn. She told my friend right in our presence that "Asew, please do not fail me oh!" It was as if they have had a contract.*

Another respondent (12) married said this;

*I have always wished to have only the customary marriage and sign at the court because I wanted my things to be simple but I was not allowed. My parents and family did not agree to my suggestion. My father was a Bishop by then so my mum insisted that I have to go in for the wedding. She was like "you cannot disagree the whole family with your so-called simplicity." She did same to my senior sister but I was dad's girl so I was thinking daddy will come in but he kept quiet on it. So, we did it for them. Even that, they left before we closed from church, all because we decided not to do the part two but to cut the cake in church."*

The data gathered reveals how the family is and has become powerful (Olaniyi, 2015) not only in customary marriage ceremonies but also in the ordinance marriage celebration too. Most at time not for the interest of their daughter or son going into the marriage but their own interest and want to protect their reputation. This has led many young couple to suffer, some even have to sacrifice the joy they will get in their marriage for wedding. The data also shows that some families are not interested in the ordinance part of the process, all they need to hear is their daughter has been wedded. The appropriate institutions like the judicial services should see how best some of these challenges can be corrected.

#### **4.3.2 The church**

The church was also seen as one of the key factors influencing the parallel nature of the marriage ceremonies. Almost all the respondents said something about the church's influence in one way or the other. The church really has influenced almost everything about the marriage processes. These are some of the responses from the interviewees.

Respondent 8, who is married said this;

*“I was a diocesan officer of my church so I was told I cannot perform only customary marriage because I was a leader and that the church's constitution demands I do the ordinance too. Doing it will at least help me to continue my active service in the house of God and also to dine with my Lord Jesus Christ. The reason was that the church has made it that until you perform the parallel marriage ceremony you cannot continue to be a leader. Although we have all been called by God to work in His vineyard in different capacities, one's refusal to perform the parallel marriage ceremony would make them deny you. Indirectly, the church is forcing the young people to perform parallel ceremony because if you refuse to do it you would not be actively involved in*

*the activities of the church. Roman Catholic for instance, you will not be given communion. So, we had no option than to agree on it and do it for them.”*

One of the respondents (10) a marriage counselor had this to say;

*“The church is another agent influencing the youth to go into parallel marriage ceremonies. I cannot mention names of churches but some of them are demanding too much. Also, the one-man churches are creating a lot of problems but the public has not gotten the glimpse of it. Most of their pastors and place of worship are not gazetted but they influence their members to have weddings in such churches. I even have to suggest to a couple to go to court to register because what was given to them by their church was not a state recognized marriage certificate. The church is really causing troubles in the marriage contraction process but we are to counsel and not to decide for people.”*

From the data gathered the church has been seen to be one of the influential institutions in the society. The data has shown that almost every Christian’s marriage cannot be performed without the involvement of the church. It has been revealed that most of the people who perform the parallel marriage ceremony do that because of the churches demands for that. This reflected in almost all the responses of the people interviewed. The church which was to help the vulnerable has now become a burden to most of the youth who would wish to have a simply marriage ceremony. This is to confirm what Agboka (2008) alluded that the churches or religious institutions that are expected to ease the fears of the youth about this procedure are making things difficult.

#### **4.3.3 The society**

The respondents also made assertion about the society’s involvement in these influences are very high. The society is key in affecting everything we do due to the

society's socialisation process. The data shows that the societal demand for wedding is on ascendency. People perform parallel ceremonies because of the fear of societal ridicule. Some even measure the successful of a wedding ceremony with the number of people who came for the programme or by how stylish the ceremony was. Also, in some societies, people are looked down upon because they refuse to organize the kind of marriage ceremonies the society wanted. One of the married respondents (9) have this to say;

*“The society is gradually coming in with a lot of things which at first were not part of the ceremony. Which in one way or the other put pressure on the would-be couples. For example, the society has it that the number of ladies of honour or best men you present at your wedding shows how well your marriage was organized, the pre-wedding photos, decorations, the video coverage and pictures. All these are coming in because of the demands of the society these days. If you are not able to organize a world class wedding then your parents or family will be at the receiving end. In our community for instance, if you organize low class wedding, then it means yourself, your brothers and sisters, parents and even the entire family should be careful they do not offend anyone. They will ridicule you with it. One of the popular guys in our place organized a wedding which to some was not a big wedding. Brother, the little thing then they will be like “upon all your too known look at what you did as a wedding, you could not even organize a buffet.” I think the society is really creating problems for the upcoming youth who will want to marry. They have to go extra mile to make things work. Because some of these things put a lot of pressure on the young would-be couple which at times makes them go extra mile to fulfil all righteousness. Hmmm, remember all these come at a cost.”*

One of the unmarried respondents (11) acknowledged that;

*“At times too in the community everyone is doing it and a standard has been set and it becomes difficult to do yours below that standard so you try to follow suite. All your friends are doing that why will I choose different thing? At times*

*it is like you are too difficult so do what you think can help you keep your friend.”*

The data gathered shows that individuals in the society want to live to please the demands of the society. This according to Smith (1997), is because every society has its rituals and these rituals ensure that marriage ceremony followed a particular pattern. But the question is, “are all the rituals healthy for the good of every member of the society?” Some people also have the belief which is in agreement with the great scholars like Kertzer and Barbagli (2001) cited in Gallagher (2002) and Johnson (1960) which says that marriage is a social institution which operates effectively through societal structures. The society has structures but the structures do not help us get the best out of life rather it stresses the individuals in the society. These societal expectations have burdened a lot of would-be couples financially (Finnell, 2018).

#### **4.4 The Challenges of Performing Parallel Marriage Ceremonies**

The data gathered was to help examine the challenges associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies. The data gathered shows that there are a lot of challenges would-be couples go through in their quest to perform parallel marriage ceremonies. The data gave some overview of some of the challenges individuals face. In examining the challenges associated with the performance of parallel marriages, all the fifteen (15) respondents had one issue that ran through their responses that was financial burden or problem. Some of them also talked about the stressful nature of the whole ceremony.

#### 4.4.1 Financial problems

One major challenge that was seen in all the responses from the respondents was financial problems or challenges and stress. From the data most of the people now see marriage ceremony to be capital intensive venture. While, people are taking loans to start businesses, youth that have reached their marriageable ages are also face with deciding between a loan for their marriage ceremony or forgetting about marriage for some time. Others have to save for a long period of time in order to meet the demands of the family, the church, the society and to some extent their partners.

Respondent 7 (a parent) had this to say;

*“Performing both marriage ceremonies are costly. Some would-be couples who go for loans to perform the parallel ceremonies suffer after that. Some couples were financially stressed during and after the marriage. With some of them I and my husband have to come in to help them calm their nerves and plan how to get out of the financial burden they are going through. In fact, the youth are burdened when it comes to marriage celebration. One of them I was talking to recently, is really struggling with the finance but still they are planning for the wedding. He told me all the moneys they have save for the four years they started work has gone into the preparation. They are still on it because they are not done yet. Until they are done with the program, they cannot say that they are through with their expenditure.”*

Respondents 4 (married) said this;

*“Financial burden is one major challenge couples go through in their quest to marriage. The expensive costumes and other expenditure put a lot of pressure on the would-be couples before and after the marriage ceremonies. The cost involved is too much. The “engagement” has its own costumes, they are also to plan for the wedding and reception. A lot of moneys go into marriage ceremonies these days. Although I prepared well towards ours, at a point it was not easy “kora.” I have to clear all the little vestments I have done just to make the programme happened. Certain things we did not plan for all came*



*up and we have to push some moneys in there to make the programme a success. Brother the financial burden was too much. In fact, at times I pity young people who have not settled and they are made to organize wedding. It is not easy oh.”*

One of the unmarried respondents (14) also added;

*“Financial challenge is one of the challenges most would-be couples face. Many people because of the demands of the family, the church and the society go for huge loads for their marriage ceremonies. A friend of ours is still paying for the loans he took for his wedding three years ago. How can they enjoy their marriage?”*

A respondent (6) unmarried had this to add;

*“To me the key of it all is financial problems. I and my beloved were ready oh, we have gotten all the things on the list but the money for the wedding is what we are still fighting for. Sister says wedding is what she wants because all the sisters had it. So, we are still on it. Oh, she is also trying “paa” to get things done. I would not go for loan. My brother has suffered enough for that mistake. I would not try “koraa.” My mother was the one who was sending my brother money at time. My mother would not even allow me to commit same mistake.”*

The data gathered gave a great revelation about the challenges some couples and even unmarried individuals go through in their quest to get married. All the respondents in one way or the other talked about how people spend huge sums of money for the performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies. These huge sums of money are used for the marriage process other than the marriage life itself. All the responses showed that the performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies drain the account of the would-be couples. This is to confirm what Calves (2016) alluded that the cost of customary marriage ceremony is relatively low. This means that if the young people are encouraged to perform only the customary marriage ceremony and

are advised to register their marriages at the law court and or blessed at church, many of them can save a lot of money for other equally profitable ventures.

#### 4.4.2 Stress

From the data gathered, most of the respondents showed their worries when it comes to the challenges they face or others face in performing parallel marriage ceremonies. One of them which was running through the data was stress. The data revealed that many go through stressful moment due to the parallel nature of our marriage ceremonies. The data revealed that the family and the church are mostly the cause of the stress the would-be couples go through prior to their marriage ceremonies. These are some of the responses.

One of the married respondents (9) had this to say;

*“It was so stressful. For almost a week I could not have enough sleep. I used two different venues for both the engagement (customary marriage ceremony) and the wedding. Brother, my parents demanded that the engagement (customary marriage rite) be done in our home town. Also, I have been a church leader here for some time so the church also demanded I do the wedding here if I want most of them to be around. So, upon deliberation and to satisfy all of them we have to use the two venues. We suffered “papa.” If my family should have agreed on the venue we would not have spent that much in the transportation and also the stress we went through organizing the program. Thus, moving from one place to another in the organisation of both the engagement and the wedding ceremonies. We performed the two at two separate venues within three days.”*

Also, one of the marriage counselors said this;

*“The performance of the two ceremonies stresses the couple mostly the woman. One of the issues I had in one of the counselling sessions was disturbing. The two were all staying at two different places. The man was working in for instance Accra and the lady was reading a course in say University of Cape Coast and the lady’s parents have divorce so she is with*

*the mother in say Winneba where they would have the wedding but the father insisted that they should come to his house for the engagement (customary marriage ceremony) which was in say Assin Fosu. I hope you have gotten the Map I am trying to draw? So, in fact, at a point I have to encourage the man because he was given up. The stress was too much for them. Coming from Accra for counselling every week end. I also suffered small because of the stress. So, dear for the stress in the performance of parallel marriage is too much for the young would-be couples. To me, the church and the family at times stresses the would-be couples too much.”*

From all the data, it was realised that stress has also become one of the key challenges the individuals who wish to marry through the parallel marriage ceremonies face. The stress is indirectly created by the social institutions one has to satisfy. The family and the church have created an impression that the individual has to suffer before he or she marries. They are with the notion that marriage is for mature persons. Instead of the church and the family coming together to help the youth who have reached their marital age to have a smooth transition, the marriage process has been complicated by these institutions rather.

#### **4.5 The Effects of Parallel Marriage Ceremonies on Marriage**

The interview data gathered was to answer the last research question which was to ascertain the effects of the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies on marriage. Several themes emerged from the data and these themes include; positive effects of parallel marriage ceremony on marriage and the negative effects of parallel marriage ceremony on marriage.

##### **4.5.1 The positive effects of parallel marriage ceremony on marriage**

Although all the people interviewed complained bitterly about the parallel marriage ceremonies, some of them expressed the positive effects the ceremonies have had on

marriage. Most of them talked about it helping partners to be faithful and also to get them and their children secured. These very responses run through those who talked about the positiveness of the parallel ceremonies. These are some of the responses.

One of the married respondents (3) said this;

*“I think parallel marriage ceremonies is affecting the marriage institution positively. This is because it makes the partners especially the men not to misconduct themselves after marriage. Thus, not think of marrying another wife or husband. If not the registration of marriage, hmmm, I do not know how Ghana would have been like. Because the way some unmarried women are over marriage men hmmm. It is well. So, me I have not regret doing the two at all.”*

Another married respondent (8) had this to say;

*“It will help me secure the legitimacy of my children so that when I am no more, no one will take their possessions from them as it happens in some marriages contracted under the customary laws.”*

The responses above have shown some of the perceptions people have going into the parallel marriage ceremonies. But the records should be set straight for the upcoming couples to understand that it is not only the parallel marriage ceremonies that will prevent their partners from cheating. Also, there are laws to protect the interest of the couple and their children even when one of them or the both are no more (PNDCL 111).

#### **4.5.2 The negative effects of parallel marriage ceremony on marriage**

The data gathered revealed that the effects of parallel marriage ceremonies are numerous. But the two main topics that were gathered from the data; the fear to go into marriage and cohabitation.

#### **4.5.2.1 The fear to enter into marriage**

All the respondents talked about the perception people are developing about marriage being an expensive venture. This has created a kind of fear in all the unmarried individuals that were interviewed. Also, the married, parents, opinion leaders and the counselors expressed their displeasure about the increasing concern going on about the expensive nature of marriage ceremonies these days. One of the respondents express how he has to raise three thousand Ghana Cedis (GHC 3000.00) to pay for the video coverage and the pictures that were taken during the customary marriage and the church wedding.

The following are some of the responses from the respondents; one unmarried respondent (1) had this to say;

*“It indirectly takes away the joy couples anticipate to have in marriage. This is because after the ceremony some partners begin to blame each other for their frustrations in marriage. The frustration couples go through during the ceremony affects them at the early stages of their marriage. What I saw some couples who performed the parallel marriage ceremonies go through created some kind of fear bi in me.”*

Respondent 3 (married) said;

*“Another effect is fear of marrying. Many young people think that if you go ahead with the ordinance marriage and the person is disturbing you, the laws do not allow for simple break up and also have no option to get additional wife who may come in to comfort you.”*

Another respondent (15) a pastor added;

*“Most of the young people are afraid of going into marriage. One major issue I have been faced with is the expensive nature of the ceremonies. Most of the young people in our church for instance are going out but because of the moneys involved in the performance of the parallel ceremonies, they do not even talk about marriage in their conversations. In fact, some of them*

*have come to me personally about how silent their guys are on issues of marriage. My meetings with them made me aware of their fears.”*

All the data gathered gives as the picture of what some would-be couple go through in their quest to get marriage. Also, some of the young people expressed their fears of getting marriage because of the amount of money they see others pump into the organisation of their weddings. This has created some kind of fears in them knowing that they are not gainfully employed.

#### **4.5.2.2 Cohabitation**

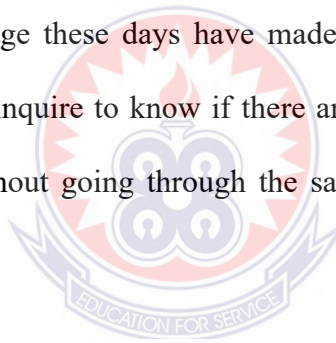
From the data gathered, one of the silent or least talked about effect of parallel marriage ceremonies on marriage emerged. This is with the issue of cohabitation. People who claim to love themselves these days cohabite for years before they go through the procedures for marriage to be recognized as husband and wife. Although Lindsay (2000) cited in McCafferty (2011) considers the transition into cohabitation for many couples to be unplanned and simply happens, the data shows that a lot of factors contribute to this situation. The responses of the interviewees made it clear that the performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies also contributed to the cohabitation situation in our societies. One of the parents (respondent 7) had this to say;

*“Another negative effect on the marriage institution is the issue of cohabitation. I have tried to talk to some of the cohabiting couples in our area and in the church I fellowship, but all their problem is money. Most of them are not gainfully employed but they have gotten to their marital age. Because of that they have agreed to cohabite and help raise the children they have given birth to. Some have informed me that they have gone home for the knocking but they cannot tell when the marriage ceremony will come on.”*

Another married respondent (12) added;

*“It has affected marriage negatively ‘papa.’ Those days you go home to see the parents of the woman with a drink and you are through but now it a different thing all together. This parallel ceremony thing made my wife and I cohabitated for few years before we got married. I wanted to do the engagement and go for the court registration but the parents said no, so while we were here, we were together till we married. They did not know. So, when all was set, I went home for the necessary rites and she officially moved in here.”*

The data collected revealed the negative effects the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies is having on the marriage institution. Something that the society was against in few years ago is now accepted and endorsed by society, that is cohabitation. Cohabitation was and is against societal norms but the dynamics involve in getting marriage these days have made the marriage institution opaque that people are afraid to inquire to know if there are other means they can get their marriages celebrated without going through the same difficulties others have been through.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter brings to light the major findings of the study, conclusions are drawn, recommendations made and the limitations of the study revealed by the researcher in the quest of exploring parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

##### 5.1.1 Overview

The aim of this research was to explore parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality. This section draws the main finding from the five (5) research questions that were explored. The questions were;

1. How do Christians in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality understand parallel marriage ceremonies?
2. What are the reasons for the performance of parallel marriages ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality?
3. What are the agents that contribute to the challenges of performing parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality?
4. What are the challenges associated with the celebration of parallel marriages ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality?
5. What are the challenges associated with the celebration of parallel marriages ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality?



### **5.1.2 The concept of parallel marriage ceremony**

Almost all the respondents exhibited some level of understanding on the concept of parallel marriage. This perception has influenced many to see the customary marriage ceremony as not a complete marriage ceremony. This is as a result of the influence from Christians leaders through indoctrinations, which has made it to sound that until marriage ceremony is done in church or by the church one would not receive God's blessing on such union (DeSimone, 2003). The above notion has made especially the youth not to see the performance of both customary and ordinance marriage ceremonies as parallel but anything customary is seen as that which starts the marriage process of which the ordinance ceremony is the climax.

From the data gathered, the respondents addressed the issues of customary and ordinance marriage ceremonies which most of them referred to as wedding, as well as what goes into each of the components especially the customary marriage rite. Although most of the respondents exhibited some level of understanding of the components (customary marriage and ordinance marriage), most of them were not able to speak to the dynamics that exist in the marriage registration process especially with the licence that is given by the law courts. Under the components, two main themes emerged. Thus, the customary marriage ceremony and the Christian or ordinance marriage ceremony.

From the data, none of the respondent disregarded the customary marriage ceremony but they showed a level of distrust in it because most of them were in doubt whether there are laws to protect the individuals that go into such marriages. One thing the society has lose sight of, in the ordinance marriage is that, not all marriages organized especially in churches is recognized by the laws of the state if the requirements of the

Marriage Act are not entirely satisfied. For instance, according to the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 if these three basic requirements such as gazetted chapel and officiating minister is not met, the marriage though organized in church, is not recognized by the state.

On the area of the marriage act, it was evidence from the data that most of the respondents did not know much about it. The responses from the respondents made it clear that although the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 is nicely carved to help the citizenry in marital issues, the Act is still far from the people it was made for. That is many of the responses did not know much about the Marriage Act 1884-1984, Cap. 127 and it demands.

### **5.1.3 The reasons for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies**

Exploring the reasons for parallel marriage ceremony, the respondents believed that the performance of the parallel marriage ceremony is an honour to both couple and families. They did confirm what Twene (2019) wrote, marriage celebrated in church in addition to the customary marriage ceremony serve as honour on the couple in their society. Also, others belief that the family of the bride feel honoured when such ceremonies are performed. This belief that one has to do everything possible to please the people around them is really leading many young people to do what at times is not even within their means.

The data gathered from the responses also made two important assertions on the reasons for parallel marriage. The first one was on faithfulness in marriage and the second one was on the security and legitimacy of the children born in the marriage. This reveals the fact that many couples believe that the intestate succession laws of the state only works when both marriage ceremonies are performed.

Another reason raised was religious factors. The data revealed that the social institutions (the family, the church and the society) especially the church has indirectly contributed to the performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies. The responses thus show that it is only the people who have gotten married and few who are close to the leadership of the church are aware of this influence. Although it is something that is going on, it seems to be under the tone. This is because most of the unmarried respondents did not talk about the influence from the church especially in the performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies.

#### **5.1.4 The agents that contribute to the challenges of performance parallel marriage ceremonies**

In enquiring the challenges associated with the performance of parallel marriages, the data revealed three major agents that pose much challenge, namely the church, the family and the society at large. On the part of the church, the data showed that most of the people who perform the parallel marriage ceremonies face a lot of challenges because of the church's demands. The church which was to help the vulnerable has now become a burden to most of the youth who would wish to have a simple marriage ceremony. This ratifies what Agboka (2008) allude that the churches or religious institutions that are expected to ease the fears of the youth about this procedure are rather making things difficult for them.

In looking at the family, the data reveals how the family has become powerful not only in customary marriage ceremonies but also in the ordinance marriage celebration. Most at times not for the interest of their daughter or son going into the marriage but their own interest and want to protect their reputation. This has led many young couples to suffer, some even have to sacrifice the joy they would have in

their marriage for wedding. The data also shows that family are not interested in the ordinance part of the process, all they need to hear is that their daughter has been wedded. Most families do not bother to know whether proper documentations have been done by the couples.

The society was never spared as one institution that create so much a challenge to the youth when talking about parallel marriage ceremony. The data showed that the societal demand for the wedding is on the ascendancy. People perform parallel ceremonies because of their fear of societal ridicule. Some even measures the successful of a wedding ceremony with the number of people who came for the programme or by how elegant the programme was. Also, in some societies people are looked down on because they refuse to organize their kind of marriage ceremonies. These societal expectations have burdened a lot of would-be couples financially leading to many well matured young men and women living a single life.

#### **5.1.5 The challenges associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies**

Apart from the Church, family and society who serves as the agent creating many challenges, the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies is faced with issues. Financial burden is key of them all. Almost all the respondents attest to the fact that the major challenge in the performance of parallel marriage has to do with the financial drain. From the data, while people are taken loans to start businesses, youth of today who have reached their marital ages are also face with deciding between a loan for their marriage ceremony or forgetting about marriage for something.

Others have to save for a long period of time in order to meet the demands of the family, church, and the society. All the respondents in one way or the other talked

about how people spend huge sums of money for the performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies. These huge sums of money are used for the celebration of the marriage other than the marriage life itself. This has informed many young people especially the men to say for long a time before they get married.

Aside the monetary issues, others also affirmed the stressful nature of parallel marriage ceremonies. This stress is usually created by the social institutions one has to satisfy. The would-be couples go through several difficult times and sleepless night just trying to meet the demands of the church, family and society.

#### **5.1.6 Effects of the performance parallel marriage ceremonies on marriage**

The data drew two main effects the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies have had on marriage. Namely; the positive effect and negative effect. Positively, respondents assume that parallel ceremonies helping partners to be faithful and also make the couples and their children secured in the marriage. One of the negative effects of parallel marriage ceremonies on marriage is that, marriage being perceived to be an expensive venture has created a kind of fear in almost all the unmarried individuals that were interviewed. Also, the responses showed that this perception has influenced or fueled the cohabitation issues in our society.

On this, the married, parents, opinion leaders and the counsellors all expressed their displeasure about the increasing concern going on about the expensive nature of marriage ceremonies these days. One of the respondents expressed how he struggled to raise three thousand Ghana Cedis (GH¢ 3000.00) after their wedding to pay for the video coverage and the pictures that were taken during the ceremonies.

## 5.2 Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it is clear that some of the respondents had some level of understanding of the concept parallel marriage ceremonies, just that most of them referred to the customary marriage as “the engagement”. In addition, most of the respondents were not in the known of the demands or they have less knowledge of the Marriage Act 1884-1985 Cap. 127. Although some of the married respondents claimed to have married or registered their marriage under that Act, most of them could not tell the detailed demands of the Act. Also, almost all the unmarried respondents were not in the known of the Marriage Act 1884-1985 and its demands. Furthermore, the respondents did not know the dynamics that exist in the performance of church marriage (church blessing and solemnisation of holy matrimony) and the issuance of marriage registration certificates.

The performance of parallel marriage ceremonies is perceived by many as a way of ensuring faithfulness in marriage. Also, many have taken the performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies as a means of acquiring security and legitimacy for themselves and the children born in the union. Moreover, parallel marriage ceremonies are performed by many to fulfill or satisfy the demands of the church, the family and the society at large.

The challenges associated with the parallel marriage ceremonies were linked to three key agents. The customary marriage ceremony is centered on the demands of the family (tribe based) and also at times some families demand for the performance of the ordinance marriage ceremony (wedding). The church has been the pivot on which the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies evolves. Individuals who are leaders or wish to be leaders are made to perform the parallel ceremonies in order to

be in line with the doctrines of the church. The society is also seen to be one of the agents pushing for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies. Many young couple perform parallel marriage ceremonies because of the fear of that society ridiculing them and their families. From the findings of the study, it is clear that the agents (thus the family, the church and the society) mostly decide for the would-be couple the kind of marriage ceremonies to perform.

The huge financial burden on couples who perform parallel marriage ceremonies was alluded to by almost all the respondents. The performance of parallel marriage ceremonies put financial burden on the would-be couple especially the man. Some couple pay huge debts years after the organisation of the parallel marriage ceremonies. Also, most would-be couples stress themselves organizing and preparing for the ceremonies other than the marriage life itself. Most would-be couples use their long-time savings and investment for the organisation of the parallel marriage ceremonies. Many couples get drained financially after their marriage especially those who performed parallel ceremonies.

The performance of parallel marriage ceremonies has contributed to the problems of marriage than it was ever imagined. Marriage is seen to be expensive venture by most of the unmarried individuals. This perception has created fear in the hearts of many unemployed and ungainfully employed young individuals who have found their love but have no means to tie the knot because of the huge sums of money involved in the organisation of the parallel marriage ceremonies. In addition, the notion that marriage is an expensive venture has contributed to the rising nature of cohabitation in our society. People who are not gainfully employed to save towards the performance of the parallel marriage ceremonies mostly prefer to live together

for some time to enable them prepare towards the organisation of the ceremonies. Cohabitation which was considered to be against societal norms few years ago, is now accepted and endorsed by society due to the rigorous dynamics involve in getting married these days.

### **5.3 Recommendations of the Study**

The concept of marriage contraction and the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127 should be added to the Senior High School curriculum to help educate the youth about the dynamics in the marriage contraction and registration process. Also, in the meantime the churches and other government agencies like the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) should through public education, educate the youth to understand the rudiments of the Marriage Act 1884-1985, Cap. 127. This will help the would-be couples to take informed decisions.

The churches and the marriage counsellors should embark on education to help the youth understand the reasons for the performance of marriage ceremonies. Also, marriage counsellors should help would-be couple clear their doubt on the customary marriage ceremony as being engagement. In addition, the church and the media houses should educate the citizenry on the existing laws that protect the interest of the couple and their children even when one of them or the both are no more. Example, PNDCL 111.

The family should be educated especially by the churches, the NCCE and the media to know some of the dangers they pose to the would-be couples when they force them indirectly to perform parallel ceremonies. Also, the leadership of the church should streamline their regulations regarding the celebrations of marriage to encourage the youth marry with ease. In addition, massive public education should be carried out by



the NCCE to sensitize the populace about the rudiments of a valid marriage ceremony and the dangers involved in organizing elaborate marriage ceremonies.

The state should establish more counselling centers (especially marriage counselling centers) in various towns (if possible, all district capitals and bigger communities) so that young people who would prefer to register their marriages in court would not be denied premarital counselling especially by the church. Also, the state should make premarital counselling as part of the requirement for the marriage registration. This would help the would-be couples either reduce or deal with the challenges associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies.

The state and other agencies should come together to find better ways through which the effects of the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies on marriage can be reduced or eradicated. Also, the youth should be encouraged to abreast themselves with the Marriage Act as well as the pros and cons of choosing to perform the parallel marriage ceremonies in order to control the extravagant expenditure for the ceremony and focus on preparing towards the marriage life.

#### **5.4 Limitations of the Study**

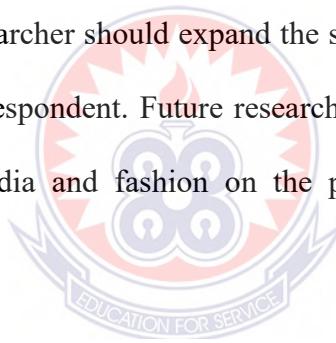
Like every qualitative research, this study was not devoid of some limitations.

Firstly, the sample size of fifteen was relatively small and therefore the findings could not be generalised. Secondly, there were much of delay from the sample selected due to the technical nature of the study so who to respond to the questions was a matter of contention. Thirdly, even though many people are married and performed the parallel ceremonies, they seem not to understand marriage as an institution let alone having a reason for performing parallel ceremony. This was made clear based on the level of

ignorance some of the respondents exhibited on the issues concerning the marriage registration process during the interviews. There were others too who for the sake of what they have been through were unwilling to share their experience. Lastly, as an individual who has experienced parallel marriage ceremony myself, such experiences might have had an adverse judgement or opinion formed beforehand on the situation under study without good justification and this could lead to subjectivity of the findings. This problem was addressed by allowing the data collected to speak for itself, thus making sure that the finding was grounded in the data collected.

### **5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research**

This study explored parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality. Future researcher should expand the sample for the study as well as the setting to include more respondent. Future researchers should also consider studying the influence of the media and fashion on the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies.



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## Appendix A



22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2021.

*TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN*

Dear Sir/Madam,

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION: MR. VINCENT ODOOM (200012922)**

We write to introduce Mr. Vincent Odoom to your outfit to assist him conduct his research. Mr. Vincent Odoom is pursuing a Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) in Social Studies Education in the Department of Social Studies Education of the University of Education, Winneba.

As part of the requirements for the award of M.Phil in Social Studies Education, he is undertaking a research on the topic "*Exploratory study on parallel marriage ceremonies in Winneba in Effutu municipality*".

We would be very grateful if he could be offered any assistance he may need to enable him achieve the purpose of his study.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. Cletus K. Ngaaso

**Ag. Head of Department**

## **Appendix B**

**University of Education, Winneba  
Faculty of Social Sciences Education  
Department of Social Studies Education**

### **Interview Guide for People Who Had Had Parallel Marriage Ceremony**

This interview is to seek your opinion to help in soliciting information to write a thesis on the topic: **“exploratory study on parallel marriage ceremony in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality.”**

You can freely share your views on this topic because they are needed for academic work only. Your views will be treated with high level of confidentiality.

**Male [ ] Female [ ]**

**Age; 25-30 [ ], 31-35 [ ], 36-40 [ ], 41-45 [ ], 46-50 [ ]**

#### **Views of people on parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. What is your understanding of customary marriage ceremony and Christian marriage ceremonies?
2. What do you understand by parallel marriage ceremonies?
3. Could you tell me what constitute parallel marriage ceremony?
4. Which of these ceremonies did you perform during your marriage?
5. Do you know that the customary marriage is recognized by the Marriage ACT 1884-1985 Cap. 127?
6. What makes blessing of marriage different from solemnisation of holy matrimony?
7. Do you know of the dynamics that exist in relation to the registration of marriage under the ordinance? Explain your answer.
8. Under which certificate was your marriage registered?

#### **Reasons for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. What informed your decision to perform both customary and Christian and other marriage ceremonies?
2. a. Was it a pressure from anyone (your partner, parents, churches, peers) or that has been your wish all this while?

- b. Did you have any discussion with the parties involved to agree with why you want to opt for only one ceremony? Yes or No. Explain your answer.
3. Do you have any other reason that you think pushed you into performing the parallel marriage ceremony?
4. How good or otherwise is the performance of parallel marriage ceremony?

**The agents that contribute to the challenges of performing parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. Is the performance of parallel marriage ceremony challenging? Explain your answer.
2. What specifically lead to the challenging situation(s)?

**Challenges associated with the celebrating of parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. What were the challenges (if any) you faced in the performance of the parallel marriage ceremony?
2. Were the challenges avoidable? Yes or No. Explain your answer.
3. In what way(s) would you have prevented such challenges?

**Effects these challenges have had on your marriage**

1. Could any of the problems in marriage be associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremony? Yes or No. Explain your answer.
2. In what way could you associate the challenges or your marital problems to the performance of parallel marriage ceremony?
3. Do you think the performance of parallel marriage ceremony has had general effects on marriage? Yes or No. Explain your answer. Thank you for your cooperation.

**University of Education, Winneba**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences Education**  
**Department of Social Studies Education**

**Interview Guide for those who have reached their marital age but are not married**

This interview is to seek your opinion to help in soliciting information to write a thesis on the topic: **“exploratory study on parallel marriage ceremony in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality”**.

You can freely share your views on this topic because they are needed for academic work only. Your views will be treated with high level of confidentiality.

**Male** [ ]      **Female** [ ]

**Age 25-30** [ ], **31-35** [ ], **36-40** [ ]

**Views of people on parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. What is your understanding of customary marriage ceremony and Christian marriage ceremonies?
2. What do your understanding of parallel marriage ceremonies?
3. Could you tell me what constitute parallel marriage ceremonies?
4. Which of these ceremonies will you perform during your marriage?
5. Do you know that the customary marriage is recognized by the Marriage ACT 1884-1985 Cap. 127?
6. What makes blessing of marriage different from solemnisation of holy matrimony?
7. Do you know of the dynamic that exist in relation to the registration of marriage under the ordinance?
8. Do you know that any of the marriage ceremonies mentioned above is recognized by law as legal marriage ceremony? Yes or No. Explain your answer.
9. Under which certificate would you wish to register your marriage? Explain your answer.

**Reasons for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. Would you choose to perform parallel marriage ceremonies? Explain your answer.
2. Why would you not perform only one marriage ceremony?
3. How good or otherwise is the performance both customary and Christian and other marriage ceremonies?

**The agents that contribute to the challenges of performing parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. What do you think could be a driving force that can make you opt parallel marriage ceremonies instead of only one marriage ceremony?
2. Could they be avoided? Yes or No. Explain your answer.

**Challenges associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. Do you think there are challenges associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies? Explain your answer.
2. What do you think are the challenges you could face in your quest to perform parallel marriage ceremonies? Identify and explain.
3. The challenges (if any) you envisage, do you think they could be avoided? Yes or No. Explain your answer.

**Effects these Challenges have had on Marriage**

1. Could any of the problems in marriage be associated with the performance parallel marriage ceremonies? Yes or No. Explain your answer.
2. In what way could you associate the challenges in marriage to the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies?
3. Do you think the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies have had general effects on marriage? Yes or No. Explain your answer.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**University of Education, Winneba**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences Education**  
**Department of Social Studies Education**

**Interview Guide for Parents and Opinion Leaders**

This interview is to seek your opinion to help in soliciting information to write a thesis on the topic: **“exploratory study on parallel marriage ceremony in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality”**.

You can freely share your views on this topic because they are needed for academic work only. Your views will be treated with high level of confidentiality.

**Male** [  ]      **Female** [  ]

**Age; 30-40** [  ], **41-50** [  ], **51-60** [  ], **61-70** [  ]

**Views of people on parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. What is your understanding of customary marriage ceremony and Christian marriage ceremonies?
2. What do your understanding of parallel marriage ceremonies?
3. Could you tell me what constitute parallel marriage ceremony?
4. Which of these ceremonies would you encourage your ward or any would-be couple to perform during marriage?
5. Do you know the dynamic that exist in the Christian Marriage ceremony?
6. What makes blessing of marriage different from solemnisation of holy matrimony?
7. Do you know of the dynamic that exist in relation to the registration of marriage under the ordinance? Yes or No. Explain your answer.
8. Under which certificate would encourage your ward or would-be couple to register their marriage?

**Reasons for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. Do you think there are reasons for would-be couple wanting to perform both customary and Christian and other marriage ceremony? Explain your answer.
2. Would you, advice or encourage your ward or any would-be couple to perform both customary and Christian and other marriage ceremony? Explain your answer.
3. Do you have any other reason that you think pushed you into performing the parallel marriage ceremony?

4. How good or otherwise is the performance of both customary and Christian and other marriage ceremonies.

**The agents that contribute to the challenges of performing parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. What do you think could be a driving force that could make a would-be couple opt for parallel marriage ceremonies instead of only one marriage ceremony?
2. Could they be avoided? Yes or No. Explain your answer.

**Challenges associated with the celebrating of parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. Is the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies challenging? Yes or No. Explain your answer.
2. What are the challenges (if any) you have witnessed in relation to the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies?
3. Were those challenges avoidable? Yes or No. Explain your answer.

**Effects these Challenges have had on Marriage**

1. Has any of these challenges influenced your perception on marriage?
2. Could any of the problems in marriage be associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies? Yes or No. Explain your answer.
3. In what way would you associate the challenges or marital problems to the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies?
4. Do you think the performance parallel marriage ceremonies have had general effects on marriage? Yes or No. Explain your answer.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**University of Education, Winneba**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences Education**  
**Department of Social Studies Education**

**Interview Guide for Marriage Counselors**

This interview is to seek your opinion to help in soliciting information to write a thesis on the topic: **“exploratory study on parallel marriage ceremony in Winneba in the Efutu Municipality”**.

You can freely share your views on this topic because they are needed for academic work only. Your views will be treated with high level of confidentiality.

**Male** [ ]      **Female** [ ]

**Age; 30-40** [ ], **41-50** [ ], **51-60** [ ], **61-70** [ ]

**Views of people on parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. What is your understanding of parallel marriage ceremony?
2. Could you tell me what constitute parallel marriage ceremony?
3. Would you advice or encourage your client or would-be couple to perform both customary and Christian and other marriage ceremonies?
4. Do you make your clients aware that the customary marriage is recognized by the Marriage Act 1884-1985 Cap. 127? Yes or No. Explain your answer.
5. Do you inform your clients on the dynamic that exist in the Christian Marriage ceremony?
6. Do you make your clients aware of the dynamic that exist in relation to the registration of marriage under the ordinance? Yes or No. Explain your answer.
7. Under which certificate would you encourage your client to register their marriage?

**Reasons for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. Do you think there are certain factors that push would-be couple into the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies?
2. Would you share with me the reasons why would-be couple you have counsel opt to have parallel marriage ceremonies?
3. Would you advice or encourage any would-be couple to opt for parallel marriage ceremony? Yes or No. Explain your answer.



**The agents that contribute to the challenges of performing parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. What do you think could be a driving force that could make a would-be couple opt for the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies instead of one marriage ceremony?
2. Could they be avoided? Yes or No. Explain your answer.

**Challenges associated with the celebrating of parallel marriage ceremonies**

1. Are there challenges associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies?
2. Has any couple come to you with a case relating to challenges they faced in relation to them performing parallel marriage ceremonies? Yes or No. Explain your answer.
3. Have you had any challenge through your counselling sessions in relation to the performance of parallel marriage ceremony?
4. Could you share the challenges couples have shared with you in relation to them performing parallel marriage ceremony?

**Effects these Challenges have had on Marriage**

1. Could any of the problems in marriage be associated with the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies? Yes or No. Explain your answer
2. In what way would you associate the challenges or marital problems to the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies?
3. Has any of these challenges affected or influence the perception people have about marriage?
4. Do you think the performance of parallel marriage ceremonies have had general effects on marriage? Yes or No. Explain your answer.

Thank you for your cooperation.