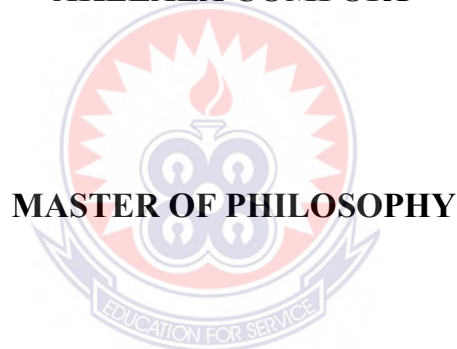


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**PORTRAYAL OF GENDER IN THE TELENOVELA,
SARASWATICHANDRA: PERSPECTIVES OF VIEWERS IN ACCRA**

AKELALA COMFORT



MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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AKELALA COMFORT

7181960002



**A Dissertation in the Department of Communication and Media Studies,
Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication, submitted to
the School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment**

**Of the requirements for award of the degree in
Master of Philosophy
Communication and Media Studies
(Communication Skills)**

JULY, 2020

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Akelala Comfort, hereby declare that this Dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in the published works which have all been identified, cited 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.....

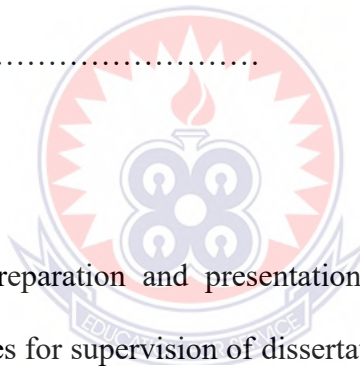
Supervisor's Declaration

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

Name of supervisor: Prof. Andy Ofori-Birikorang

Signature.....

Date.....



DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my noble husband Mr. Simon Apeliba Alenyorige, for all the support and sacrifices that you have made and continues to make in life. Your unflinching emotional and intellectual support throughout the research process was been truly remarkable. I am very grateful to God for giving me such a wonderful husband. God richly bless you.



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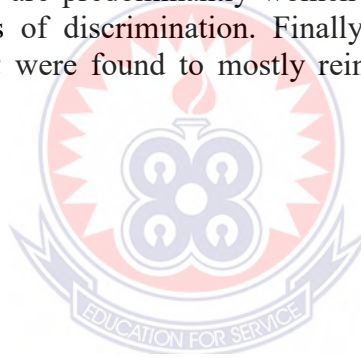


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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to highlight the various kinds of gender issues portrayed in the telenovela *Saraswatichandra* and the reception of these issues among viewers in Accra using qualitative content analysis. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 30 respondents. Data was collected using document analysis, interviews and focused group discussions and anchored on the gender theory as well as social constructionism theory. It probes further on how the viewership reception either contradicts or reinforces existing gender issues. The study reports gender inequality, gender stereotypes, sexual harassment and machismo as the dominant issues portrayed in the telenovela *Saraswatichandra*. The study offers a very detailed description of the method of data collection which, in qualitative research, demonstrates adequate validity of the analysis and the results. The study further revealed that the telenovela *Saraswatichandra* portrayed the following categories: viewers have been sensitized about the red flags that precede sexual harassment behavior, women mostly portrayed like sex objects and viewers have been empowered and emboldened to stand up against any form of sexual harassment and gender discrimination. The study also inclined of portraying issues such as reinforcement. The study therefore, concluded that the progressive kinds of gender issues portrayed in the telenovela, *Saraswatichandra*: perspectives of viewers who are predominantly women were positively empowered to be educated on the antecedents of discrimination. Finally, the portrayals of gender in the telenovela *Saraswatichandra* were found to mostly reinforce existing perspectives in the society.



CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

The chapter one encompasses the introduction to the study, the background, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions. The chapter also outlines the significance of the study, and the organization of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Media has become a part of people's daily lives in Ghana, the role of television in every society is to inform, persuade, entertain and educate. Television offers variety of valuable programmes and content which aid the purpose of education, entertainment, information and relaxation; and has become an important, powerful and integral medium in the Ghanaian context (Antwi et, al. (2015). Similarly, television stations also sell out artifact, ideas and products to audience in a form of programmes. Therefore, most of the television stations in Ghana now compete with each other to show the best program to encourage their cherish viewers to always stick to their stations at all times and also to mark them as uniquely different from their competitors (Busumbru, 2013).

According to the study conducted by Mihelj and Huxtable (2016) state that television is privately owned entity used within the walls of people's private homes. In this contemporary world, television can be seen everywhere, it is practically impossible to walk through a street without seeing a bar, a restaurant, a shop or even an office without a television (Adia, 2014). In tandem with the above, Ofori-Birikorang (2014) opines that "especially in Africa, television owners mostly bring their television sets into open spaces for interested members to share in the viewing experience (p.1)." He added that even when

such television sets become immobile from a certain site, interested individuals are often led into a particular private space to join in the viewing experience.

According to Ogakason (2017) television is one of the electronic media that is generally accessed in most homes particularly by young people who have become familiar with how the medium operates and helps them interact with their environment and beyond. People watch television to seek information on socialization, family values, fashion trend, culture and reality of life. Ogakason (2017) children, due to their undiscerning minds are very vulnerable and impressionable to what they see and hear especially what they watch on the television screen. They replicate and display certain conducts that are attributed to viewing certain television contents such as acts of violence, aggression and immoral sexual actions that are considered as detriments to their cognitive development.

Similarly, a study conducted by Singh (2014) postulated that television viewing is referred to as 'televiwing' encompasses several behaviors showcased by the various audience and these actions are not random phenomena but rather a response to a cause. Television viewing behaviors are therefore seen as "purposeful and goal oriented" (Singh, 2014; p.2) intended to achieve some objectives, which in turn would satisfy the need of the viewer. For instance, you might see people watching telenovelas at a specific television viewing place which viewer may pay rapt attention to everything been said in the serial. The purpose might be to help them hear the whole story that is being said by the characters which would go a long way to gratify their need of getting information, education and entertainment from the telenovela.

According to Wambua (2014) telenovela as a genre of television programme is one of the most popular forms of entertainment in Latin American, Spanish, Filipino, Portuguese and

American with hundreds of millions of viewers. The word telenovela is a combined word; that is “tele” short for television or televisão (Spanish and Portuguese word for television), and “novela” a Spanish or Portuguese word for “novel”. As indicated previously, telenovelas are originated from Latin America which started as graphic novel and it is the representation of classic literature and stories, and then later evolved into radio and television programs.

Busumbru (2013) views telenovelas as a melodramatic fictional story lines which usually features the lives of multiple characters, evolving romance, secret relationships, realities of life, family values, genuine love and extramarital affairs which tends to appeal to people’s emotions and gives them the visual connection of love life. Recently, Ghanaian youth have been influenced either negatively or positively by foreign serials especially women because some tend to imitate the characters in the story such as their costly lifestyle, heavy jewelry, lavish spending, fashion, and behaviors.

Asiamah (2017) avers that Ghanaians do not have a relationship or socio-cultural similarity to these foreign serials producing countries, yet they have been importing and airing Indian, Chinese and Latin American telenovelas since the year 2000s up till date. Also, teenagers in Ghana are exposed to the content of some of the cultural practices of these foreign serials in terms of speaking, dressing and behavior which might likely lead to adoption of this foreign life style; which may not be culturally acceptable. According to La Pastina, Rego and Straubhaar (2003), telenovelas also have very outlining endings that allow the kind of narrative closure which is usually after 180 to 200 episodes depending on their popularity. However, some may be extended for a longer period due to successful ratings. They also “offer their audience dramas of cognition and re-cognition by locating political and social

issues in personal and familial terms” and thus making sense of the complex world in which we live (Lopez, 1995 as cited in Asiamah, 2017; p.6).

Telenovelas also have the capability to emotionally stir their audience, particularly teenagers and those that are still developing their opinions about issues on sexuality, relationships, self-esteem, religion and the society. They have a strong audience appeal, a fact confirmed in 1990 when Telemundo tried to vary its prime-time lineup by replacing serials with other programs and that led to an extreme decline in rating. In fact, the serials were quickly returned to schedule and now comprise of approximately 70% of Telemundo's prime time offering. Also, Mexico is one of the largest producers and exporters of telenovelas (Wambua, 2014).

According to the research conducted by Adia (2014) viewers of telenovelas can also use the programme to reinforce their self-esteem and also as a self-reflective support device to better identify themselves. The impact of watching telenovelas differs from one class of people to the other. For instance, if one belongs to the lower class in a social setting, the serial might help him or her build a more positive and valuable reflection of his or her status. He further stated that, telenovelas also provide images, symbols, values, rituals and models that act as reference points for those who are always in the process of constructing or forming their identities like adolescents (Adia, 2014).

Because of the impact that telenovelas have on their cherished viewers, they are shown at strategic times in the day (Adia, 2014). This assertion, however, affirms Toure (2007) point of view that the slot between 7:30 and 8:30 p.m. is synchronized with people's leisure time particularly women and children and as a result most serials are given those slots which are

considered “primetime”. The idea of primetime is that it will provide the largest possible audience (Antwi et al., 2015).

1.1.1 The Concept of Gender

The word ‘gender’ in these contemporary times, has become a household term. In the last decade, the word gender was used interchangeably with sex, the class of people’s reproductive anatomy. Though, the emergence of gender as a social, political, economic, and a human rights issue has helped to make a distinction among the two terms (Alhassan, 2012). The concept of gender refers to social relations, interactions or communications between women and men in a certain social or a given cultural context. According to Poynton (1989) gender is socially constructed, ‘functions by distributing access to roles and activities in relative to what are considered as relevant social characteristics such as sex, class, age and gender. During socialization and as children grow up in a given social setting, parents teach them how women and men should behave, talk, dress, act and take responsibilities. Eagly et al., (2004) said this is continuously reinforced into adulthood. In this context, gender is an identity that is tied to how women or men should conduct themselves in that particular society. Men and women as social beings strive to belong and seek for approval by complying and conforming to the social and cultural norms within their society.

According to the research conducted by Adomako (1992), the word gender is constructed, reproduced and sustained through language as a key element in the socialization process; and we need to appreciate the numerous ways in which this is done before we can begin to deconstruct gender. The various forms in which women are excluded from decision making

process is well documented in the literature, however little concern has been shown in studying how gender is portrayed in telenovelas.

Giddens and Sutton (2009) contend that gender concerns the psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females. It is linked to socially constructed perception of masculinity and femininity; it is not necessarily a direct product of an individual's biological sex. Also, gender roles are, then the set of arrangements by which a society changes biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these changed needs are gratified (Reiter, 1975 as cited in Dedzo, 2017). According to the study by Coon (2001) gender is the psychological and social characteristics associated with being either male or female. It involves the construction, negotiation and performance of masculine and feminine identities (as cited in Annan, 2017).

1.1.2 Telenovelas in Ghana

Telenovelas became dominant in Ghana in the year 2000s but in 2015, Adom TV broadcast an Indian telenovela which was broadcast by Zee TV and premiered on the 15th of April, 2014 (Antwi et al., 2015). Currently the serials that are broadcast on Ghanaian television are either produced from Mexican, Indian or Brazilian which have been adapted and adopted into English language or Twi. Sometimes others are translated from their indigenous languages into a local language-Twi. Ever since 2000s, television stations in Ghana have shown one serial to the other (Wambua, 2014). Most of the television stations now compete with each other to show the best telenovela to encourage their viewers to always stick to their stations at all times (Asiamah, 2017).

Recently, there were lots of telenovelas running on television stations in Ghana that held the attention of most Ghanaian audience in the early 2013 such as *Kumkum Bhagya (A Brides*

Destiny), *Wild at Heart*, *Rosalinda*, *the Gardener's Daughter*, *Veera*, *Gangaa*, *Kuch Rang*, *Madhubala*, *Kawach*, *Sapne Suhane*, *Storm over Paradise*, *Who killed Libia*, *Saraswatichandra*, *Mara (the only one)*, *Secret Love*, *Amaya*, *Simply Maria*, *Taste of Love*, *My heart is yours*, *Wild Lands*, *Elena Ghost*, *Esmeralda*, *Laws of love*, *My Enemy*, *Brazen*, *In Love with Ramon*, *Lies of the heart*, *Double Kara*, *Asintado*, *Daughters of the Moon* and *Jiji Maa*. There have been a few Korean, Mexican serials that have been a hit, which include 'Storm over Paradise and Maricuz but currently Indian telenovelas is reigning on the Ghanaian television stations.

Saraswatichandra is one of the telenovelas that held most Ghanaian viewers captivated in the early part of the year 2019. *Saraswatichandra* is an Indian soap opera and romantic drama initially produced and written by Sanjay. It is an Indian serial which was broadcast by Zee TV and was aired and premiered on Star Plus from 25th of February, 2013 to 20 September 2014 in India but in Ghana *Saraswatichandra* was premiered and aired by Adom TV on 19th June, 2019. It is shown five times in a week between 7:30pm to 8:30pm. On Sunday, an Omnibus is shown from 1pm to 5pm. This assertion is however affirming Feilitzen (2004) point of view that they are normally shown five or six days a week and run for an average of 120-150 episodes. This is again supported by Bellos (2007) assertion that, telenovelas are mostly shown prime time in order to obtain the largest possible audience because of the economic benefits of the telenovelas.

Saraswatichandra narrates the story of young cultured aristocrat-Saras, whose mother committed suicide during his childhood. He is practical, hardworking and committed to supporting his father's business. His father Laxminandan Vyas then married Gumaan, an evil and selfish woman who gave him a kind and selfless son called Danny. Later,

Laxminandan arranges Saras' wedding with Kumud Desai, the well-educated daughter of his best friend, Vidyachatur Desai. However, Saras, withdrawn since the death of his mother, refuses to marry and writes to Kumud to inform her but later fell in love with her as time went on. Later *Saraswatichandra* and his brother Danny married two sisters who are known to be their father's friend's daughters (Kumud and Kusum).

In the contemporary world, the industry has seen the globalization of several media telenovelas around the world such as, *Trotro*, *Sankofa*, *Sofua Kube*, *Abubro Kosua*, *Efiewura*, *Awaresem*, *Revealed*, *Celebrity fan Zone*, *Kente* and *Yolo* are all telenovelas produced in Ghana, having the same story line, style, plots, settings and other dynamics of these Mexican, Indian and American telenovelas.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There have been studies conducted by different researchers on telenovelas and gender in general.

Alhassan (2012) conducted a study on language and gender: the construction and reproduction of gender. The results revealed that the Dagomba hold a strong view about differences between males and females and expressed these in various ways. Also, paired masculine or feminine linguistic items tend to have negative associations for females but carry positive meanings for males. There is a higher tendency of giving stereotypical and derogatory labels to females than to males. Again, negative representation of females is most pervasive in proverbs and contrasts sharply with positive representations of men, although the uniqueness of the woman as mother and wife is recognized. There are also some differences in the use of some linguistic items by males and females, men use forms that are associated with higher status and power while women have to use forms that are associated

with inferior status. Finally, women and men engaged in normal interaction routinely reproduce gender stereotypes as they use language.

Similarly, Salifu (2015) also conducted a study on the phenomenological study of gender issues in public relations agencies. The findings grouped into these categories such as, sexual harassment, power, status and respect, gender stereotypes and discrimination. Women are stereotyped in the public relations agencies either direct or literal form. The first form is the expectation that women will listen to, support and help others. This stereotype can lead to job segregation where women are put in positions that traditionally support “women’s roles” in society. The second form is that women will not be as serious about their careers as they are or will be mothers in the future; it assumes that motherhood will take precedence. This perception hinders women from receiving organizational backing in terms of training and promotional opportunities which then perpetuate the stereotype.

Wambua (2014) also studied the impact of Latin-American telenovelas on the social life of Kenyan teenage girls. The study revealed that teenage girls are highly motivated to watch telenovelas because they provide solutions to their needs even though they know that the stories told in the telenovelas might not be real. They also watch telenovelas because it teaches them on how to live with others, to improve their self-esteem, widen their scope of thinking, and help them to understand the meaning of true love, to improve their academic performance and it also helps them to speak good English. She also suggests that, telenovelas appeal to Kenyans in particular because the plot of the genre usually portrays a “specific model of family: small, attractive, white, healthy, urban, a typical middle-class setup that most viewers identify with regardless of their socio-economic status” (P. 19). The

study furthermore showed that telenovelas are able to emotionally stir their audience, especially teenagers who are still forming their views about society.

Adia (2014) conducted a study on the analysis of telenovelas in the Ghanaian media. The study revealed that viewers can use telenovelas to reinforce their self-esteem, and as a self-reflective support tool to better recognize themselves. It can also be understood as a link to the experiences of others through which can help explain their own existence. The effect of watching telenovelas varies from one class of people to the other. That is, if one belongs to the lower class in a social setting, the telenovela might help him or her build a more positive and valuable reflection of his or her status. Again, telenovelas also provide values, images, rituals, symbols and models that act as reference points for those who are always in the process of constructing their identity like adolescents.

Kanga (2016) on the other hand, conducted a case study on telenovelas and the social life of university students. The research sought to examine which practices (attitudes, conduct/manners, and dressing patterns) telenovelas viewing cultivates in undergraduate university students and also to investigate what motivates university students to watch telenovelas. The results of the study indicated that telenovelas are indeed popular amongst undergraduate university students. Undergraduate university students watch telenovelas because of entertainment purposes and to seek educational information. Also, female respondents proved to be ardent viewers of telenovelas as compare to males. Consequently, females showed more enthusiasm towards the discussion than the males.

Also, male respondents gave several reasons which include the fact that telenovelas are more appealing to females than it is to them. For instance, “When we watch such programs, we learn a lot about life, some of the episodes sometimes play out real life situations in these

telenovelas, you will realize that good always triumph over evil and that is a good moral lesson that we learn from them”. Again, the practices that university students cultivate from viewing telenovelas is that it provides new attitudes towards society since specific personal norms are learnt and adopted from these television programmes especially telenovelas. It has been used as tools to shape behavior or attitudes in several countries around the world including Brazil the home of telenovelas.

Asiamah (2017) also did an ethnographic study of audience viewing of the telenovela- Kumkum Bhagya to investigate the culture that surrounds the immediate viewing of the telenovela. The study reveals that viewers of Kumkum Bhagya cut across various classes on the social ladder reiterating the assertion that, in Africa, everyone irrespective of their sex, age, religion, or ethnicity patronizes popular culture. Also, the findings of the study grouped into pre-viewing culture, viewing culture and post-viewing culture revealed that the culture that surround the viewing of Kumkum Bhagya are made of planned and unplanned activities which are all geared towards a successful telenovela viewing at the selected sites.

Although Kanga (2016) and Asiamah (2017) acknowledge that studies can also look at how gender issues are portrayed in telenovelas. This study thus, seeks to critically analyze the various kinds of gender issues portrayed in the telenovelas-*Saraswatichandra* using a multi-theoretical framework and qualitative content analysis methodology.

1.3 Purpose of the study

This study therefore seeks evidence to analyze the various kinds of gender issues portrayed in the telenovela, *Saraswatichandra*: the perspectives of viewers in Accra.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the study include the following:

1. To analyze the various kinds of gender issues portrayed in the telenovela-
Saraswatichandra.
2. To investigate the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender in the telenovela.
3. To investigate how the portrayal of gender issues in the telenovela *Saraswatichandra* reinforces or contradicts existing perspectives in the society.

1.5. Research Questions

To accomplish the stated objectives, the following questions need to be considered:

1. What are the various kinds of gender issues that are portrayed in the telenovela-
Saraswatichandra?
2. What are the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender in the telenovela?
3. How does the portrayal of gender in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* reinforces or contradicts existing perspectives in the society?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The role of the media is to educate, inform, persuade and entertain. It is therefore prudent to investigate the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender in these foreign serials, particularly the views of women and children so as to make an informed decision on the production of telenovelas. The study will also pave the way for further studies to be conducted in the area of gender and telenovelas.

Again, the study seeks to investigate how the portrayal of gender in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* influences the behavior of viewers either negatively or positively so as to aid the National Media Commission to regulate the telecast of these programs.

Academically, the research findings and recommendations will provide empirical evidence, contributions and add up new information, perspectives and knowledge to the existing literature on the comprehension of telenovelas and their relevance in Ghana.

1.7 Scope of the study

This research seeks to investigate the various kinds of gender issues portrayed in telenovelas; particularly Adom TV, *Saraswatichandra*. It also seeks to investigate the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* in the telenovela. The study is limited to viewers of *Saraswatichandra* selected from Greater Accra Region of Ghana because they spend a lot of time watching the telenovela and are also knowledgeable in the serial. Bubiashie was chosen for the research because of its physical location and proximity to the researcher.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This thesis is presented in five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study with background information to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives and questions. It also outlines the significance of the study, and the organization of the study. Chapter two presents reviews of related literature relevant on study. It also discusses the empirical studies and outlines the theoretical framework of the study and operational definitions of terms.

Chapter three encompasses the methodology and techniques used for the collection of data for interpretations and analysis. The chapter also comprise of the research approach,

research design, sample size and sampling strategy, data collection method, data collection processes and data analysis, ethical consideration, trustworthiness and credibility.

Chapter four presents the findings and discussions of the study. It discusses the emerge clusters that came up during the coding process along with the theories and concepts in chapter two to explain them.

Finally, the fifth chapter comprise of the summary, conclusions from the findings and makes recommendations for further researches.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The media is seen as a powerful medium which influences and changes our attitudes, opinions and behavior about what we see, feel and hear (Busumbru, 2013). Also, the content of programs shown on the media always has an effect on the society either negatively or positively particularly women and children since they spend lots of time watching these serials (Antwi et. al., 2015). The programs on television both print media and electronic, enforces a great impact on the beliefs and knowledge of the youth out of which they make ideas and act upon (Wambua, 2014). This chapter two encompasses of related literature reviews on all existing and documented literature that are relevant to the research topic. The chapter further presents the theoretical framework that underpinned the study and their relevance to the research work.

2.1 Evolution of Telenovelas

Telenovela is very popular among Spanish broadcasters and its success is partly because of the large sums of money invested in production and television infrastructure (Wambua, 2014). In the 1930s, the word telenovela which was known as soap opera was coined by the American press to represent extraordinary popular genre of serialized domestic radio dramas. In the last decade radio serialized dramas ruled the airwaves (Bsumbru, 2013). In the 1940s the production of telenovela in Latin America was a screen adaptation of radio dramas originating from Cuba. The on-screen adaptation used to run for three to six months showing generally five to six days a week. A classic example of such production is Esmeralda, a 1997 peruvian production (La Pastina, 1999).

According to Wambua (2014) telenovelas have their root in Latin America, starting as graphic novel representations of classic literature and stories, and then later evolving into radionovelas. It also establishes a great deal of the whole television production and attracts more viewers than any other form of programming in Latin America. Even though U.S. telenovelas are disseminated widely around the world, there is wider global circulation of soaps made in others countries, particularly Brazil and most of all Latin America. In addition, the great exporters of telenovelas are U.K. and Australia as well. A study by La Pastina Straubhaar (2005) said one of the most striking demonstrations of the popularity of soap television was the serialization of the Hindu religious epic Ramanyan broadcast in Indian in 1987 to 1988. Additionally, radio and telenovelas programs were commercially sponsored by the manufactures of the household cleaning products. Similarly, telenovelas represent 90% of all commercially sponsored daytime broadcast hours in 1940 and originally, telenovelas were used to be broadcast live from the studio (Busumbru, 2013).

During the 1990s action, the mob and adventure stories fell out with producers due to declining ratings for daytime telenovelas at that time. Historically, telenovelas were first produced in Brazil, and the country is still the most important producer of telenovelas ahead of such countries like Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina and Colombia (Busumbru, 2013).

Perreau (1999) asserts that telenovelas were produced by Globo in a place known as Projac, where six of telenovelas can be shot at the time, in six different studios. Normally telenovelas vary from 180 up to 240 episodes, but sometimes specific telenovelas may be extended for a longer period due to successful ratings. In the late 1950s the first telenovelas were produced in Brazil, they have been recorded the most popular fictional television programs in the country.

Slade and Beckenham (2005) propose that the realization of this genre is because the melodramatic and entertainment nature of telenovela is specific to the Latin American culture. In the Spanish speaking world (Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela) telenovelas have a wider appeal because the masses can identify and relate with the characters, storylines and melodrama in telenovelas. Therefore, they offer the people opportunities of self-recognition in a manner that serial literature, radio and film could not. Telenovelas appeal is beyond continental or national boundaries. In the last two decades, they have evolved from national products to transnational exports, challenging Hollywood's exports in certain regional markets (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2003).

2.2 Evolution of telenovelas in Ghana

In the last decade telenovelas have dominated primetime programming in the Ghanaian television stations (Adia, 2014). La Pastina, Rego and Straubhaar (2003) posit that telenovelas are designed to attract a wide viewing audience particularly women, men and children. These stories can act as an instrument in the construction and reconstruction of viewers' personal identity and self-esteem (Adia, 2014). For several years now, the uses and gratification people have for watching television differ since the world now moves into a more technological paradigm. Again, Hamburger and Almeida (2001) said telenovelas originally were categorized as women' programmes. They usually had a predominantly female audience, even though prime-time soaps and telenovelas such as Dallas (U.S) were intended at a broader viewer which comprised about at least 30% males (Ahmed, 2012).

According to Antwi et. al., (2015) telenovela emerged in Ghana in the mid-nineties precisely in 1996 when the first Brazilian telenovela titled *Escrava Esaura* (Esmeralda) was shown in Ghana on the national broadcaster (GTV). Later, another serial like *The Bold and the*

Beautiful, Acapulco bay, Cuandos Sias Mia, the Promise, Timeless, Storm over Paradise, Hidden passion and Maricruz were also showed in other television channels in Ghana. This telenovela was produced and released by Televisa in 1997, and it was premiered in Ghana. It has become a norm for almost every single television station in the country to have a spot for that serial telecast. According to Jiwaji (2010) daytime serials concentrated on secret relationships, genuine love, extramarital affairs, legal drama, romance, family and marital discord. Also, telenovelas began to incorporate action and adventure storylines in a more intriguing and youthful romance in the 1980s. It also focused on evolving super couples and importance was placed on romance. Additionally, telenovelas also have a detrimental effect upon audiences by suppressing the local cultures and imposing upon them foreign cultures.

Sinclair (1999) said telenovelas and soaps have attracted massive viewership in more than 128 countries such as Europe, Middle East, North America and Africa. The situation is not different in Ghana, even though Ghanaian do not have any socio-cultural relationship with these telenovelas producing countries yet they have been importing and airing this Latin America, Chinese and India telenovelas (Asiamah, 2017).

2.3 Studies on Gender

Krugler (2017) conducted a research to examine how gender has influenced the experiences of a selected group of women in leadership roles in public relations. The feminist standpoint theory underpinned this study. The researcher used interviews to collect data relevant to the study. This study found that gender has influenced the experiences of a selected group of women leaders in public relations in a variety of ways, such as salary, pressure of stereotypes, promotional barriers, leadership styles and expectations. The study also revealed that, women think that gender has influenced the challenges and success they have

faced in their careers. Most of the participants of the study described their challenges as promotional barriers as well as inequalities in salary and representation in leadership roles. Again, the study indicated that women thought they are perceived as leaders both in a positive or negative light and think a double standard exists between men and women leaders. Finally, the study revealed an issue with female competition in the form of workplace bullying and a shift in the field of public relations regarding gender issues, which they thought would benefit women.

In a similar vein, Annya (2013) also conducted a project work on the impact of gender roles and cultural dynamics in the work of global to local's Community Health Promoters (CHPs). Interviews were used by the researcher to gather data relevant to the study. The research found that gender roles and culture significantly impact the CHPs' work. The study further indicated that gender roles, culture and even religion can impact the way CHPs deliver programs to their community. Also, CHPs adapt certain programs to be gender and culturally appropriate for their community such as incorporating better forms of traditional foods. The findings also suggested that only women attend the programs due to traditional cultural and gender roles present within the community: women as the primary caretakers of the children and men as the breadwinner of the family.

2.4 Kinds of gender issues

According to the study by UNESCO (2003), in Ghana, Tanzania, Guinea and Ethiopia the muting of women in the society leads to the inability of women to express themselves fluently in the male parlance. Therefore, women monitor their own communication more intensely because they are less comfortable and less expressive in public situations than men. Traditionally, people believe that the responsibility of the women is taking care of the

children, cooking food, cleaning the house, fetching water and firewood, while men are supposed to go to work and provide for the family. Similarly, men are empowered to be in control and in charge, which plays a very important role in the society and how it is reinforced in the mainstream media, telenovelas.

Again, male characters are depicted to be machismo, their mode of expression is embedded in language, when a man is talking and the wife tries to interrupt him the result might be physical brutality. The use of disrespectful language by male characters in the telenovelas; the use of vulgar language, threaten, blackmails, warning and harassments; and even the time allotted for these negative values is more than the positive ones. This illustrates the fact that male characters have more capability and power than women characters (Svenkemd & Suruchi, 1999).

Crespi (2004) on the other hand said people are molded by society, it is society that determines how we should be, and teaching us what is appropriate and inappropriate for both boys and girls, through gender roles. In a similar vein, women are seen as more communal while men are considered as more agentic and influential. Also, gender beliefs propose that men have greater status and are more knowledgeable and competent at things that count than women (Conway, 1996). According to Aldoory and Toth (2002) women are normally assigned to cover topics such as family, food, fashion, relationship, girl child education and women empowerment while men more center on political issues and finance that are assumed to be masculine field.

Rojahn and Willemsen (1994) affirm that “Men are believed to be more self-assertive and motivated to master their environment while women are believed to be more selfless and concerned with others” (p. 110). In a similar way, Harper and Hirokawa (1988) also talk

about how women tend to display traits of nurturance and open-mindedness while men on the other hand normally show traits of assertiveness and power.

In a study by Crespi (2004) women are portrayed as irrational, submissive, loving, nurturing, home-maker, passive, quiet and need to be saved, supported, protected by the man because they are helpless while men on the other hand are portrayed as active, strong, rational, decision-maker, aggressive and providing for the family. Again, men are known to be in the public which is reinforced by maintaining a job that relate to the outside world and are known to be the breadwinner of the family while women are confined to the private sphere performing tasks that they do inside the household which include being a maid or nanny. This reinforces the status quo that women should have domestic roles that deal with cleaning and being a provider for the children.

Again, women characters are portrayed in telenovelas to be sexually objectified to demand respect and power. The underlying nature of ideal women and beauty is not the same as telenovelas. Men are mostly covered and wearing suit meaning that they do not have to bare any skin in order to demand respect, control, power, status or dominance but women on the other hand are portrayed to cover up to show their “innocence” as well as other parts that are more suggestive. These illustrate how gender roles are displayed both in society and in telenovelas (Busumbru, 2013).

2.5 Studies on Telenovelas in Ghana

Adia (2014) conducted a research on the perception of viewers on telenovelas in an attempt to identify the actual elements there in which attract such large viewership and why the Ghanaian television stations had rapidly shifted from traditional drama to telenovelas. The

cultivation theory and the uses and gratification theory underpinned this study. The researcher used participant observation and interviews to collect data for the study. The researcher conducted participant observation and also witnessed and understudied why and how themes related to telenovelas were spontaneously shown by viewers in a normal circumstance. The studies revealed that viewers were receptive to the theme of love which was the dominant theme in the telenovelas. Again, the result proposed that telenovelas were a great time to de-stress, relax, and escapes from the pressures of everyday life.

Busumbru (2013) also conducted a case study on the youth of Bread of Life Methodist Church in Dansoman Exhibition to know “why young women enjoy watching telenovela”. The study proved that they enjoy it because of what they learn from it: the moral lessons, lifestyles, and new trends of fashion. Also, majority of them claimed it has an impact on their lives and for that reason they will keep on watching it. They also enjoy watching it because they want to relate the stories with their relationships because it teaches them how to live with people for pleasure; to get information; and, because they meet their expectations for new ideas.

Donkor (2013) adopted quantitative survey to evaluate the effect of television serials like telenovelas on teenagers in Madina. The study concluded that the viewing of the various television serials like telenovelas slightly affected how teenagers dress, speak and behave and that the cultivation theory about heavy and light viewers may not work in every culture and situation. Her study was particularly interested in teenagers and how they negotiated meanings in popular television serials and how they were also impacted by the contents of such programming. Also, the study believed that the predominance of foreign content and

culture in the serials that Ghanaian teenagers were being exposed to could lead to the adoption of some foreign behaviour which may not be culturally conducive or acceptable.

2.6 Studies on Telenovelas in Other Countries

Khadidia (2007) conducted an ethnography study on the in Bouake (Cote d'Ivoire) and Bamako (Mali). The cultivation theory underpinned this study. The researcher employed participant observation and interviews to gather data relevant to the study. Through interviews and participant observation, the researcher appraised the level of understanding and appreciation of the telenovelas by illiterate and literate female viewers. The researcher also observed the photo albums belonging to hairdressers and tailors in order to check if overtime clothing or hairstyles designs were similar to those exhibited in the telenovelas.

The results revealed that the telenovelas were visually and linguistically understandably to viewers, whether illiterate or educated ones. Again, viewers who are illiterate sometimes decode the images to help them make interpretation of meanings. Audience usually learnt a great deal from the happenings, characters and events in the telenovelas and imbibed these in their own daily lives, especially in the realm of gender relationships. Again, telenovelas influenced women's external appearance, hairstyle and clothing. They were also sources of inspiration for periodic changes in fashion and even behaviour.

Morales and Simoelio (2015) also analyzed the consumption of telenovelas by Latin American residents in Spain. The research tested the hypothesis that telenovelas were a way of constructing identities especially in communities that have immigrated to other countries. The theory that underpinned this study is the cultural relativism. The survey involved five demographic questions and twenty-one related questions to the consumption of telenovelas. The outcomes confirmed the hypothesis that culture and identity reasons were fundamental

in conditioning viewers' preferences for serials. The cultural motives were fundamentally due to nostalgia and proximity to their country, their culture and their favorite actors. Finally, the preference for cultural components were ignited over the isolation of immigrants and their need for factors that bring them closer to their roots, whether textual or visual.

Similarly, Werner (2006) also conducted a study on how Senegalese women received and consumed Latin American telenovelas. The uses and gratification theory underpinned this research. The researcher designed an ethnographic study to investigate how telenovelas may be influencing feminine identity dynamics. The description and analysis of the phenomenon were based on data collected from women in the suburbs of Dakar during the first six months of 2002. The research applied a threefold fieldwork process. Also, the researcher first obtained a detailed knowledge of the storyline by watching the different telenovelas which were being broadcast on Senegalese television. Further, the researcher also became a participant observer in several households, which include observing, listening, what people said before, during and after the broadcasting of the telenovelas. Finally, the researcher conducted detailed interviews with non-representative sample of twenty telenovelas viewers. The study indicated that the reception of telenovelas occurred inside the household, hence modifying the balance between public and private spheres.

2.7 Audience perspectives on the existence of telenovelas

From time immemorial, varying perspectives have surrounded the concept of telenovelas because of the different socio-cultural similarity and the detrimental effect upon audiences by suppressing the local cultures and there by imposing upon them foreign cultures. Telenovelas gratify viewers; they also comprise of “storylines that comment directly on contemporary events and viewers are glued to the set across social classes. It also conveys

widely-received prominent messages, which have the potential to shape the life of people (Mante, 2016).

Perreau (1999) avers that, telenovelas have been the most popular fictional programs aired in most of the television stations, hence the media houses should find a way of reducing the number of serials been aired in a day and the duration showed on the television. The media is seen as a powerful medium that projects the minds of people and also able to change the attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of people through what is being aired on the television stations. Since the introduction of telenovelas most audience spend much time watching programs on the television stations, so therefore the media houses can find a way of educating and encouraging viewers through the programs they aired and also add more educational programs on their networks rather than entertaining ones. Again, telenovelas are a culturally significant television genre that exerts a great deal of influence on real life. They are important to study because they have large audiences and thus are able to convey their messages broadly. The audiences have power through their consumption and feedback (Perreau, 1999).

Consequently, audiences gave different perspectives for patronizing telenovelas. For instance, viewers watch telenovelas to acquire information about life, identify with the characters since they served as role models, it also enabled them to understand themselves better and to give a sense of belonging. Moreover, viewers perceived the telenovelas as real and a true representation of the society (Asante, 2006).

They have the ability to create meanings that people can relate to the values specific to their country and people are attracted to them because the stories are effective in depicting the social, religious, economic and political issues people experience on everyday basis. The

plot, characters, and historical background act as a frame for the cultural issues and impact on how the audiences respond. The popularity of the genre is due to the intimate relationship between the viewers and the telenovelas. This is reflected in many genres that focus on just education or enjoyment, audiences are able to critique the issues displayed on-screens which lead to viewers connecting with telenovelas (Asante, 2006).

Littlejohn and Foss (2011) are of the view that, there are basically two forms of television viewers- the heavy viewers (people who watch television more than four hours in a day) and the light viewers (people who watch television less than four hours in a day). Also, heavy viewers are more likely to be influenced by the content of television programmes than light viewers (Little & Foss, 2011).

Similarly, Alhassan (2012) said television as a window to an alien world allows them to become aware of their social relations and want them transformed. Media messages influence audiences' thoughts, perceptions, and behaviors and therefore in their television consumption choices, some viewers seek knowledge and acquire information about specific issues while others simply want entertainment or fashion. Also, television program is a means to spread information and messages across the country that is fractured by enormous social inequalities. Telenovelas are educative and informative for viewers. For example, it is a way for viewers to imbue their lives with fictions, fantasy and images and it also inspire viewers to reflect on the ways in which social conflicts were apparently, produced and resolved (Mante, 2016).

Ampofo (2009) said telenovelas also reinforced what viewers expected in their relationships and education in terms of language, vocabulary, cultural exposure, fashion and shaping the lives of individual. Also, audience are of the view that telenovelas portrayed issues such as

violence, obscenity, wrong cultural exposure, bad dressing and the use of strong language as negative impact on the youth and society as a whole. On the other hand, Feilitzen (2004) said majority of viewers are influenced by the luxury, uncommon love, mischievous acts and dressing exhibited in telenovelas. Soap operas have been accused of having negative impact on their viewers like striving for sensation by seasoning the contents with bad language, promiscuity, promoting exhibitionism and also contributing to a new lifestyle standard that prioritize publicity, glamour, competition and individualism. Audience also used the program to assimilate and interpret the contents of telenovelas and develop their own thematic understandings.

Underwood (2006) affirms that the media have been accused by many people of supporting social indecency by airing inappropriate content in the telenovelas therefore exposing the youths to a world of unrealistic indulgences which they end up coping. It is said that despite the criticisms that telenovelas have negative influences on their audience, the pleasure that viewers develop for them as well as the passion audience find in watching them is unbelievable (Brown, 1994).

2.8 Distinctions between telenovelas and soap operas

Telenovelas and soap operas have been used interchangeably by different scholars but a major distinction have been made between telenovelas and soap operas by La Pastina & Straubhaar (2003). The word soap operas originated from such dramas being usually sponsored by soap producers in the last decade. The term, “soap” denotes to the soap and detergent advertisements originally broadcast during the shows, which were directed at women who were cleaning their households at the time of viewing or listening, and “opera” refers to the melodramatic character of the shows. Soap operas are long running series

concerned with everyday life which might run for several years before ending, a classic example is Kumkum Bhagya. While telenovelas are a limited run serial drama on television or radio which features related story lines about the lives of multiple characters, usually focusing on emotional relationships and extramarital affairs (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2003).

Ahmed (2012) avers that soap opera are daytime serial narrative originated from Latin America. They are uniquely designed to capture audience attention and loyalty (Bielby & Harrington, 2005). Soap opera is one of the most popular genres of television content. They are essentially serials just as telenovelas. Though, soap opera and telenovela are different forms of serials. Again, serials are either open ended or close ended stories. Soap opera (open-ended) serials are common among producers and writers in Great Britain, United States of America and Australia. Telenovelas (close-ended) on the other hand are serials popularly in the areas such as India, Japan, China and Latin America.

According to Bielby and Harrington (2005) the main difference between telenovela (close-ended) and soap opera (open ended) serial is the presence or absence of narrative closure. From the historical perspective, telenovelas and soap opera are similar however different. Soap opera and telenovela both emerged from radio drama in the 1930s but their success and perpetuation is predicated on dissimilar conditions. The origin of soap opera can be traced in the United States of America; Allen (1985) opines that producers of soaps were motivated by commercial interest. Hence, soap opera was influenced heavily by the economic interest to capture audience attention and to sell this to product manufacturers mainly manufacturers of domestic products. The name of a genre called 'Little Wonder' was closely associated with particular manufacturers of domestic products 'soap'.

According to a study by La Pastina and Straubhaar (2005) the first serial considered to be a “soap opera was “Painted Dreams”, which was premiered on October 20, 1930 on Chicago radio station. Also, soap operas were inspired by the motivation to create audience loyalty and as a result inform, educate and entertain the masses. The main aim of Latin American soap operas was to make national literature popular and available to the masses in the country. In Ghana, several soap operas are broadcast weekly on the Ghanaian television stations. For instance, “Kumkum Bhagya” and “Simply Maria” is one of such soap operas. The first nationally broadcast radio soap opera was Clara which was aired on the NBC Blue Network.

Again, soap operas are daytime serials while telenovelas are usually broadcast daily in primetime and mostly end after 180-200 episodes depending on the popularity (La Pastina, Rego & Straubhaar, 2003). Also, soap operas are either produced from England or America while telenovelas are either produced from Mexico, Brazil, India or Latin America. In this research, telenovelas and soap operas will be used interchangeably because they usually signify the same structure, phenomenon or genre of television programming the only difference is basically associated with how long it shows on television or the country of origin (Mante, 2016).

2.9 Theoretical Framework

A theory is defined as a set of interrelated propositions that present a systematic view of a phenomenon by identifying relationships between concepts (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). Most of interrelated literature reviewed on telenovelas applied the social learning theory by Bandura, Gerber’s cultivation theory, cultural proximity theory and the uses and gratification theory as the basis of their theoretical framework. This current research is

specifically interested in finding how gender is portrayed in the telenovelas from the perspectives of audience of *Saraswatichandra* as well as to investigate how they have been influenced by these gender issues. In this study, the social constructionism theory and gender theory seem to be appropriate theory that would underpin the research.

2.10 Social Constructionism Theory

Social constructionism is a sociological perception of knowledge that considers how social phenomenon of consciousness develops in social contexts. Social construction theory is to discover the methods groups and individuals contribute in the construction of their perceived social reality, and how social phenomena are established, recognized, generated and made into traditions and customs by humans. The world is socially constructed, functions by distributing access to roles and activities in relative to what are considered as relevant social characteristics such as gender, class, and age (Poynton, 1989).

Briamah (2015) said social construction theory influence men and women to behave in ways that conform to the stereotypes of masculinity (aggressive, independent, authoritative and controlling) and femininity (emotional, nurturer, cooperative and dependent). The social construction theory views gender as a social construct rather than a biological given. In other words, gender differentiation lies more in social and institutional practices than in fixed properties of the individual. Again, gender is created and recreated out of human experience and interaction. It is an institutionalized system of social practices for constituting people as two significantly different categories, men and women, and organizing social relations of inequality on the basis of that difference (Ridgeway & Correll, 2004).

Lorber (1994) is of the view that the male-female social construct starts with the assignment to a sex category on the basis of what one's genitalia look like at birth. Once the facts of external genitalia or sex organs of a new born are known, the society begins to put different significances to these facts, significances derived from the specific culture into which the child is born. In that respect individuals are born sexed, not gendered, but society creates the differences in which these two sexes are treated and ultimately see themselves. Again, children are treated differently (from the clothes they should wear to the objects they can play with) on the basis of their sex categorization and they respond to the different treatment by feeling different and behaving differently. Throughout their life's individuals learn what is expected, see what is expected, act and react in expected ways, and thus simultaneously construct and maintain the gender order (Lorber, 1994).

2.11 Gender Theory

Janus (2008) affirm that gender refers to the social constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes a particular society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender is the characteristics of men and women that are socially and culturally determined. For instance, society centers women more on the issues of girl child education and issues related to women while men are in positions on financial and political issues. Zevallos (2014) is of view that gender is described as how society determines and manages sex classifications, the cultural meanings attached to the roles of women and men and how individuals recognize their identity as being a woman or man. She further stated that gender encompasses social norms, attitudes and activities that a particular society considers appropriate for both sexes. Gender is portrayed as a cultural construction, which makes biological and physical differences into socially meaningful classifications that seem reasonable and proper (Nanda

& Warms, 2004). On the other hand, Giri (2004) argued that gender is a thought of as learned behaviour or what culture associates with being female or male; where the concept of an ideal femininity is communicated to females and masculine ideals are communicated to males as well.

Similarly, Grauerholz and Newman (2002) specify that gender is associated with masculinity and femininity and describe sex as a biological classification of male and female. They also said that most people match sex and gender by assuming that if a person is female, she will be feminine but if male, masculine; which is not normally the situation. Significantly, they indicated that considering the difference and affinity of gender and sex helps us realize that male and female behavioral changes do not spontaneously emanate from biological differences but also socially constructed. Therefore, how people treat one another is determined by their beliefs about gender and vice-versa.

Certain people in some families seem to be in commanding positions or have power based on their gender and this is attributed to their beliefs in such families. Consequently, right at birth the destiny of a female child is determined, from the short statement, *“it is a girl” this short statement alone changes everything for the child. This child is treated by everyone in a gendered stereotypical way* (Grauerholz & Newman, 2002).

Although, gender and sex are argued by many scholars to be biologically determined, gender is seen by some researchers like Kessler & Mckenner (1978) and Lorber (1994) as a social construction. However, Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin (1999:191) aver that gender is presented as a structure of relations organized around the sex categories of ‘male and female’ but it does show that the categorization produces different institutionalized and unequal social practices and relations between the two. Additionally, gender is the characteristics of men

and women that are socially and culturally determined by society, For instance, roles, behavior, responsibilities and expectations of men and women.

Kabaji (2005) emphasizes on gender as the most significant component of social identity and cultural classification in human cultures. Particularly, people are known in the society by the role the people play and then based on their sex/biological appearances as male or female. According to Giri (2004) sex refers to the biological make up of an individual who is initially attained at birth or determined by the presence of XX chromosomes for females and XY chromosome pattern for males.

2.12 Relevance of the Theories to the Research

In this contemporary world where different categories of individuals have access to increasingly abundant media environment, social construction and gender have emerged as an important theoretical framework explaining gender as a social construct. Based on this, the theorist of gender and social constructionism theory will enable me uncover how women are portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*. In Ghana, gender research has largely been done within the social sciences, and seems to be mostly marked at enlightening gender advocacy and eliminating gender inequalities.

However, gender is constructed, reproduced and sustained through telenovelas as a key element in the socialization process and we need to appreciate the various ways in which this is done before we can begin to deconstruct gender. The study represents an identification of gender as it emphasizes on society's prescription of roles for women, especially in the area of inequality, sexual harassment and stereotypes (Alhassan, 2012). Many literatures reviewed have argued that women have been restricted to perform certain

roles in relations of equality henceforth, gender theory and social constructionism theory will aid to comprehend how gender are portrayed in the telenovela *Saraswatichandra*.

2.13 Summary

In reviewing the literature or from the literature reviewed, it was concluded that, studies have shown that television as a window to an alien world, allows them to become aware of their social relations and want them transformed. Viewers surf through various television stations to seek specific issues such as knowledge and acquire information, entertainment and new trend of fashion. In Ghana telenovelas has been the most popular fictional programs aired in most of the television stations. It also conveys widely-received prominent messages which have the potential to shape the lives of people. The empirical studies also reveal that Ghanaians patronized foreign serials as compare to local ones.

Also, because of the popularity of foreign serials on the Ghanaian stations, studies have been conducted by different scholars to analyze what motivate people to watch telenovelas and how these issues are incorporated into the daily lives of people. Base on the research objectives, this research is grounded on the gender and social constructionism theory. These theories will help to analyze the various kinds of gender portrayed in the telenovela perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* understudy.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The main aim of the research methodology is to examine how the research is accomplished, the knowledge required, the information needed and how it is collected. This chapter encompasses the method used in carrying out the research. It also comprises of the methodology, research approach, research design, sampling strategy and size, data collection method, as well as the procedure of data analysis. Finally, the chapter explains the method used to collect the data for each of the research questions. It is therefore important to restate the research questions as follows:

1. What are the various kinds of gender issues portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*?
2. What are the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender in the telenovela?
3. How does the portrayal of gender in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* reinforce or contradict existing perspectives in the society?

3.1 Research Approach

Qualitative research approach according to Creswell (2014) is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals ascribe to a social or human problem. He further states that the process of qualitative research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants setting and analyzed inductively, building from particular to general themes and researchers making interpretations of the meaning of data.

The rationale for this approach is that the researcher seeks to study viewers of *Saraswatichandra* in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings and people's life experience in a flexible manner.

In line with Creswell (2014) assertion, the current study involved the researcher going to the field (the natural setting where people gather to watch the telenovela) to collect data and conduct a data analysis which was inductively built from specific clusters or categories attained from individuals. Another justification for the use of qualitative approach stemmed from the lack of adequate research into how gender are portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*, hence the need to use an approach which is more flexible in order to develop data instruments which are both sensitive and responsive to the context of the study and reflects 'insider' accounts. Suffice to say there is still a lack of this preliminary qualitative work in the empirical studies in Ghana on the subject of how gender is portrayed in telenovelas. The conclusion to adopt qualitative research approach therefore, was informed by the need for a research approach that would not only fill the gap of analyzing the various kinds of gender issues portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* but also their perspectives on such portrayal.

Braun and Clarke (2013) postulate that "qualitative researchers seek to understand and interpret more local meanings; recognizes data as collected in a context, sometimes produces knowledge that contributes to more general understandings" (p.4). Due to the characteristics of qualitative research adopted above, this research seeks to investigate the portrayal of gender in the telenovela perspectives of audiences of *Saraswatichandra*. Qualitative research approach is a methodology that provides an "exploration of the quality of experience through the study of meanings and process" (McMichael, 2002, p. 174). The

justification for chosen qualitative approach as the main methodology was to gather first-hand experience and knowledge from viewers of *Saraswatichandra*. Instead, qualitative studies focus on discovering themes and patterns from the data to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena understudied. Qualitative approach is appropriate for this study as it enabled the researcher to delve deep into some of the gender issues for proper analysis.

Similarly, qualitative research is concerned with understanding social practices and meanings of people in a specific historical context (Patton & Cochran, 2007). This means that it is effective in obtaining and gathering specific information about the norms, values and perceptions of a particular people. Per their definition, this research seeks to investigate the perspectives of audience of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender in the telenovela. The viewers of the telenovela are seen as a group who share one common thing at the selected site; henceforth an investigation on their perspectives will help me to gain more insight into their norms, values and general way of life as supported by the researchers.

3.2 Research Design

According to Creswell (2014), research design can be described as a plan, a structure and strategy of guiding a research work. This means that, research design includes the arrangement of conditions for gathering and analyzing data applicable to the researcher in the most efficient way that defines the sampling technique, sample size, the type of data collection method as well as the method of data analysis (Amoani, 2005). Also, the selection of a research design is mostly dependent on the nature of the research problem, the researcher's personal experiences, and the audience for the study (Creswell, 2014). In line

with this explication, the current research adopted qualitative content analysis to help the researcher appreciate meanings and patterns embedded in the telenovela.

Terre Blanche and Durrhein (2002) on the other hand, argued that research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the implementation of the research work. It is also the plan that guides the arrangement of conditions for collection of data and analysis of data in a way that aims to combine the importance of the research work.

3.3 Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis is the intellectual process of categorizing qualitative textual data into clusters of similar entities, or conceptual categories, to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes (Julien, 2008). The purpose of qualitative content analysis is “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p.314). Again, Zhang and Wildemuth (2005) are of the view that qualitative content analysis allows the researcher to appreciate social reality in a subjective yet scientific way by scrutinizing the meanings and patterns that could be latent or manifest in a text.

Qualitative content analysis is one of the research techniques suitable for analyzing visual texts (Hsieh Shannon, 2005). Similarly, Krippendorff (2004) describes content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (p. 18). According, Hsieh and Shannon (2005) qualitative content analysis as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.

Zhang and Wildemuth (2005) acknowledge that qualitative content analysis consists of gathering suitable data and selecting the unit of analysis. The unit of analysis refers to the basic unit of text to be classified during content analysis (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005). Qualitative content analysis was espoused for this study because it allows the appreciation of meanings and patterns embedded in the telenovela *Saraswatichandra*. There were 444 episodes in the telenovela and each episode constituted a unit of analysis for this study. The analyses drawn from the telenovela were as a result of actively watching the series over and over again (two times in all), moving back and forth through the episodes and cluttering the volume of data into core patterns and meanings. There was also a focus on in-depth descriptions of the embedded meanings from the telenovela (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2005).

3.4 Area of the Study

The sampling frame for this research was limited to greater Accra, the capital town of Ghana. Specifically, the study was narrowed down to Bubiashie. First and foremost, Bubiashie was specially chosen for the study because of its physical location and proximity to the researcher and also the convenience of locating viewers of the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* needed for the study. Again, the cosmopolitan nature of the town was perfect since telenovelas is a genre that has gained popularity and recognition across races, religion, gender as well as diverse socio-economic status within the area. Bubiashie is situated in the Okai-koi Sub Metro. According to the Accra Metropolitan Assembly statistics, the population of the community is about 34,568 approximately. It has a people of different tribes, educational background, and religion and socio- economic levels.

3.5 Sampling Strategy

Daymon and Holloway (2011) affirm that ethnographers generally use purposeful sampling strategy. This research strategy was chosen because there is a particular audience to target for the aim of this research. Also, the sample frames for this study are both men and women ranging from the ages of 23 to 45 who are viewers of the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*. Researchers also propose that the underlying principle of gaining rich, in-depth information guides the sampling strategies of qualitative researchers. For instance, whom you select for your study, where and when depends on certain criteria which are determined by the purpose of your study. In tandem with Daymon and Holloway views, I purposively selected informants who are viewers of *Saraswatichandra* and not any other telenovela because they better helped in addressing the issues in relation to the telenovela as explained by Creswell (2014). I also used purposive sampling for this research because I wanted to know the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender and how these portrayals of gender in the telenovela reinforce or contradict existing perspectives in the society.

Jack (2008) also contend that convenience is a core for qualitative research hence the need to employ purposive sampling for the purposes of this study. This study employed purposive sampling strategy because the sites presented themselves easily accessible in terms of its physical location and proximity, as well as the readiness of the social actors to participate, especially during the exploratory stages of negotiating access to the sites. Wimmer and Dominick (2013) purport that purposive sampling includes subjects or data that are selected for possessing specific features that are in line with the study. In line with this assertion, Oliver (2006) also describes purposive sampling as a form of non-probability sampling in

which decisions concerning individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based on a variety of criteria which may include participants' knowledge of the research and readiness to participate in the research.

Bernard (2002) posits that purposive sampling involves the researcher deciding what needs to be known and setting out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. In line with this, Purposive sampling method was employed because I purposively set out to find what the study demanded and which people were best and ready to provide information by virtue of their knowledge and experience. There are two main sampling units for the current research- the people and the site.

3.6 Sampling Size

Sampling is a process of selecting a sufficient number of elements called sample from a given population in such a way that by studying the sample, and by understanding the characteristics of the sample subjects, it would be possible to generalize the properties of the population (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001). There are two types of sampling, probability sampling and the non-probability sampling. This study employed the purposive sampling method to draw 30 respondents from the population. According to Fischler (2013), explain the sample size as the subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for the purpose of making generalization about the target population. Normally, this denotes the number of units that were chosen from which data were collected. The sampling size of 30 was derived from the population.

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) opined that sample size is the “terra incognita” of qualitative sampling strategy. Therefore, “there is no test that exists to tell the researcher when the

sample is big enough or small” (p. 129). Adler and Adler (2011) also aver that a sample size should be between 12 and 60. In line with this explication, 30 informants from the two selected sites were used for this research paper. The 30 informants comprise of 20 women between the ages of 23 to 45 and 10 men between 23 to 45 years were selected with their permission. These informants have different backgrounds in terms of their religion and educational background. Also, the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* was chosen because it has received a large number of audiences and was adopted predominately in the indigenous Language-Twi.

3.7 Unit of Analysis

One of the procedures in content analysis is the selection and classification of a unit of analysis (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). In their view, the unit of analysis is the smallest however the most essential component in content analysis. In line with the above statement, I chose serials that reflected how gender is portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*. The data are then coded categorized into preconceived or inductively generated code categories. The unit of analysis was precisely an episode. The coding covers a total number of 444 episodes in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* sampled within the period of four-month.

3.8 Data Collection Methods

The data collection methods for the qualitative phase were document analysis, interviews, and focus group discussions employed by the researcher in conducting the study to ensure that the data collected can be relied on to give better understandings. Most of the participants availed themselves for the interview, after the interaction with the researcher, the purposes of the study were clarified to the respondents in details.

On the other hand, social actors presented themselves for the interviews at an agreed time, date and venue. One-on-one in-depth interviews were used so that the researcher could deeply explore the objectives of the study. It also enabled the researcher to probe deeply the responses of the interviewees. In interviews, the purpose is to allow participants to share their idea through stories, experiences and perspectives on the phenomenon under study. The data collected for this research work lasted over a period of eight months spanning June 2019 to April 2020.

3.8.1 Document Analysis

Document does not only contain words. A document can also have images, online news article, audios, advertisement, videos, photographs and motions images that have been recorded without researcher's intervention (Bowen, 2009). This research therefore, employed document analysis as one of the data collection method to thoroughly analyze the various kinds of gender portrayed in the serial *Saraswaticandra*. Document analysis according to Corbin and Strauss (2008) requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge about the study. It is also a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both electronic and printed material. Atkinson and Coffey (1997) also refer to documents as 'social facts', which are produced, shared, and used in socially organized ways (p. 47). Bowen (2009) on the other hand is of the view that, as part of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning to a phenomenon of the study.

Drawing from Bowen's (2009) assertion, it is clear that documents are at the centre of the analysis while Daymon and Holloway (2011) explicate that documents entail words and

images that have been recorded without interference of the researcher. The above explication spells out the forms that documents come in, whether printed, sound based, visual content, written and other digital forms and how the researcher has no influence on how these contents are produced preceding the research.

According to Daymon and Holloway (2011) document analysis is an analytical process which entails finding, selecting, appraising and synthesizing the data contained in the document into categories or themes. Analyzing document is a useful technique because of its unremarkable and non-reactive nature. These make the document naturalistic and also possess a built-in level of genuineness (Leavy, 2014). This current study adopted the analytical process supported by Daymon and Holloway (2011) which requires making sense of and producing rich descriptions from the meanings acquired from the telenovela- *Saraswatichandra*. In line with the statement by Leavy (2014), regarding the unobtrusive and non-reactive nature of the document *Saraswatichandra*, it makes the document under study possess a naturally built-in level of authenticity.

3.8.2 Interviews

Interview is another data collection method that was used to collect data for the research. The researcher used interviews basically to gather responses for the research questions two and three which inquired about the justification that the informants gave as their perspectives on the portrayal of gender in the telenovela and whether these issues reinforces or contradict existing perspectives in the society. The researcher also used interviews to serve as a means to explore the views, experiences, beliefs and motivations of individuals on specific matters and it also help me to get a ‘deeper’ understanding of social phenomena.

According to Merriam (2009), “interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feeling and how people interpret the world around them” (P.88). Also, Patton (2002) avers that interviews, “allow us to enter into the other person’s perspectives” (P.134). Interviews are appropriate approach when trying to look for meaning and understand the experiences of others. The justification behind this is that, the purpose of interviews is to understand someone else’s meaning and experiences and the purpose of this research was to understand how gender influenced their viewers in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*.

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) posit that qualitative interview involves a situation where one person who is known as the interviewer encourages others (interviewees) to talk about their interest and experiences without any kind of restraint. Per the above explanation, the act of interviewing therefore involves the asking of questions and the listening of reactions and responses from people who fell what they know, feel and believe. The rationale behind this method is that, the researcher engages in interviews because it helps to better understand the social actors’ (interviewees) experiences and perspectives on the phenomenon under study and also to get a deeper understanding of the social phenomena.

3.8.3 Focus Group Discussions

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) aver that though focus group discussion is a form of interview, it has become a stand-alone data collection method by itself. Bore (2012) employed focus group discussions to investigate audience engagement with television comedy in Britain and Norway. She further stated that focus group is very good in television studies. Handcock et al. (2009) on the other hand see focus group discussion as an instrument that resembles interviews in a way. Using Bore’s (2012) statement as a framework, I adopted focus group discussion as a data collection method since telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* is a television

programme to know their perspectives about the portrayal of gender in the telenovela. In addition, the researcher used focus group discussion because within a group context, members are stimulated by the ideas and experiences expressed by each other and thus what occurs is a kind of “chaining or “cascading effect” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002: p. 182) which helps to enrich the researcher’s data collection.

Similarly, focus group discussions involve serials of dialogues between the researcher and the target audience and also among the audience themselves. It allows for a more extensive and in-depth narration of experiences and sharing of information about the issues under study. Again, focus group discussion is a research data collection method that encompasses a small group about three to eight people who are drawn together for an in-depth discussion on a particular issue (Fawole et al., 2006).

3.8.4 Data Collection Processes

Data collection processes looks at the means through which the researcher utilizes a number of data collection tools to gather data for the study. The research seeks to analyze the various kinds of gender portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*, the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender in the telenovela and how the portrayal of gender in the telenovela influenced the viewers of *Saraswatichandra*. The researcher always watches the series from Monday to Friday, spending an hour each for the times in the day for the period of the study. Document analysis was employed as one of the data collection methods so as to make sense of the virtual world to analyze the various kinds of gender portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*.

According to O’ Leary (2014) point of view there are two procedures when conducting document analysis. The first one is the interview procedure. This procedure requires the

researcher considering the document like an informant that provides the researcher with appropriate information (O' Leary, 2014). The second procedure is by observing occurrences within a text. This procedure requires the researcher analyzing the data inductively building from particular to general, core occurrences within the text (O' Leary, 2014). This procedure requires coding and category construction (Bowen, 2009; Creswell, 2014; O' Leary, 2014). For the purpose of this study and to ensure the authenticity of the document, the telenovela- *Saraswathichandra* was watched episode by episode in order to gain understanding and knowledge to answer my research question one. Also, to avoid distractions and interruption by others, I always watched the serials in my room alone. This is affirming O' Leary's (2014) procedure of treating a document like an informant and asking questions that benefit the researcher.

Whenever, I am watching the serial, I always had a note book where I jot down the patterns in the telenovela that were important to the study and sometimes simultaneously record the most relevant part for further studies. All the edited information from the telenovela will be typed later with Microsoft Office Word on the laptop and converted the Word documents into PDF files to prevent changes from being made to the data mistakenly. The documents were then printed and analyze. This is in line with Altheide and Schneider's (2013) assertion of saving the data retrieved for later study since it can be more easily searched and a more secure way of reviewing data because you can refer to it at any point in time.

Again, I skimmed through the document and later read it closely putting down descriptive information relevant to my work in order to get a general understanding of the data. I began coding, after having a full grasp of the information that were espoused in the data and came up with some thematic themes. These thematic categories include: gender inequality,

gender stereotype, sexual harassment and machismo. The rest of the data were coded based on the codes that emerged from the data. I kept notes on patterns, insights, ideas and connections that occur to me as I read and reread through the data (Benaquisto & Given, 2008). The notes helped me to keep track of the emergent definitions of codes and their distinctive criteria. This is also affirming O' Leary (2014) second procedure where the researcher organizes the data using coding and category construction.

I employed interviews in order to explore the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender in the telenovela. Interviews were conducted during the period June 2019 to May 2020. Prior to the interviews, some of the participants received via email the interview guide to help them prep for the interviews, and in addition a consent form with information concerning the research was also sent out. Also, face- to face interviews was conducted, except two social actors who were interviewed over the telephone. Most of the interviews took place in a convenient setting for the participants to avoid interferences and also to make the interviewee feel comfortable or relaxed. Again, the interview usually lasted about 20 to 25 minutes to provide enough time to cover all of the interview questions and also to give participants the opportunity to elaborate in detail.

Additionally, interviews were recorded with participants' permission and a set of semi-structured and follow-up questions were adapted to each of the response, all interview questions were established to guide the discussion between the researcher and the social actors. During interviews with key informants, I took notes and simultaneously tape-recorded the interactions. The recordings were transcribed and open coding was also used to find common themes throughout the data. The researcher printed and read all the transcripts over and over to make meaning and sense of the data, marking important ideas with

different colored pens. Subsequently, the initial round of open coding, the data was reviewed again to ascertain the missing information and improper responses before grouping similar ideas. Again, the researcher used index cards to find significant ideas from the printed transcripts. Afterwards, axial coding was also used to generate themes for the groupings of similar entities (Merriam, 2009). The researcher continued to sort out the hundreds of index cards into themes based on common ideas and continued to reorganize the cards until the strongest themes were identified.

Finally, the researcher grouped the dominant themes together to tell the larger story of the data and also to show the connections among emergent categories (Creswell, 2013). The purpose of using semi-structured questions was to guide the research topics while allowing for flexibility in answers, with the hope of facilitating natural conversation (Merriam, 2009). Most of the interviews were conducted in vernacular; Twi (the widely spoken dialect in Ghana) while other interviews were done in English language for the participants who are knowledgeable and had a good command in the English language. The data was recorded, stored in a secure space transcribed and translated into the local language by some faculty members from Ajumako, both fluent in the local and English language, and was again reviewed for accuracy by a professional translator from the Faculty of Ghanaian Languages Ajumako.

Three focus groups were formed comprising of ten members each who follow Smithson's (2000) view that focus group discussions must comprise a moderate size six to ten participants. The discussions normally lasted for about 25 to 30 minutes long. The place and time of the discussions was usually determined by the participants, we normally sit in a circular form so that we can easily see each other and I always put my recorder at the middle

and asked them to speak loudly and one after the other so that everything can be recorded. The rationale behind this arrangement was to help create a rapport with social actors and also helped in putting them at ease. Every group comprised informants from similar background in terms of education and so on. These give the social actors the opportunity to express themselves eloquently without feeling intimidated by anyone.

The first group comprised six females and four males while the second group consisted of six females and five males and the third group comprised of one male and eight females. The researcher was the mediator or facilitator for the group discussion and I began by introducing myself to the group members and the purpose for the meeting. I provided guidelines on how the discussion was going to be and also gave them numbers for each group for easily identification since members were not comfortable with their names being mentioned. Demographical information about the informants was taken. These methods were used in order to facilitate a better understanding, interpretation and analysis of the phenomenon understudied.

3.9 Data Analysis

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002) data analysis is the process of labeling and breaking down raw data and reconstituting them into themes, patterns, propositions and concepts. Based on the above explanation, the method of data analysis was done in order to identify themes and patterns from the data collected. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes or patterns within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in rich detail (Braun & Clark, 2013). The inductive type of thematic data analysis where the researcher does not try to fit the data into any form of preconceived analysis or pre-existing coding categories (Braun and Clark, 2006) was used for this study.

In this study, the data collected were analyzed with the purpose of identifying and reporting the trends and patterns that run throughout the data as indicated by Braun and Clark (2013).

The key quotes were highlighted, coded electronically and sorted into themes. All the themes emerged from the data but not predetermined or imposed by the researcher. The analysis brings to bare different kinds of gender issues portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*. In responding to research question one which sought to analyze the various kinds of gender issues portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*. The data analysis process commenced with assembling all the data from the episodes related to how gender is portrayed in the telenovela.

The first research question was more inclined towards portraying issues like gender inequality, gender stereotype, sexual harassment and machismo respectively. This is in line with this opinion expressed by Creswell (2014) which indicates that in analyzing data, the researcher needs to winnow the information gathered. The outcome of this process is to aggregate data into small number of themes.

According to Bertelsen (2005), bracketing involves the researcher creating a distance from previously held assumptions or theories and basing interpretations solely on immediate insight into the phenomenon themselves. In line with this assertion, I always tried to bracket my biases since I am also a viewer of the telenovela in order to come out with a more objective analysis and interpretation of the data so that my biases will not affect the findings of the research study. Accordingly, the interpretations in this study were exclusively on the immediate perception from the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*. As the researcher, I did not transfer any previously held assumption into the findings of this research.

The data collected for RQ2 and RQ3 were also grouped into relevant themes such as: viewers have been sensitized about the red flags that precede sexual harassments, women are mostly portrayed like sexual objects, viewers have been empowered and emboldened to stand up against all forms of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, gender inequality, gender stereotypes and machismo respectively. Excerpts from the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* were also used to support the discussions and analysis.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

According to Jennings (2003) ethics is a branch of philosophy that seeks to address question of morality. Jennings (2003) said morality talk about the standards or beliefs about concepts like good or bad, right or wrong. Bowen (2009) is of the view that, a research study is anticipated to demonstrate objectivity and sensitivity in the selection and analysis of data. Creswell (2014) on the other hand affirms that deception arises when the researcher does not unveil the main aim of the study to the informants. Furthermore, the ethical principles: respect for participants and informed consent, are the foundational principles from which all other ethical considerations cascade down (Vanclay, Baines & Taylor, 2013).

Additionally, Vanclay, Baines and Taylor (2013) note that a research study must be fully unveil all methods and analytical techniques used for the study to enable replication of the research by another researcher; enable peer review of the adequacy and ethicality of the methodology; and to encourage critical self-reflection on the limitation of the methodology and any implications for the results and conclusions. During the study some of the ethical issues that came up had do to with informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and the importance of the interviews. In relation of giving information and seeking of consent, I informed the participants about the main aim of the research study and what will be

expected from them. The formants were given the opportunity to either decline or accept to be part of the interview. The interviews and focus group discussions were recorded with participants' permission. The researcher abided to the principles of this study. It confirmed that all the participants willingly gave their views and that the responses they provided were preserved with high level of confidentiality. There were no enquiries regarding individual's private life.

3.11 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (2000) contend that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness in a research work. Creswell (2014) provides eight validation strategies in testing for the validity in a qualitative research. These processes include triangulation, using member-checking to determine accuracy on the part of participants, using rich and thick descriptions, presenting negative case analysis, spending prolonged time at the research field, using peer debriefing, using external auditors and bracketing of biases. He further states that qualitative researchers should adopt at least two of these strategies in their studies.

Lincoln and Guba (2000) identify four types of triangulation; data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation. Therefore, the present study made use of the methodological triangulation.

3.12 Summary

Chapter three presented the procedure of the research and the method used in the collection of data. The researcher employed a qualitative content analysis to analyze the various kinds of gender portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*. It also highlighted the approach, design; sampling strategy and sampling size suitable for the study and at every point justify

or rationalizes to suit the research. Finally, it discussed the processes used in the data collection method, data analysis in detail and wrapped up with ethical considerations, trustworthiness and credibility.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

The study was conducted about the portrayal of gender in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* in Ghana using triangulation of data collection method or a blend of document analysis, interviews and focus group discussions. This chapter presents the results obtained after analyzing the data obtained from document analysis, interviews and focus group discussion.

From the investigation, the findings revealed the various kinds of gender portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*. The study is guided by the research questions which emerged from the theories and relevant literature underpinning the data collection method. The data were grouped into themes and sub-themes after a qualitative content analysis. This is followed by the discussion of result obtained after data analysis.

To answer research question one, the bulk of the coded data were managed and reduced into categories or themes which represented the entire data. The research questions directing the study are as follows:

1. What are the various kinds of gender that are portrayed in telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*?
2. What are the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender in the telenovela?
3. To investigate how the portrayals of gender in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* reinforce or contradict existing perspectives in the society.

4.1 Demographical Information

This research question one addresses the various kinds of gender portrayed in the telenovela perspective of *Saraswatichandra* in Bubiashie-Accra. In answering research question one, demographical information covered the age, sex, educational background and the religion of the respondent was sought. Out of the thirty respondents, ten (10) were male while twenty (20) were female. However, five (5) of the participants were twenty-four (24) years, twenty (20) were between thirty (30) and thirty-four (34) years whereas six (6) were above forty (40) years.

Also, ten (10) participants had their educational level up to Junior High School level, five (5) had theirs up to the Senior High School level, also, fifteen (15) had theirs up the tertiary level. Lastly, twenty (20) of the respondents were Christians, five (5) were Traditionalists and five (5) were Muslims. The demographics specify that although the figures under the various demographical groups vary, the respondents that participated in the study cut across all the groups (age, sex, religion and educational background). Analysis of the data reveals the following gender issues portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*:

4.1.1 RQ1: What are the various kinds of gender portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*?

The concept gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, abilities and likely behaviors of both women and men (femininity and masculinity) (UNESCO, 2003). The media reinforces gender inequality by emphasizing on women's domestic, sexual, consumer and marital activities to the exclusion of all (Tunstall, 2000). Gender is an issue of social and interpersonal

relationships between male and female, a problem of difference in roles and values, and inequalities in opportunities, access to resources and power. The differences and inequalities are firmly embedded in language (Alhassan, 2012). Women represent about half of the population in the world, gender inequalities persist everywhere such as the educational sectors, organizations and even in the household which leads to stagnation of social progress meanwhile, and gender disparities do not favour men always. In recent year's trends in educational achievement show gender reversals in some countries, with women's educational attainment exceeding men's (Ridgeway, 2011).

Additionally, gender refers to how society determines and manages sex categories, the cultural meanings attached to the roles of women and men, and how individual perceive their identity as being a woman, man or other gender positions (Zevallos, 2014). She further stated that gender encompasses social norms, activities and attitudes that a particular society regards proper for men and women. Nanda and Warms (2004) confirms that gender can be portrayed as a cultural construction, which makes physical and biological differences into socially meaningful classifications that seem realistic and applicable. The research question therefore sought to analyze the various kinds of gender portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*. Through coding of 444 episodes in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* revealed the following themes: gender inequality, gender stereotype, sexual harassment and machismo. Using the gender theory, these themes are critically analyzed to explain how gender is portrayed in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*.

4.1.2 Gender inequality

In this work gender inequality outlines the notion of unequal access to resources and opportunities including economic participation and decision-making or the situation where there is no equal distribution of sources such as power, roles and decision making between men and women in the society. In Ghana, societies display numerous complementarities among men and women's roles. Men as a cluster enjoy more power, rights and privileges than women. Certainly, in many cases in Ghana, women's power, enjoyment and rights of privileges are tied to men as brothers, fathers and husbands (Ampofo, 2014). Many women in Ghana suffer from greater inequalities than men, not because of some inherent deficiencies but because society is structured in ways that favours men over women. This is an excerpt in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* to support this. For instance,

Mayakye was allowed to go out any time he wants but Rachina on the other hand were not given the opportunity to go out after sun set because she is a woman. Whenever Mayakye and Rachina come back from school, Mayakye always have the opportunity to go out and play and then do his homework while Rachina will have to do all the house chore before doing her homework and by then she is already tired and might not be able to perform well.

Gender inequality were also grouped into various parts: inequality in education, inequality in career role, unequal access to speech, restricted use of clothing and social amenities and inequality when it comes to the implementation of various laws.

4.1.3 Inequality in Education

Unlike their male counterparts, females are not given the same opportunity to educate themselves to the highest level. This is based on the traditional saying that “the woman’s place is in the kitchen.” Women are also seen as vessels used to nurture (breed) children, hence, women are expected to focus on getting married, producing children, taking care of their children/husband and doing household chores like cooking, washing, sweeping, among others.

This was confirmed by Ngulube (2018) that girls are denied access to basic education, decent jobs, and struggle to access health services and is also victims of discrimination. When it comes to the decision-making of essential issues women are sidelined. Therefore, the central argument is that the extremely embedded disparities that affect girls’ and women access to education are a result of intrinsic power relations and gender roles that originate from the male-dominated social and cultural structures. The studies revealed that economic status, cultural structures and geographical settings are factors reinforcing unbalanced gender roles that contribute to the rural women and girls’ limited access to education. It is affirmed that inequalities in education are as a result of the inherent gender roles and power relations in the social and cultural structures of Ghana which originate from the patriarchal system. Drawing from GSS 6, approximately 19.7% of the population in Ghana has never been to school. In general, about 24.3% females have never been to school than males (14.6%). The attendance rate of males is higher than females (GSS, 2014). This is a clear instance that was show case in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*. For example,

Danny and Kusum were children of Laxminandan Vyas but Danny was given the opportunity to go to school to the highest level but Kusum were

not given the same opportunity to educate herself to the highest level because she is a woman. Laxminandan Vyas said to Kusum you are a woman, so there is no need going to the University because you will soon get married, so focus on getting married and producing children.

Due to this statement above, there is the need for people and society as a whole to know that women who are educated contribute to the development of the nation by reducing the population growth as a result of late marriage and fewer children (UNESCO, 2013). The reduction in population makes it easier for nation to address poverty and raise the standard of living. On the contrary, uneducated women marry early and have many children. The most important benefit of education of women results in improved health and financial stability. Accordingly, education help women to have opportunities to have job with a regular income and are more likely to achieve greater autonomy be independent in the household, as well as have decision-making power (United Nation, 2013).

Drawing from UNESCO (2013), education empowers women to overcome discrimination, sexual harassment and an educated woman is more aware of her rights, high self-esteem, has confidence and is more likely to have problem-solving strategies. Consequently, government need to step in and give the affected girls the education they need and a second chance to those who missed out, girls will be denied equal opportunities in work places.

4.1.4 Inequality in Career Role

There is a major source of inequality when it comes to career role, mostly women are put into technical roles rather than managerial roles even if they are put into managerial role they end up performing technical role, because of the belief that “women are not good managers, not tough enough for corporate life, too emotional and would soon have children”

(Cline et al., 1986, p. 6-8). These stereotypes and beliefs were the main reason that women were prevented from obtaining promotions and getting placed into management positions.

In Pakistan, women also have limited chances to acquire an education let alone a professional degree. Because of their educational background, they have limited career opportunities in leadership positions and management as compared to their male counterpart. Women also experience pay gap at their workplaces regardless of their age, race, educational level and occupation in the United States (Kelsey, 2013). For example, *Gunjan wanted to contest for the position of chief but she was not given the opportunity to contest because they perceived it as a masculine affair.*

This finding is confirmed by Krugler (2017) finding that gender has greatly influenced the challenges and success that women face in their career which might impede her chances of climbing the corporate ladder, and it is essential to reveal the dynamics behind it. For instance, women experience inequality in salary, double standard and promotional barriers at their work places. Consequently, Gyllensten and Palmer (2005) reported that institutions that practices gender bias culture where women are employed have lower salaries, lower positions and promotional barriers as compared to men who also have the same work experience and educational background.

4.1.5 Unequal Access to Speech

There is inequality in speech because women are expected to be restrained and to speak with respect especially to men. For instance, in the northern region, women are not supposed to talk back when she is reprimanded by her husband or raise her voice above his voice or argue with him. Even if the husband is beating her, she is expected to kneel and plead for

forgiveness. A woman is expected to respond quickly when her spouse calls her or when he gives her instructions.

In a similar vein, the Akan are of the view that women are not as communicatively competent as compare to men in the juridical genre, they realized that women use precise language strategies that are mostly considered as powerless and indecisive (Alhassan, 2012). They perceive that women frequently use language of politeness such as deferential addressives, indirectness, downtoners and hedging, more than their male colleagues. Again, women's relative silence within the domain of mixed group interaction might be an enactment of their social status which is the vital part of their social norms of communication. This acknowledges the cultural prescription of unequal speaking roles for men and women but does not tell us why this is important.

Though, Ghana shows evidence of addressing gender inequalities, but this success is mainly in the urban areas. The gender equality achievement gap is attributed to the failure of government in addressing the underling systemic challenges and gender policy implementation gaps which directly affect women in the rural areas. Unless these challenges are addressed, women will continue to be marginalized especially women from the North and they will continue to migrate to the South for better economic opportunities, where, unfortunately, they will be exposed to various gender issues such as sexual harassment, stereotypes and so on. Therefore, in order to achieve gender equality across the board, there is the need to actively include men in gender issues, as they are the ones who make the rules in patriarchal societies. In contrast, men do not usually employ these strategies because they view them as an act of powerlessness (Alhassan, 2012).

4.1.6 Restricted use of Clothing and Social Amenities

Traditionally, women are restricted from wearing modern outfits/cloths such as the wearing of trousers, short dresses, among others. Furthermore, in most cultures, women were also discouraged from using various social amenities such as internet café's, or are relegated to the back when they go to the mosque or church. In the same vein, it is normal for a man to cheat on the wife but it is an abomination for the wife to do that. Even the bible says that a man can divorce wife when she commits adultery but the bible did not say the vice-versa.

In line with the above explication, the Akan and in other languages euphemisms are used in order to avoid mentioning of sexual organs, the expressions represent the female organs in food, images and male organs in images of weaponry. The euphemisms for the male and female organs and the sexual act itself tend to be suggestive of female passivity and male dominance.

4.1.7 Inequality when it comes to the implementation of various laws

In most modern societies there is a major inequality when various laws are being implemented. For instance, women are sometimes blamed for being sexually harassed or going through other forms of sexual abuse. And the examples that is usually cited is the fact that, the victims knowingly or unknowingly seduced or lured their abusers to abuse them through provocative dressing, going out at night, etc. Similarly, contentions such as land litigations between a man and a woman are usually ruled in the favor of men. This is based on the archaic belief that land and other properties are more useful and can properly be taken care of by men far more than women.

The findings above are similar to what is currently happening in Ghana. Specifically, as a result of traditional beliefs and cultural practices, women face various forms of inequality.

There are various traditional and cultural practices and beliefs, some of which are beneficial, while others are harmful to women (Obeng, 2008). Some of these harmful traditional practices which includes female genital mutilation, early marriage, tribal marks, hindering women from attaining high education, domestic violence, etc. (Biney, 2012). Even though the aforementioned cultural practices are harmful by nature and violate international human rights laws, such negative practices against women persist because they are not challenged, but rather allowed in the name of culture (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979; The Women's Manifesto for Ghana, 2004).

A classic instance here in Ghana is the fact that women are often held to a higher standard of cultural compliance than men. For example, most Ghanaian societies expect all men and women to marry and have children by a certain age. But women feel the weight of these expectations more heavily as they are expected to marry much earlier than men, women also often blamed for the breakdown of their marriages and the absence of children within marriage. Again, in situations where men do not contribute to the upbringing of children, women are left to carry the burden unaided and stigmatized, and are often vulnerable to exploitation (The Women's Manifesto for Ghana, 2004).

Similarly, customary law rules, beliefs, ideologies and practices of marriage discriminate against women. For instance, the differences in status, rights and responsibilities of a husband and wife, and inheritance rules that favor the extended family over the nuclear family result in power imbalances and weaken women's voices within their households. Also, women are expected to submit to their husbands irrespective of the issues at stake and their submission is reinforced by religious doctrines. Similarly, the time constraints women

experience within their households also affects girls who are socialized to do more housework than boys (Cantalupo, et al., 2006).

Similarly, in traditional Ghanaian communities, there are several norms and practices which are for the purposes of social control. Apart from defining the roles of women and men, they also determine the space within which women and men operate. Often, the space women occupy is constrained by norms which control their presence in the public sphere (The Women's Manifesto for Ghana, 2004). In some situations, women are either not allowed to speak in public when men are present or are expected to express their views privately or through men (The Women's Manifesto for Ghana, 2004). Ironically, there are situations when women become the enforcers of negative customs against fellow women in their capacity as custodians of practices such as female genital mutilation and widowhood rights (Hosken, 1994).

Unfortunately, women who do not conform to the aforementioned traditional expectations, norms and practices find themselves accused of immorality or witchcraft and have to face sanctions and humiliation (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979; The Women's Manifesto for Ghana, 2004).

4.1.8 Gender Stereotypes

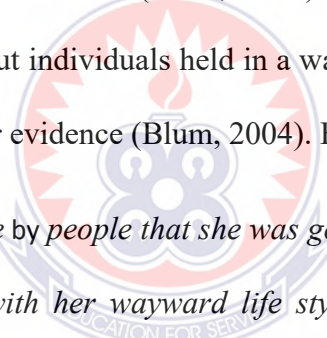
This theme is operationalized as any negative statement or comment about a particular group of people which might not be true of them. This also grouped into two sub themes- Women are generally looked-down upon by men and less representation of women in the decision-making process. Women are generally looked-down upon by men: As compared to men, women are generally perceived to be timid, less intelligent and dependent on men. This is partly due to the various gender stereotypes that downplay women's physical, psychological

and emotional abilities. Specifically, men are perceived to be more physically, psychologically, and emotionally matured and stable to handle various issues of life than women. This usually starts from children where children are made to know that the “...boy child is more valuable than the girl child”. For example, “The fate of every child is determined right at birth, from the short sentence, “it is a boy” or “it is a girl”. This sentence changes everything for the child. Everybody treats the child in a stereotypical gender manner”. For instance, if the child is a “girl”, they will provide her with things like dolls and the colour pink but when the child is a “boy” they will give him things like ball and the colour blue. In general, there is the stereotype that girls are bad at mathematics. But in reality, girls and women are just as capable as boys and men when it comes to mathematics. This can lead to the suggestion that some innate difference between women and men leads to this discrepancy. For instance,

Kusum was raped by her husband (Pramad) but her mother in-law said that serves her right, after all my son has paid her bride price, so you are his property and he have the right to sleep with you any time he desires to do so.

In many cases stereotypes endorsed existing forms of inequality or discrimination in society (Hinton, 2000). Because of that, those who perpetuate and generate stereotypes of others are normally in greater positions of status and power than those who are stereotyped (Beegly, 2015). Stereotypes do not simply place and describe others as inferior, but also indirectly confirm and legitimate those who stereotype in their own identity and position (Owen, 2012). Surprisingly, those with comparatively little status and power might also stereotype others, with those stereotyped helping as scapegoats for feelings of dissatisfaction, irritation or frustration associated with this lack of status and power.

Lindsey (2005) argues that stereotypes targeting females can lead to sexism, the belief that the female status is inferior to their male colleagues. This belief is reinforced by officialdoms of patriarchy, male-dominated social organizations whose customs function and have become the standard to which people adhere, all over all social institutions. Brewer (2010) adds that stereotypes have the tendency to distinct individuals into certain subdivisions within the society base on membership of a specific group of people. These stereotypes of women that exist in the telenovelas are not different from traditional stereotypes (Brewer, 2010). Therefore, society is responsible for stereotyping. Stereotypes are the belief that all people within the same ethnic, racial or cultural group will act alike and share the same beliefs and attitude (Blum, 2004). However, stereotypes are false or misleading generalizations about individuals held in a way that renders them largely, though not entirely, immune to counter evidence (Blum, 2004). For example,



Kumud were stereotype by people that she was going to influence the girls in the village badly with her wayward life style. Look at how she is dressed like a commercial sex worker, listen carefully I will not allow you marry that city girl because girls from the city don't have good manner, they are prostitutes.

This is affirmed by Krugler (2017) that gender stereotype is mostly recognized association among social attribute and groups. It can either be positive, negative or neutral depending in the situation in which they are used. And so, stereotypes are normally represented by negative features that lead to inequalities, stigmatization and discrimination which generally affect the vulnerable people in the society such as women and the poor (Beeghly, 2014). This finding is also supported by Donkor (2014) that gender stereotypes are negative images

or ideas thought to be true of a particular group of people which might not be true. Stereotypes are habitually used to oppress and discriminate against people who are marginalized in the society such as women, children and the less prevalent once.

This is also confirmed by Mullins, 2010; Whitley and Kite, 2006 that stereotypes come in different forms, for instance it can be negative, positive or neutral. A negative stereotype linked to discrimination, such as negative behaviours directed towards individuals because of their group membership to a specific social group. For instance, women are less intelligent, women are weak or Africans are corrupt. While positive stereotype refers to a subjectively favourable belief thought about a social group. For example, men from the north are good in bed, women are more affectionate or Africans are strong. Neutral stereotypes are neither discriminatory nor favourable. They are just generalized beliefs about a specific group of people. For instance, women are nurturing or Australians like cricket.

Stereotypes come in diverse ways and are habitually used to oppress and discriminate against people who are marginalized in any given society (Kanahara, 2006 & Lipmann, 1992). Stereotypes can be something that is harmful when it limits a person capacity to develop their personal goals, pursue their professional careers and make choices concerning their lives. Predominately, women are involved in other parts of the media like entertainment and lifestyle reporters but do not feature much in sports journalism (Franks, 2013).

4.1.9 Sexual Harassment

This frame refers to the expressions of when a man or a woman start requesting for sexual favors from someone before something is done or being forced to do something sexual. For instance, Indicators such as repeatedly asking for dates, making unwelcome sexual

advances, unwanted touching of the body that make you feel uncomfortable, glance, touching the breast, buttocks, eye contact and sharing of pornographic pictures. There are two forms of sexual harassment, which include quid pro quo and hostile environment. Quid pro quo refers to the demands for sexual favors in exchange for some benefit (e.g. a good grade, recommendation or promotion) or to avoid some detriment (e.g. a failing grade or termination) in the classroom or workplace.

Per the definition, it can be said that, it is only perpetrated by someone or people in higher position of power over another person. While hostile environment harassment also arises from unwanted conduct this is so persistent or severe that it creates an offensive educational or working environment, intimidating or humiliating working environment. The conduct might be physical (e.g. pinching, kissing, hugging, touching or inappropriate touching), verbal (e.g. sexual remarks about a person's clothing, sexual advances or insults based on the sex of the worker) or nonverbal (e.g. Leering, whistling or sexual-suggestive gestures). For example,

Kusum was sexual harassed yet she was blamed for being sexually harassed, that she should have protected herself from sexual violence by dressing decently. Why won't she be harassed, she knowingly seduced or lured the abuser to abuse her through provocative dressing and going out at night dress like a commercial sex worker"? These frames were also grouped into:

4.1.10 Women usually fall Victims to Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is prevalent in today's society, but unfortunately, most perpetrators are men and most victims are women. This is usually driven by the belief that "men can do whatever they want and get away with it." Hence, even though most men are aware of the

fact that sexual harassment is a criminal act; they do it anyway just because they are men. Furthermore, society expects women to have more control over their sexual urges than their male counterparts. Hence, society is lenient on men who sexually harass women, and harsh on women who sexually harass men.

Sexual harassments come in different forms for these women. It could be by persist inappropriate touching, passing lewd comment or throwing of sexual glances at them. This is affirmed by Nielson (1996) sexual harassment continue to be a problem of consequence for the contemporary working women. He iterated that sharing of pornographic pictures, demanding for hugs, pinching in a sexual way, unwelcome sexual advances, unwanted touching the buttocks and other verbal conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when offer to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly on condition of an individual's employment. Traditionally, women in male dominant careers experience sexual harassment (Whaley & Tucker, 1998). This goes to confirm Sereni Toth, Wright and Emig, (1998) that a workplace that is inhabited primarily by men will be highly sexualized, and have a higher likelihood of obscene sexual jokes, sexual language and emphasis on physical attractiveness.

According to the Ghana's Labour Act (2003) sexual harassment at work place is defined as any importunate sexual request and unwelcome offensive made by an employer, co-worker or supervisor to a worker whether the worker is a woman or a man. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) of the United States of America in 1980 as cite in Dedzo, 2016 also defined sexual harassment as unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favours and other physical or verbal conduct of sexual nature which could be done when the conduct implicitly or explicitly affect individual's employment or interferes with their work.

Subsequently, it is estimated that between 20 to 50% of females are sexually harassed in sports at various levels (Fastings, 2005). State Sport International (2014) as cited in Salifu, 2015 reviewed 466 items in sports literature globally, and reported that sexual harassment and abuse in sports was as high as 28% with sexual harassment alone accounting for about 12%.

4.1.11 Quite a number of Women are Sexually Abused

As a result of the freedom given to men to express their sexually urges, most of them take advantage of this to abuse women through rape, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, among others. Also, Umeogu and Ifeoma (2012) assert that in the corporate circle women are usually portrayed as corporate prostitutes and are used as baits to lure customers. In most cases, they are given as gratification to big time customers to retain them. On the other hand, Shetty (2008) also revealed that while 7.7% of respondents (women) revealed that they have experienced some form of sexual harassment but none of the males responded to have been sexually harassed. This, they concluded that women face sexual harassment in their work places. According to Gee and Norton (1999) an overwhelming number of sexual harassment victims in the U. S. are females. According to the U. S. Department of labour (quoted by Business Women's Network, 2003) 50% to 80% of women in the U. S. may experience some form of sexual harassment in their academic or work life.

The above result supports that of Archampong and Baidoo, (2011) whose result revealed among other things that, sexual harassment is increasingly becoming pervasive in Ghana even though it is a criminal offense. For instance, Ghana's Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29) has provision on indecent assault which includes sexual bodily contact with another person without the consent of the other person or sexual violation of the body of that person

in any manner not amounting to carnal knowledge or unnatural carnal knowledge. The indecent assault is a liable offence and on conviction, the perpetrator may have to face an imprisonment term of at least six (6) months (Archampong & Baidoo, 2011).

Archampong and Baidoo, (2011) further stated that, at the heart of most sexual offences in Ghana is the issue of consent; without consent sexual contact or acts are unlawful. The legal system's treatment of consent in Ghana reflects assumptions about women and how they do or do not consent to sexual acts (Archampong & Baidoo, 2011). This implies that, when an individual is sexually harassed, and he or she wants to take criminal action against the perpetrator they have to prove that they did not consent to the sexual harassment. Unfortunately, proving in court or to an investigator that one is sexually assaulted is difficult because evidence is mostly in the form of eye witness accounts.

It is for the above reason that, even though sexual harassment is very prevalent in Ghana, a great majority of the victims do not formally report their experiences to management or superiors for redress. About 95% of the cases go unreported (Andoh, 2001). Most victims try to handle the issue on their own for a variety of reasons, including the social stigma attached to harassment cases, the fear of the consequences of reporting, the high ignorance of human rights among employees, the unprofessional and insensitive manner in which complaints are generally dealt with in organizations, and the lack of laid down channels for filing complaints of sexual harassment (Andoh, 2001).

The above finding is supported by Andoh, (2001) who has discovered that females experience higher levels of sexual harassment than their male counterparts. Specifically, is said that as at the year 2000, about 74% of female employees and 42% of male employees in Ghana alone experienced sexual harassment at work in the form of unwanted sexual teasing,

pressure for dates, unwanted repeated proposals, jokes, remarks, love letters, unwanted telephone calls, unwanted sexual looks, pressure for sexual favours within their working environment and unwanted touching of intimidated body parts (Andoh, 2001).

Unfortunately, the psychological impact of sexual harassment includes low self-esteem, negative self-concept, anxiety, depression, and stress among others. Specifically, most victims of workplace sexual harassment in Ghana undergo a wide range of psychological and emotional problems, including the loss of self-esteem and self-confidence, as well as feelings of helplessness, distress, anxiety, anger and depression (Andoh, 2001).

4.1.12 Machismo

Machismo defines the situation where men exhibit their maleness. For instance, they always try to prove that they are macho, aggressive, independent, sentiment, self-reliant and authoritative.

Women are perceived to be the properties of men: Most women especially the married women are usually seen to be the properties of men by married men and society as a whole. This is partly due to the various bride prizes men pay before they marry them. Men are definers of value, importance and heads of family in every society whereas women must assume a subordinate but complementary role. This belief balances the extremes that macho men go through to prove their manliness. For instance,

Women are either not allowed to speak in public when men are present or are expected to express their views privately or through men.

Similarly, women are predominantly taught the role of a homemaker, who is expected to be submissive, dependent, less intelligent and self-sacrificing. As would be expected, women in

the machista culture undoubtedly play an essential role as accomplice to her subordination. As enlightened by Bustos (1979), societies consider housework as the fundamental role of the woman, even in a situation where she might have a full-time job outside the home.

Men have more political leadership roles than women in most political jurisdictions across the globe. Most religions also disallow women from holding major leadership roles. For instance, in Islam, women are not allowed to become imams. Similarly, the Roman Catholic Church does not allow women to become priests or bishops. This is partly because men are believed to have an inborn leadership predisposition.

As a result of the underrepresentation of women in political and religious leadership, international advocacy groups such as the UN Women, (2015) are doing whatever it takes to empower women across the globe to be more assertive when it comes to participating in leadership roles. According to UN Women, (2015) it is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his/her country. This is because the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life. The power relations that prevent women from leading fulfilling lives operate at many levels of society (from the most personal to the highly public) (UN Women, 2015).

The rationale behind the above is the fact that achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning (UN Women, 2015).

Additionally, equality in political decision-making performs a leverage function without which it is highly unlikely that a real integration of the equality dimension in government policy-making is feasible. This shows that, women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women (UN Women, 2015). As noted in the consultation on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, "gender equality is not about transferring opportunities from men to women, but about realizing the rights of everyone, and creating conditions where both all have the right and ability to realize their full human potential" (UNICEF and UN Women, 2013, P.35). Furthermore, women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved (UN Women, 2015).

The negative representation of women is most pervasive in proverbs and contrasts sharply with positive representations of men, though the uniqueness of the woman as wife and mother is acknowledged. There are differences in the use of some linguistic items by males and females, men use forms that are associated with higher status and power while women have to use forms that are associated with inferior status. Even though, women and men engaged in normal interaction routinely reproduce gender stereotypes as they use language (Alhassan, 2012).

4.2 RQ2: The second research question sought to investigate the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender in the telenovela?

In response to research question two, three themes came up. These were viewers have been sensitized about the red flags that precede sexual harassment, women are mostly portrayed like sexual objects, and viewers have been empowered and emboldened to stand up against all forms of gender discrimination. Using the social constructionism theory discussed in chapter two, these themes are critically investigated to explain the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender in the telenovela.

4.2.1 Viewers have been sensitized about the red flags that precede sexual harassments:

This is the situation in which viewers have been informed through awareness creation programs and education about the red flags and the negative implications of sexual harassments, gender inequality and stereotypes in the society. We are impressed by the way Kusum denote sexual harassing behavior of the man and the tactics that she used to report the incident, “I didn’t even know that when a man starts demanding for hugs, unnecessary eye contact, and sharing pornographic pictures can term as sexual harassment”. This research discovered that what constitutes sexual harassment varies from jurisdictions to jurisdictions. A respondent in an interview submitted that,

She does not feel sexually harassed till she is touched on the sensitive parts of her body by her male colleagues. She does not even see the glances her male counterparts or colleagues throw at her as a sexual harassment whereas others said otherwise (e.g. looks, comments, hugging and so on).

Another respondent also accounts that,

She didn't even know that when a man starts demanding for hugs, unnecessary eye contact, and sharing pornographic pictures can term as sexual harassment. So, after watching the series she has come to realize it and will be vigilant when in similar situation. After watching the series, she has come to realize what connotes sexual harassment, so I will be vigilant when in similar situation.

4.2.2 Women are mostly portrayed like sexual objects

Generally, women are seen to be object for sex or sexual objects. This is said to be driven by the media who mostly portray women on TV (i.e. in advertisements, movies, music videos, etc.) in a nude, semi-nude or in a sexually suggestive way and manner. In the telenovela, women were seen as occupying the household chores. This confirms that women are continuously seen as the weaker sex, hence cannot live without men. This is evident in the telenovela especially when it comes to decision-making, counseling and financial issues. Women are portrayed as dependent on men whereas men are portrayed to be independent (Brewer, 2012). They have been personified as emotional, highly talkative, passive and gentle. Again, their bodies have been characterized as objects of sexualized ideals. For instance, a participant submitted that,

I have to sexually objectify my body to demand respect and power from men. Even though both males and females can be sexually objectified, but it is mostly associated with the objectification of women. Women feel a greater pressure to engage in sexualized self-representations, either to capture the attention of the opposite sex.

This is affirming by Willem, Tortajada and Figueras-Maz (2017) that females feel a greater pressure to engage in sexualized self-representations, either to capture the attention of the opposite sex. Based on the result above, it could be said that women usually experience sexual harassment and abuse when compared to their male counterparts. This is partly due to the fact that in Ghana and most part of the world, women are seen as sexual objects or objects of pleasure (Osei, 2010). Specifically, in Ghana, the reason why women are seen as sexual objects is blamed on the media.

To confirm this, Mubarique, (2014) examined the extent to which women are represented as sexual objects in Ghanaian media. Towards this end, a content analysis examining the depiction of women in 60 advertisements from 4 major Ghanaian newspapers that focus more on fashion and entertainment and 4 TV stations was carried out. Advertisements were coded with respect to whether women were presented as sex objects and using a scheme developed by the researcher. On average across media categories, one of two advertisements that featured women portrayed them as sex objects (Mubarique, 2014). The implications of viewing advertisements depicting women as sex objects are therefore drives public perception and behavior towards women.

Regardless of the negative effects sexual harassment and abuse has on victims, the family of victim, society and the country as a whole, sexual abuse remains under reported. This is so because victims of sexual abuse are usually stigmatized and ostracized by their families and others as a consequence of the abuse (Mohammed, 2014). In addition, the perceived shame and secrecy associated with it as well as the perceived negative outcomes it has on the family and individual further hinders reportage (Ampofo, et al., 2007; Mohammed, 2014).

Regarding causes of sexual abuse, a variety of explanations have been offered, using different frameworks from process oriented (Finkelhor & Browne, 1985) and individual (offender focused) explanations (Ward & Beech, 2006) over feminist (Seymour, 1998) to multi-systemic models (European Commission, 2010). Although these frameworks differ in the primary causes, they list for sexual harassment and abuse; they tend to agree on certain factors: A majority of perpetrators are male, while a majority of victims of sexual abuse are female. Most perpetrators are not strangers; rather, they know their victims and tend to prepare the offence through so-called grooming strategies (example, establishing a close emotional relationship with the victim, “testing” it by telling secrets, giving gifts, etc.). This frequently makes it difficult for significant others in the victims’ life to perceive or believe that actual abuse is taking place, since the offender often appears to be someone who cares for the victim (Böhm, 2016).

Nevertheless, studies such as Mohammed, (2014) argue that, one of the unfortunate human abuse practices that are on the rise in Ghana and beyond are sexual abuse. This is so because in Ghana, sexual abuse is not uncommon, even though currently, there are not enough, accurate and reliable statistical data on sexual abuse in general (Mohammed, 2014). Nevertheless, available data from the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) revealed that the reported cases of sexual abuse incidents such as attempted rape, rape, incest, among others increased from 181 in the year 2000 to 1,578 in the year 2007. This rising trend in sexual abuse is consistent in school records and on the streets of Accra as indicated in the studies of Ampofo et al., (2007) and Brown, (2003). Similarly, according to Adamu, (2018) in 2017, rape cases in the country soared to 514 cases reported to the Ghana Police Service.

Similarly, in a study commissioned by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in 2016 findings states that 30% of Ghanaian women experience sexual violence at least once over their lifetime, and 10.6% of women reported having experienced sexual violence at least once over the 12 months that preceded the survey. The report again stated that the incidence of lifetime sexual violence was higher among younger women. Specifically, 38.2% of women aged 15-19 years, 40.4% of women aged 20-24 years and 38.3% of women aged 30-39 years reported having experienced at least one act of sexual violence (Ghana Centre for Democratic Development, 2018).

According to the records from Plan Ghana, (2009) non-Governmental Organization revealed that 53% of sexual abuse cases occurred in the school environment while 47% happened at home while 67% of the victims of child sexual abuse are in senior high school, 28% in Junior high school and 5% in primary school. The Ghana Centre for Democratic Development, (GCDD), and (2018) further states that the year 2018 has witnessed an increase in reportage on sexual misconduct cases involving school teachers and female students at different levels of our schools' system. Furthermore, Böhm, (2016) therefore espoused that sexual harassment and abuse against children, adolescents and adults is increasingly being recognized as critical global problem.

4.2.3 Viewers have been empowered and emboldened to stand up against all forms of gender discrimination

This theme refers to the process of creating a suitable environment for people to make decisions of their own for their personal benefits as well as for the society. For instance,

I was influenced by the way Kumud, Kusum and other women were empowered; they were strong and confident in controlling their life and claiming their rights. Kusum and Kumud were empowered, they gather courage and mobilized the women to go on demonstration against the men's idea that women should not wear jeans trouser, used the internet, or go to school to the highest level. Another participant also accounts that,

We are now empowered, emboldened and sensitized through the education given to us to stand up against any form of gender discrimination and sexual harassment practices at the work place and beyond.

The above result is supported by some studies that have been conducted in this research area. For instance, UK'S Research Center, (2013) discovered among other things that through education, women usually become sensitized and emboldened to stand up against sexual harassment and other gender discrimination practices at the workplace and beyond. Nevertheless, in most countries in the world women find themselves compelled to fight for most of what should be their rights to equal pay for equal jobs, access to managerial positions or fair coverage of their image, or issues related to their gender (UK'S Research Center, 2013).

4.3 RQ3. The third research question sought to examine how the portrayals of gender in the telenovela reinforce or contradict existing perspectives in the society.

From the assessment of the data retrieved, it was revealed that the following themes reinforced existing perspectives here in Ghana with the exception of “restricted use of clothing and social amenities” and having most women experiencing sexual abuse. Specifically, in Ghana it is rare to find communities restricting the use of some clothing (e.g. wearing of trousers, etc.) and restricted use of amenities such as internet cafes, among

others. Furthermore, even though some women experience one form of sexual abuse or the other in Ghana, the cases of sexual abuse in Ghana is not predominant when compared to other countries such as India. In responding to the research question three, one important theme came up; which include **reinforcement**. Using the social constructionism theory discussed in chapter two, this theme is critically examined to explain how the portrayal of gender in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* reinforces existing perspectives in the society.

4.3.1 Reinforcement

Reinforcement in this study is operationalized as the process whereby something keeps occurring or actions keep increasing.

The portrayal of gender in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* reinforced existing perspectives in the society because in schools, the texts books reinforced the ideologies of machismo (Pacoy Lola stories), gender inequality and so on and even the church establishes the man as the head of the family. Again, the culture fosters inequality, religious systems and the educational sectors support this inequality and even in the home the fathers and brothers have the power over women. The media reinforces this societal inequality by framing carrier women in telenovelas as submissive, bossy, rude, dependent and caring and emotional neglect of their children. The media also reinforces the view that masculinity is equality to strength, competition, aggression and violence hence, a natural goal for boys to achieve (Ghana Strongest). A participant in an interview submitted that,

Women football has been framed in the media as nothing and there are fewer sports presenters. But football has been portrayed in society as a masculine affair.

A critical review of the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* also appears to suggest that it sought to reinforce the portrayal of gender in the telenovela. Gaunlett (2008) and Van Zooren, (1994) are of the view that gender is produced by popular culture and media and it is established on this that, telenovelas have been recognized as an avenue that gender is produced, sustained and reinforced. Even though people believe that gender is taught by family, peer groups, schools and nations. Kulick (2003) attest to the fact that it is reinforced through songs, slang, language, discourse and sayings. Similarly, gender stereotypes and norms reinforce gendered identities and constrain the behaviour of men and women in ways that lead to inequality (Ridgeway, 2011). There is also power imbalance between men and women and a few linguistic forms that must be used differently by males and females. These power imbalances are reflected in speech to reinforce these inequalities.

Additionally, some traditional gender roles are reinforced by the general challenges, because of extreme poverty some parents choose to educate a boy and leave the girl at home to assist with income-generating activities. Besides, girls are expected to get married early and join the husband's family, while the boys will remain within the family and provide financial support.

Portrayal of women in the telenovela- *Saraswatichandra* reflects cultural stereotypes that depart markedly from reality. The entertainment media outlets often portray particular groups, such as women, having more negative qualities or being portrayed in a negative way than the dominant social group (Media Awareness Network, 2008). Mostly in the media, women become the stereotyped ones while men become the ones who stereotype. Television and telenovela also typically portray an unrealistic view of the ideal woman in addition to reinforcing the traditional representation of what makes a woman. Similarly, researchers

such as Okunna (1996) criticizes images of women in movies and acknowledges that movies seem to project negative stereotypes of women rather than portraying aspect of women that would empower audiences. He further confirms that many popular products particularly movies carry stereotypic and misogynistic images of women. From the findings, it could be inferred that women are consistently stereotyped, sexual harassed and experience inequality in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*.

In the same vein, the society and traditional norms enhance inequality by shaping our expectations of gender behavior. The features presented in these telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* shows a lack of equality when it comes to gender because they highlight male privileges in society. Episodes after episodes revealed that this telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* reinforce gender imbalances in the society such gender inequality, gender stereotypes, sexual harassment and machismo respectively.

Also, the issue of gender inequality is evident in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*. In many instances the telenovela depicts the inequalities that exist in gender relations in the community and societies at large. According to Media Awareness Network (2008), due to lack of gender sensitivity among producers of popular movies, production of gender inequality is reinforced in several productions. Even though there has been a lot of changes over the years in terms of what is considered appropriate societal roles for men and women, Hazel & Clarke (2008) observe that the change is not reflected in the media particularly in telenovelas. This is also evident in the telenovela understudy. Women are usually shown as domestic; dedicated only on family and personal relationships, less competent, less intelligent and dependent on their male colleagues for financial and emotional support. On the other hand, men are portrayed as independent, strong leaders and not interested in things

of the home (Gunter, 1995). This gender representation found in the telenovelas creates what Morawitz & Mastro (2008) refer to as patriarchal gender discrimination.

Nonetheless, in spite of the changes described so far about the dynamic of stereotypes, this study has also demonstrated that many traditional gender stereotypes are maintained nowadays. Specifically, characteristics like physical strong, selfish and brave are still seen as more typical of men, while characteristics like submissive, emotional, sweet or understanding are more typical of women. Considering that stereotypes in general, and gender stereotypes in particular, underlie the discrimination phenomena, the pattern of results obtained is probably reflecting what actually occurs in our society.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the major findings of this study followed by the conclusion of the study. The limitations and “suggestions for further research” of the study come next followed by the “recommendations of the study”.

5.1 Summary of Findings

After data analysis, the first result that was generated indicated that there were various gender issues that are portrayed in the telenovela “*Saraswatichandra*”. Firstly, there is **Gender inequality**; inequality in education, inequality in career role, unequal access to speech, restricted use of clothing and social amenities, and “inequality when it comes to the implementation of various laws”. Secondly, there is **Gender stereotypes**; and “women are generally looked-down upon by men. Thirdly, there is **Sexual harassment**; women usually fall victims to sexual harassment, and quite a number of women are sexually abused.” Fourthly, there is **Machismo**; women are perceived to be the properties of men.

Meanwhile, the second result revealed the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender in the telenovela. First of all, viewers have been sensitized about the red flag that precedes sexual harassments. Furthermore, viewers have been sensitized to be vigilant against sexual harassment. In addition, viewers have been empowered and emboldened to stand up against all forms of gender discrimination and “women are mostly treated like sexual objects.”

Finally, the last result revealed the theme of reinforcement as the existing perspectives in the society. The portrayals of gender in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra* mostly reinforce existing perspectives here in Ghana with the exception of “restricted use of clothing and social amenities” and having most women experiencing sexual abuse.”

5.2 Conclusion

This study sought to investigate the various kinds of gender issues portrayed in the telenovela *Saraswatichandra* by viewers in Bubiashie-Accra.

After data analysis results revealed that there were various gender stereotypes that are portrayed in the telenovela “*Saraswatichandra*” such as gender inequality, gender stereotypes, sexual harassment and machismo. Meanwhile, the second result revealed the perspectives of viewers of *Saraswatichandra* on the portrayal of gender in the telenovela to be vigilant and stand up against sexual harassment, and emboldened to resist gender discrimination. Finally, the last result revealed that “the portrayals of gender in the telenovela mostly reinforce existing perspectives here in Ghana with the exception of “restricted use of clothing and social amenities” and having most women experiencing sexual abuse.” Therefore, it is concluded that the various kinds of gender issues portrayed in the telenovela *Saraswatichandra* has positively empowered viewers who are predominantly women in Bubiashie, Accra to be educated on the antecedents of sexual harassment. In addition, women have been empowered to resist forms of gender discrimination practices such as gender stereotypes and inequality, sexual harassment, and marginalization of women in decision making processes.

5.3 Limitations

The only limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size used. A sample size of 30 respondents was used in this study. This is relatedly small to be a fair representation of residents of the Bubiashie who are estimated to be 34,568 in number. Nevertheless, the researcher was constrained finally and limited time within which this research work was bound to be completed.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

It is recommended to future studies to consider using a larger sample size than the one used in this study. This is important because a larger sample size will be more representative of the targeted population, and will also go a long way to enhance the generalizability of the research findings. This is so because the larger a sample size the more efficient it is to generalize finding.

Again, it is suggested that a study can be done using two media products. One locally produced telenovela and another foreign produced in order to ascertain the differences and similarities in the surrounding the viewing of the two media products at selected free access open spaces

A study could also take a look at how viewers interpret messages imbedded in telenovelas.

Finally, it is also recommended to other researchers (students and professional researchers) to do further studies to either confirm or disprove some of the findings of this present study so as to expand the knowledge that is already out there on this research area. In doing this, future researcher could consider using other telenovelas or any popular audio-visual material that has strong gender content just as *Saraswatichandra* does.

5.5 Recommendations

It is further recommended to opinion leaders at Bubiashie and other communities to put measures in place to deal with any form of sexual harassment within their jurisdictions so as to safeguard the wellbeing of women. This could be done through constant training and awareness programs, the use of stickers, posters, etc. around their communities to serve as a constant reminder against sexual harassment and gender discrimination. In addition, when cases of sexual harassment are reported, they should hand the case to the police without delay so that any temptation of cover-up will be prevented.

Stakeholders such as the Ministries of Women and Gender Protection, the Ghana Psychological Association, among others should in their various forums or platforms to sensitize the public on the negative implication gender discrimination and stereotypes, sexual harassment, on the victims, family of victims and the community as a whole.

As *Saraswatichandra* has been found to have a positive influence on its viewer's attitude and behaviours towards gender related issues and how to deal with them, it is recommended that more media houses should consider telecasting *Saraswatichandra* on their airwaves so as to reach larger audience. This will go a long way to educate and sensitize new audience about the red flags that precedes sexual harassments. Furthermore, viewers have been empowered and emboldened to stand up against all forms of gender discrimination.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES

QUESTIONS GUIDE FOR ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS DISCUSSIONS

Research Question Two

1. Kindly introduce yourself, your name, age, religion and educational background.
2. Do you watch telenovelas?
3. Do you watch *Saraswatichandra*?
4. What gender issues do you think exist in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*?
5. What do you think if someone makes an unwelcome sexual advance like unwanted touching of the body and sharing of pornographic pictures?
6. Men are always perceived as powerful and aggressive, what are your perspectives about these statements?
7. What is your view about how women are always portrayed as maid in these telenovelas?
8. Do you think there is equal sharing of power and responsibilities in the telenovela-*Saraswatichandra*? Yes or No
9. Have you ever experienced any of the issues identify? Yes or no
10. What are your perspectives about the issues identify above?

Research Question Three

1. Does this issue exist in the society?
2. Do the issues identify above reinforce or contradict existing perspectives in the society?
3. Thank you so much for your time and for participating in this interview

