The social class myth of collectivism: A qualitative study of the impact of social class on families' meal interaction behaviour

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Abstract

The class distinction in the Sierra Leonean society is the primary determinant of families' access to a balanced diet as well as the level of social interaction at mealtimes. The findings suggest that, the income earned by families, their status in society, their level of education and the type of job they do, significantly determines the type of food they consume. This implies that, social class can act as the arbiter to families' access not only to adequate, but the quality of food consumed. It also influences the food variety available at mealtimes. The study shows that, many Sierra Leonean families experience the problem of daily food affordability challenges, which limits their access to the quantity, quality and variety of food needed at the dinner table at mealtimes. Nevertheless, the findings also show that, irrespective of the social standing of families, table etiquette are important to families from the different social classes, as it provides the foundation for training and socialising children into becoming responsible individuals in society.

A one-to-one semi-structured qualitative interview was used to investigate families' views and experiences of their mealtimes' behaviours. In this research, since the selected samples of families were unknown, the researcher used snowballing; convenience; and experiential sampling in recruiting respondents, including males and females from different cultural, ethnic, religious and professional backgrounds, across the different regions of Sierra Leone. The interviews were guided by a topic, and this procedure was followed until no new themes emerged. The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder, which were transcribed verbatim and analysed using a thematic approach.

Twenty families (comprising 20 husbands and 20 wives) with a sample size of 40 participants were used in this study. The paper critically evaluates the impact of social class factors such as income; education; occupation; and authority, on Sierra Leonean families' meal consumption behaviour. The author used families (husband and wife) from different social class backgrounds and ethnic groups, and used religion (Islam and Christianity) as the dividing line in comparing and contrasting the meal social interaction behaviours of families.

The findings suggest that, the use of social class affects families' meal social interaction behaviour both positively and negatively, as it can be used to control the behaviour of children at mealtimes, on the one hand, whilst, it can prevent children from getting access to a balanced diet.

Key words: culture, Social class, income, education, authority, occupation, family/consumer behaviour, social interaction, collectivism/individualism

Background

Suckling (2016); and Kakay (2017) argue that, social class at the Sierra Leonean dinner table is based on hierarchy and identity, and largely responsible for restrictions to food aspirations, tastes, social networks and resources. Several researchers have argued that, social class distinctions shape the level of parental control and the autonomy enjoyed by children at mealtimes (Albon & Hellman, 2019; Musher-Eizenman et al, 2019; and Rohit et al, 2019). This suggests that, food choices and diet of families are crucial to signalling identity and belonging (Ma & Ma, 2019), and sometimes teenagers from families of high social standing in the Sierra Leonean society based their food choices outside their parents' purview as a way of exerting individuality as well as fitting in with peers (Bischof, 2019). Consequently, Sierra Leone has seen a significant transformation in the way households eat together due to the social and economic changes that have occurred over the past two decades, including families gradually becoming more Americanised or Europeanised (Cooper, 2019; Estes & Sirgy, 2019; and Temudo, 2019). The social status or economic positions occupied by individuals is greatly valued and revered by Sierra Leoneans, which acts as a predominant perceptional force in determining how society relates with individuals and the kind of food purchased and consumed by families at mealtimes (Abomaye-Nimenibo, 2018; Diggins, 2018; and Cohn & Blumberg et al, 2019). However, in an earlier study, Kakay (2017) argued that, irrespective of the social standing of Sierra Leonean families, respect for elders, obedience and observance of hierarchy are central to their meal socialisation practice. He emphasised that, these factors are quintessential in defining the morals, ethical values and characters of individuals, which influences their level of acceptance by others both at mealtimes and outside it.

The acquisition of high social status on a cumulative basis in the Sierra Leonean society results in the employment of Western lifestyles or values at mealtimes (Abraham et al, 2013; and Mfum-Mensah, 2018). In Sierra Leone, social class distinction at mealtimes is also eminent among the ethnic group referred to as creoles, who are freed slaves from the United States and/or the United Kingdom (Kakay, 2017). A number of theorists have suggested that, they have more individualistic and British or American thinking at mealtimes than the average Sierra Leonean families from other ethnic groups (Bulte et al, 2018; Ireson, 2018; and Kelly, 2019). This is because they are increasingly more independent, autonomous and self-reliant than the average Sierra Leonean from other traditional backgrounds (Abraham et al, 2013; and Mfum-Mensah, 2018). This is consistent with the views of Glennerster et al (2013); McFerson (2013); and Allen & McDermott (2018), who reiterated that creole families practiced more

independence at mealtimes than the average Sierra Leonean families, and concluded that, they are largely influenced by British and American cultures. In summary, upper income households, creoles and academics are more inclined to practice individualism; because of either their educational attainment or the influence of places, they have travelled/visited and/or lived (Kakay, 2017). He reiterated that, in such cases, they are likely to imbibe the individualistic culture of places lived/visited. However, even within these groupings, irrespective of their social standings, some still embrace collectivism.

Triandis (2018); Li et al (2019); and De Mooij (2019) conclude that there is little or no empirical evidence, models or frameworks to explain the influence of social class in collectivist families' meal social interaction behaviour. Therefore, this research attempts to bring empirical data that provides evidence on the conceptualisation of social class and its corresponding influence on family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone. In this paper, the author looked at the impact of education, income, occupation and authority on Sierra Leonean families' meal consumption behaviour and used them as benchmarks in assessing behaviours of families (husband and wife) across religions (Islam and Christianity) and different ethnic groups to highlight their effect on Sierra Leonean families' meal social interaction behaviour.

Methods

The researcher conducted one-to-one semi-structured face-to-face qualitative interviews with families about the social class factors that influenced their meal social interaction behaviour. This allowed families from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, based on their perspective and own words elucidate their views of the social class attributes that influences their meal social interaction behaviours. The researcher during the semi-structured interviews introduced a theme and allowed the conversation to develop according to cues taken from what respondents said about their families.

Participants and recruitment

The researcher used snowballing; convenience; and experiential sampling to recruit families from different ethnic backgrounds from across the four regions of Sierra Leone, including the northern, southern and eastern provinces as well as the western area. The researcher primarily focused on urban areas, particularly the provincial headquarter towns with about 20 percent of the families selected in the North (Makeni), 20 per cent in the South (Bo), 20 per cent in the East (Kenema), and 40 per cent in the Western area (Freetown). This implies that, 4 families

were recruited in the North (Makeni), 4 in the South (Bo), 4 in the East (Kenema), and 8 in the Western Area (Freetown). A Sample representation and demographic information of families, who participated in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews are presented in the table 2 (see appendix 1). A total of 20 families (20 husbands and 20 wives), a sample size of 40, from various households were contacted across the country with a vivid explanation given to them about the study including potential risks of data publication, benefits to the country generally, and the assurance of confidentiality. The main participants in the study were husbands and wives (married couples) from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The researcher ensured that an even religious representation was selected for the interviews with ten families from each of the denominations (Muslim and Christian). The husbands and wives were interviewed separately to avoid any biasness or to prevent one couple influencing the other. Consequently, twenty families (20 Husbands and 20 wives) were interviewed with 50 percent from each denomination (Muslim and Christian). Initial appointments and participant invitation letters; the research themes to be covered; and the participant information sheet detailing the interview protocol, commitment, benefits; and risks and confidentiality were issued to the interviewees at their various places of work before the official scheduled interviews at their homes.

Interviews

A guideline was developed for the entire research process, which was followed from the planning phase onto the implementation phase of the research to avoid any incongruity in the research process. The analysis of literature, guided the identification of theories and ideas that were tested using the data collected from the field. This was done in the form of a gap analysis. The researcher used open-ended questions and themes, from which a broad conclusion was drawn. The themes included income, education, occupation and authority. The interview for each respondent was scheduled for an hour, but on the average, it lasted between 50 and 55 minutes. The researcher carried out the interviews at the homes of the interviewees with the conversations recorded on a digital audio recorder.

Data analysis

The researcher transcribed all the data verbatim and imported them into NVIVO 10 to facilitate the analysis and coding. An iterative approach of reading and rereading the transcripts, identifying themes and patterns, and comparing across the data was used during the analysis. Thus, continuity in the coding process helped identify redundancies and overlaps in the

categorisation of the scheme, and then grouped both sequentially and thematically. The use of NVIVO 10 facilitated the development of an audit trail using memos, providing evidence of confirmation of the Research findings. After collating and coding, the data was summarised and organised by comparing the responses provided by the different family members (husband and wife), and conceptualised the interpretation of each category by each family member, and how they interact with each other. The researcher noted that sometimes, there were variations in responses from different family members, which could have prompted the use of more than one code, which resulted in the building up of different sub-categories. The researcher worked on the categorisation scheme, assignment of codes, and interpreted and reviewed the transcripts independently. He ensured that, differences in interpretations, commonalities and differences were identified and modified appropriately. Therefore, the researcher used triangulation to enhance the credibility of the data. In addition, the audio-recordings and associated transcripts (field notes) were transcribed as soon as the researcher returned from the field to avoid unnecessary build-up of information and data and avoid loss of vital information.

Results and findings

The researcher used a sample of 40 respondents, who were between the ages of 18 and 65 years, as participants in the one-to-one semi-structured face-to-face interview. A tabular representation of the sample and personal data are depicted in table three (see appendix). The researcher considered the husband and wife (married couples) in each family as the main participants in the interview process. Twenty families (20 husbands and 20 wives) were selected to get a balanced response and interpretation of the results, and to reduce biasness to the bare minimum. It was imperative that, after the twentieth family, the data was saturated as the information collected from the 18th, 19th and 20th families (35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th and 40th interviewees) were similar to those stated by earlier respondents.

Key findings of the study

The analysis of this study identified a number of themes and sub-themes, as key social class ingredients influencing families' meal social interaction behaviour, including Affordability, family cohesiveness, authority, punctuality, participation, social etiquette, and enlightenment. A comprehensive evaluation and discussion of the influence of each sub-theme on participating males and females was undertaken. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the study are depicted in the Figure 1 and Table 1 below.

Figure 1: A diagrammatic representation of the factors influencing social class on collectivist families' meal behaviour
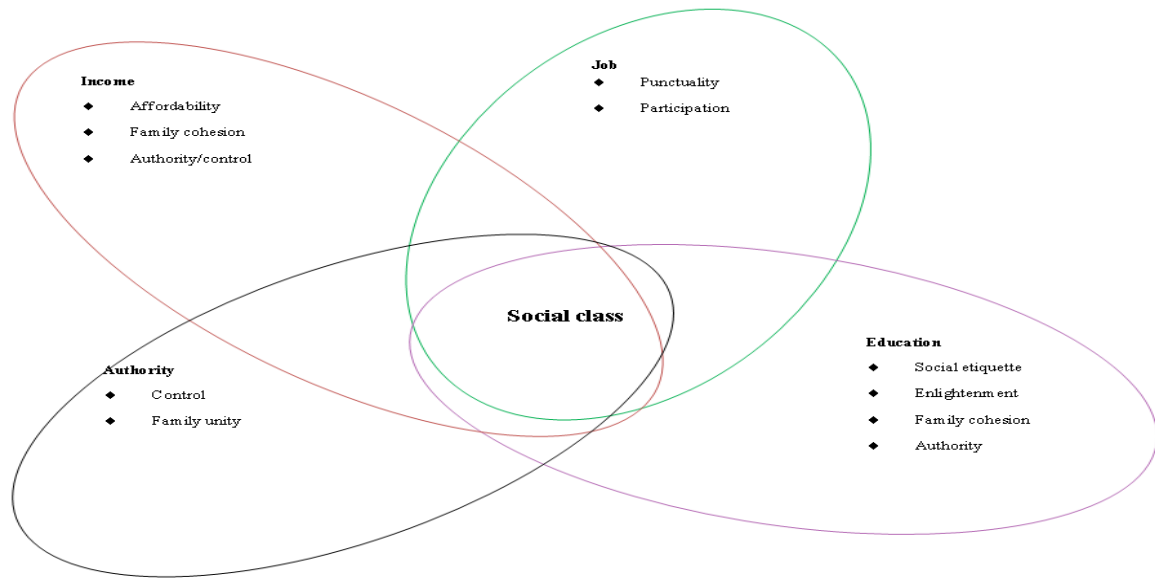
Source: Kakay, S. (2017, p.429)

Table 1: Thematic Analysis and schematic summary diagrams of the social class factors influencing families' meal consumption behaviour

Social class	How does income/wealth affect the way your family interact socially at meal times?	Affordability	Happiness (MW, CW, MH, CH), food quantity (MW, CW, MH, CH), food quality (MW, CW, MH, CH), food variety (MW, CW, CH), participation/appetite (MW, CW, CH), accessibility, satisfaction (MW, CW, MH, CH), finance, money, cash, funds, survival (CW), meal frequency (CW, CH), healthy growth (CW, MH), earnings, salary, lifestyle (MH), scarcity (MH), living of standard (CH), sustainability (MH, CH), choices (CH), affordability (MW, CW, CH), family image (MW), modern foodstuffs (MW, MH, CH), savings (MH), investment (MH), status (CH)
		Family cohesiveness	Family unity/stability/peace (MW, CW, MH), continuity, love (CW), sharing (CW, MH), relationship building (MH), understanding (CH), planning (CH), development (MH),
		Authority	Control (MW, MH), respect (MW, CW), confidence, responsibility, management
	How does your job affect the way you interact with your family at the dinner table?	Punctuality	Timeliness (MW, CW, MH, CH), lateness (MW, CW, MH, CH), absenteeism (MW CW, MH, CH),
		Participation	Sharing, fatigue/tiredness (MW, CW, CH), stress (MW), happiness (CW, MH, CH), food quality (CW, CH), encouragement, togetherness/unity (MW, CW), relationship (CW, MH), peace (MH), love (MH), control, responsibility (MH, CH), friendliness, security (CH), hope, variety, interaction/participation/appetite (MW, CW, CH), appreciation (MW), hunger (MW), respect (CW), food variety (CH)

	How important is education in your family's meal social interaction behaviour?	Social etiquette	table manners/table etiquette/moral ethics (MW, CW, CH), hygiene (MW, CW, MH, CH),food quality/balanced diet (MW, CW, CH), affordability (CH)
		Enlightenment	Awareness (CW, MH), civilisation (MW, CW, MH), family history (MW), advice, mould behaviour, knowledge (CW, CH)), idea sharing/learning/enlightenment (CW, MH, CH), experiences, planning (MH), information/communication (CH), development (MH), direction (MH, CH), modernity, judgement (CH), better life, talent, rewards (CH), understanding, confidence (MW, CW), advice (MW), cultural/traditional values (MW, MH), division of labour (CW), decision-making (CW), religious values (MH), solution/troubleshooting (CH)
		Family cohesion	Meal sharing, happiness (MW), success (CW, MH, CH), humility (CW), harmony/stability/unity/cohesion (CW, MH, CH), decision-making, understanding, bonding, relationship, appreciation, tolerance (MH), peace, societal acceptance (MW),
		Authority	Guides behaviour/shapes behaviour (MW), refine character, family image (MW), obedience (MW), respect (MW, CW, MH), boundaries, correct behaviour, power, hierarchy/orderliness (MH), priority, responsibility (CW, MH, CH),
	How important is authority in your family's meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table?	Control	Guidance (MW, CW), receptivity (CH), obedience (CW, MH, CH), rules/regulations (MW, CH), limitations, boundaries (MW, CW), headship, breadwinner, direction (MH), humility (MH), hierarchy, development/progress (MW, CH), law, responsibility (MW, CW, MH), Enforcement, respect (MW, CW, MH, CH), unity of command, subordination, orderliness (MH), appropriate behaviour, confidence, instruction, fear (MH), boss, progress, contribution, governance (CH), compliance (CH), leadership (MW, CW), success (MW), accountability, checks and balances (CH), control (MW, CW, MH, CH), good manners (CW), discipline (MW), age (CW), expectations (CW), centralisation (CH), penalty (CH)
		Unity	Unity/stability/peace (MW, CW, MH, CH), decision-making (MW, CW, MH, CH), bonding, peace, love, understanding, humility, cohesion, cooperation (MW), social etiquette (MW), happiness (MW), troubleshooting (MW), bonding (MH)

Key: CW: Christian wife; MW: Muslim wife; MH: Muslim Husband; CH: Christian Husband

Source: Kakay, S. (2017, P. 427)

Table 2: A Summary of the social class factors influencing families' meal social interaction behaviour

Social class	Income	Food quality	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Food quantity	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Food variety	√	√		√	Emphasised by a majority (CM, CF, MF), but less by MM
		Happiness	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Authority/control			√	√	Emphasised by a majority of Muslims only (MM, MF)
	Occupation	Lateness/time constraint	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Participation	√	√	√		Emphasised by a majority (CM, CF, MM), but less by MF
		Absence			√	√	Emphasised by a majority of Muslims only (MM, MF)
	Education	Moral ethics	√	√	√		Emphasised by a majority (CM, CF, MM), but less by MF
		Hygiene	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Knowledge			√		Emphasised by a majority of MM only
		Civilisation		√			Emphasised by a majority of CF only
		Balanced diet/food quality	√		√		Emphasised by a majority of males regardless of religion (CM, MM)
		Table etiquette		√		√	Emphasised by a majority of females regardless of religion (CF, MF)
		Family cohesion	√		√		Emphasised by a majority of males regardless of religion (CM, MM)

	Authority	Hierarchy/boundaries	√		√		Emphasised by a majority of males regardless of religion (CM, MM)
		Control	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Family unity/stability/peace	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Decision-making				√	Emphasised by a majority of MF only

Source: Kakay, S. (2017, p. 218)

Evaluating the influence of income on families' meal social interaction behaviour

Owing to the prevalence of low earnings across Sierra Leone among families, income dictates not only the quantity and quality of food available at mealtimes, but determines access to variety. Many families suggested that, income influences the degree of happiness and the level of social interaction at mealtimes. They argued that, the more food available at the dinner table, the better the discourse and orderliness at the dinner table, whilst less food availability triggers unhappiness, feud and discord among children at mealtimes. However, many families indicated that, despite the fret and discordance caused by insufficient food at mealtimes, the fluctuation in income with the corresponding fluctuation of food availability at mealtimes is customary to their children. This implies that, they are inclined to accept low food availability at mealtimes and increasingly demonstrate understanding when their parents' circumstances go downhill. In addition, the findings identified that, the incomes earned by families are not restricted to the purchase of foodstuffs only, but also sometimes used in addressing the problems of extended families such as bereavement and other impromptu problems.

"Well, most times as I said when you prepare western foods, you see that people are happy and consume the food in large quantity, but if for example, you cook our local food such as potato leaves, they will eat, but they will not really be happy. If the income is high like I said most times, you will be willing to prepare mostly western foods, but we adjust from time to time when there is less income in the house. Income will also affect the way interaction takes, as I said if you do not provide what they want, they will be unhappy and the level of participation will decline. Sufficient income encourages you to provide at all times what the family wants, but if the income is low at least you would have to adjust so as to ensure that food is available to the family every day" (Interviewee 7, Christian, Female).

The findings also show that, Muslim and Christian females were more concerned about the quantity, variety and quality of food, as the main influencers of their families' interaction at mealtimes. Despite these similarities, Muslim females unlike their Christian counterparts were more inclined to suggest that, income acts as an enabler in controlling the behaviours of their children at mealtimes. This implies that, income is instrumental is guaranteeing a sustainable livelihood and perhaps more importantly, promotes orderliness and sense of appreciation, especially from the children

*"Like I said if we have enough income, everybody will be happy, especially the children as they would be able to access more food and also the quality of food at the dinner table will be of the right kind that everybody wants. We e can also buy variety of foodstuffs. But when our incomes are not sufficient enough to get the appropriate quality and quantity of foodstuffs, sometimes the children will be sad as they will not be sufficiently fed and probably not satisfied with the quality of the food, but irrespective of what we always stay together as a family and try not to show it outside". (*Interviewee 19, Female, Muslim)

*"Income is very important because we can only talk about having a stable and good family if we are able to provide for our children. If we do not have money to provide for our children, it is very difficult to even control them. When there is sufficient income at home the family will always be happy and they will be admired by neighbours and other people. Income is also important because it brings respect to the family, if you do not have income in Africa, people will hardly respect you. Even your children sometimes will fail to listen to you if you cannot provide for their needs". (*Interviewee 37, Female, Muslim)

Just as the Muslim and Christian females, their male counterparts highlighted food quality, food quantity, food variety and happiness as the primary influencers of their families' meal behaviour. However, unlike their Christian counterparts, the Muslim husbands identified income as a very vital tool used by them in controlling and reigning in the behaviour of their families, especially children, at mealtimes.

*"In the first place, it has an influence on the quality of food provided and prepared for the family, and when the food is nice, you will see the emotion from the kids, they will be very happy. In addition, when the food is enough there will be no crying after eating because they will be satisfied and fed. However, if the food is not enough and the kids are not fed, the older ones will grumble whilst the younger ones will cry, as they need more. Therefore, income plays a role in the aspect of the quality, variety and even the quantity. And the meal is not only restricted to the solid aspect like rice, but you have to bring on board other ingredients or other treats to go along with the food, so that they will enjoy the meal and that is being influenced by the kind of income you have". (*Interviewee 34, Male, Muslim)

Analysing the impact of job on families' meal social interaction behaviour

Overwhelming number of families highlighted the adverse effect of their jobs on their families' socialisation at mealtimes. Many argued that, their jobs do not only limit the number of times their families eat together as a unit, but affect the timeliness of the meal preparation, delivery and consumption. Therefore, the late meal preparation fundamentally affects the rate of participation, especially of the children, causes loss of appetite, as it disrupts their consumption pattern, and sometimes even pushes others to look for alternative source to assuage their hunger. In addition, the findings show that, families are dependent on their jobs as a source of income. Implicitly, the money earned serves as a proviso for better food at the dinner table and provides a friendly atmosphere for effective socialisation and interaction at mealtimes. Thus, fosters unity and happiness among family members, especially children at mealtimes.

"My job provides me money, which enables me to provide for the family. Like I have said, if I am able to provide better food at the dinner table, the interaction will be very effective and friendly because the children will be happy and everybody around the table will be happy" (Interviewee 16, Male, Christian).

The findings also show that, Muslim and Christian females expressed commonality in the areas of lateness/time constraint and absences from the dinner table as the main effect their jobs have on their families' meal behaviour. However, the Christian females expressed concern about the effect their jobs have on their families' rate of participation or loss of appetite at mealtimes, an issue less stressed by Muslim females.

"...sometimes I come late from work and by then they have finished eating dinner or sometimes I work so hard in my job that when I come home I have less time and feeling tired and loss of appetite will cause me not to want to share the dinner table. I just check on the kids to make sure that they are doing fine and ask them to close the main gate and go straight to bed. And if my husband is out of town, I work a lot, which affects my family when I come back from work" (Interviewee 3, Female, Christian)

Akin to the Muslim and Christian females, their male counterparts also emphasised lateness, time constraint, participation rate and absence at mealtimes as the main effects their jobs have on their families' meal behaviour. This implies that, despite jobs provide incomes for families'

daily upkeep; they can also act as deterrents to their socialisation and interaction at mealtimes and hence, affects the unity of the family.

*"I can come home and may be at the dinner table, I will receive a call that something has gone wrong, and I will have to leave the dinner table abruptly to go to address the problem. Sometimes, it happens even before we have the dinner, I will receive a call and I will just leave home again before dinner is served. I will sometimes stay out for longer than expected and my family will start urging me to come home and join them for dinner. Sometimes, I will be lucky to join them, but at other times, they will have their dinner without me, which affects my participation". (*Interviewee 14, Male, Christian)

Analysing the influence of education on families' meal social interaction behaviour

Education is central to refining the behaviour of families at mealtimes and teaches the children basic table manners and etiquette such as non-use of vulgarity, silence, respect and politeness at mealtimes. Many families argue that, it teaches basic hygiene, including washing hands before meal and cleaning the dining area to reduce the effect of diseases, and that in fact, the dinner table acts as a forum for discussing historic events and stories, which significantly increases the knowledge and understanding of children. Most importantly, education breeds confidence, promotes individuals ability to speak publicly, and contributes meaningful to table discussions. It helps to build the spirituality of family members, as it teaches them how to pray before and after meal and increases their knowledge of how to seek God. Some indicated that, the socialisation of girls into preparing meals, serving meals and cleaning the dining table after meal are significant part of education at mealtimes. It is the ardent believe by many that, a young girl socialised and trained about how to cook and serve meal at the dinner, have greater chances of getting a good and stable husband/home than an untrained one.

"Most of the things we teach our children are mostly used as a forum for learning, a forum for improving their behaviour, and a forum for teaching them the basic ethics of life. Education provides the appropriate foundation for any family to learn, as our children are able to learn and understand our values through education without which it will be very difficult to unify your family. For example, at the dinner table, we teach them not to talk when eating as pepper will go the wrong part, we teach the concept of respect for elders, which is very important for shaping their behaviour in the eyes of the wider public, and we

use education to enable them learn and understand the difference between rights and wrongs. Therefore, education is very important. (Interviewee 28, Male, Christian).

The findings also show that, Muslim and Christian females were emphatic in highlighting civilisation, table etiquette and hygiene as primary educational factors that influences their families' interaction at mealtimes. This show that, irrespective of the ethnic and/or religious background, education is a fundamental part of Sierra Leonean families' meal social interaction behaviour, and children are socialised to imbibe these practices in their own families when they transition into adults.

*"Education actually provides the light to civilise behaviour in our home as it teaches basic etiquette and morals. For example, the issue of washing hands before eating, no talking when eating as pepper will go the wrong part, respect for elders, and so on are as a result of education. Education also teaches the children how to behave in public. Even watching television, children learn how to treat each other and respect elders. Therefore, if these basic educational issues are taught to the children both in school and at home, their interaction at the dinner table will be polite and respectful to others". (*Interviewee 21, Female, Muslim)

Consistent with the Muslim and Christian females, their male counterparts suggested that, moral ethics, hygiene, knowledge, balanced diet and family cohesion are fundamental educational factors that influences their families' social interaction at mealtimes. This shows that, education is a useful platform for knowledge sharing, storytelling, teaching basic hygiene practices and most importantly, it provides an enabling environment that unifies the family around a common goal.

*"Education enables us to effectively utilise our God given talent. Normally, conversation or learning starts at the dinner table, while schools and our professions serve as an ingredient to success. It is only through education at the dinner table that we are able to teach our children the basic ethics of life such as hygiene and how to behave appropriate in and outside the home. Education helps unite the family along a common front" (*Interviewee 30, Male, Christian)

Evaluating the impact of authority on families' meal social interaction behaviour

Authority is the foundation for peaceful co-existence, cooperation and stability and the driving force for ensuring children are humble and respectful to other members of the family at the dinner table. Most importantly, it helps the family coalesce around a common course/agenda at mealtimes. Many argued that, it helps guide the behaviour of the family members and ensures adherence to good ethical conduct at mealtimes. It moulds and reigns in the behaviour of the children at mealtimes, which triggers responsiveness to the chain of command and decision-making.

"It is very important because when instructions are adhered to, it breads a peaceful atmosphere at the dinner table. It ensures cleanliness of utensils at the dinner table and shapes behaviour around the dinner table. In addition, it is very important because when you authorise an individual to do something, it makes the person that gives the instruction to be proud when his/her request is adhered to, especially when at the dinner table. In addition, authority ensures that work is done in your absence even without instructing them to do so, as everybody is aware of what is expected of them. If you fail to give orders and control your family at mealtimes, the entire family will fall apart as every individual will freely behave as s/he choose to. Therefore, authority serves to unify the family in a single direction as everybody knows what is expected of them" (Interviewee 5, Female, Christian).

The findings also show that, the Muslim and Christian females share similar views about the significance of authority in their meal socialisation behaviour by highlighting control, family unity, stability and peaceful co-existence as key influencers at mealtimes. However, the views were distinct in terms of decision-making, as the Muslim females were inclined to suggest that it is the main influencer of their families' behaviour at mealtimes, which is less emphasised by the Christian females.

"Well, for law and order to be maintained at the dinner table, there must be somebody that everybody must respect and be afraid of, who usually is the figure head. If authority does not exist, just as decision-making, the entire family will be in chaos as nobody listens to nobody. For example, when my husband is not at the dinner table, sometimes, the children will argue with each other, but when my husband is at the dinner table, they will be scared of even talking. Therefore, authority brings orderliness and control at the dinner table. It also ensures that the right thing is done all the time, which guarantees family unity, stability and harmony" (Interviewee 31, Female, Muslim)

Just as the Muslim and Children females, the male counterparts shared commonalities in the areas of hierarchy, control and family unity, as the key authority factors influencing their families' meal social interaction behaviour. The findings also show that, irrespective of the ethnic and religious differences, Muslim and Christian males' mealtime practices and behaviours are similar. This implies that, cultural and religious differences do not affect their mealtime socialisation behaviour. This further implies that, male dominance and chauvinism are part of families' socialisation practice and discourse at Sierra Leonean mealtimes.

"Everybody knows that the head of the family is the father and next to him is the mother. Therefore, everybody in the family will have to understand that those are the hierarchy or chain of command or control in the family and therefore you will have to respect them. If you do not respect them, you will be seriously reprimanded. Authority definitely ensures that the family is unified and stable. Therefore, you have to respect authority, not only at the dinner table and in the home, but also outside the home, whether at school or at work. Don't talk to authorities freely as you choose especially your mother and your father…" (Interviewee 14, Male, Christian)

Discussion

This study is the first to explore the impact of social class on families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone. The findings show that, food quality, food quantity and happiness are income factors that affects the meal discourse behaviour of all families, including Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males, and determines the degree of satisfaction families enjoy at mealtimes. Despite these avowed similarities, differences were evident as the Christian females and their male counterparts, including Muslim females emphasised food variety as fundamental income influencers of families' behaviour at mealtimes. In addition, the Muslim females and males view income as instrumental in controlling the behaviour of their children at mealtimes, a factor less emphasised by the Christian females and males. The results also show divergence in views even among families of the same religious and gender groupings, including: affordability; satisfaction; family unity/stability; family image; respect; modern foodstuffs; participation; love; appetite; survival; meal frequency; healthy growth; sharing; lifestyle changes; saving; investment; development; relationship building; peace/stability; sustainability; scarcity; planning; understanding; better standard of living; status; and choices. This suggests that, families view income as a facilitator of their accesses to not only abundant food, but also enables them to access variety and a balanced diet, which is fundamental to the stability of the family. Consistent with Peacock et al (2014), the findings show that, social class is the evidence of income inequality, which determines the kind of food consumed by individuals. However, this study highlighted control; affordability; food quality; food variety; food quantity; and happiness as major influencers of Sierra Leonean families' meal social interaction behaviour. This implies that income is symbolic in ensuring families' access to a balanced diet and

essential to the stability, unity and happiness as well as for the smooth functioning of the dinner table.

Most families, including Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males emphasised lateness and time constraints as fundamental occupational factors that affects their families' meal social interaction behaviour. Despite these similarities, most Muslim females and males were emphatic about absenteeism as the key factor affecting their families' meal behaviour, which was less emphasised by the Christian females and males. In addition, most Christian females and males, including Muslim males reported loss of appetite as the fundamental job factor affecting their participation at mealtimes, which was less emphasised by the Muslim females. The results also show that, differences in opinion exists even among families with the same religious and gender groupings, including: tiredness; participation; family unity; appreciation; stress; hunger; respect; better relationship; control; love; responsibility; peace; and security. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees are adversely affected by time, absenteeism and lateness at their families' mealtimes, which can have a crucial impact on the way they relate with their children and potentially affect proper supervision of the children's meal behaviour. Mirroring the views of Moran-Ellis & Sünker (2018), the findings show that, families in collectivist societies demonstrates a unit of stratification, and that the occupation of the family head depicts their social class. This study identified lateness, absenteeism and timeliness as fundamental occupational factors that affect Sierra Leonean families' meal interaction behaviour. This implies that, in a country like Sierra Leone, where work-life balance is inconsequential, families' occupation can have negative impact on their families' meal behaviour, and potentially on organisational growth.

Muslim and Christian females and Muslim and Christian males indicated that, hygiene is the most fundamental educational factor that affects their families' behaviour at mealtimes. Despite these similarities, differences were evident as the Christian females, Christian males and Muslim males emphasised the symbolism of moral ethics as a fundamental educational factor that influences their families' meal behaviour; a factor less emphasised by Muslim females. In addition, most Christian and Muslim males were more emphatic about balanced diet and family cohesion as key educational factors that influences their families' behaviour at mealtimes, which were less emphasised by Muslim and Christian females. Furthermore, it was evident from the findings that, Muslim and Christian females were more concerned about table etiquette as symbolic educational factor affecting their families' meal behaviour, which may be due to gender roles in socialising, teaching and disciplining children; a factor less

emphasised by their male counterparts (Muslim and Christian males). Moreover, findings show that, whilst Christian females emphasised civilisation/modernity as influencers of their families' meal behaviour; Muslim males were more emphatic about the knowledge it fosters in the family, which were less emphasised by Christian males and Muslim females. The findings also show that, differences exists even among families of the same religious and gender groupings, including confidence; societal acceptance; family history; advice; family image; obedience; respect; balanced diet; happiness; control; cultural/traditional values; success/progress; harmony/unity/stability; division of labour; responsibility; decision-making; knowledge; humility; awareness; sharing; tolerance; idea transfer/experience; orderliness/hierarchy; development; planning; direction; religious values; judgement; learning/sharing ideas/enlightenment; affordability; communication/information; rewards; and solution. This suggests that, families view mealtime education as a transformational tool that can have a positive impact on their families' behaviour at mealtimes, which may help in keeping their families healthy and prevent them from disease. Consistent with Ghosh and Galczynski (2014), the findings show that, societies place people in strata and emphasised that in economically conscious societies, in the absence of wealth, people are classified based on their educational background. This study suggests that, moral ethics/table etiquette, civilisation/modernity, balanced diet, family cohesion and hygiene are elements of education that influences families' meal behaviour in the Sierra Leonean context.

In determining the influence of authority on their families' meal behaviour, Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males stressed hierarchy/control, and family unity, cohesion and stability as fundamental influencing factors. Despite these similarities, a Christian and Muslim males were emphatic about the symbolism of hierarchy and boundaries as critical authoritative factors that affects their families' meal behaviour; which are less emphasised by their female counterparts (Muslim and Christian females). In addition, the Muslim females emphasised decision-making as a fundamental aspect of authority, which was less emphasised by Christian females, Christian and Muslim males. The findings also show that, differences exists between families of the same gender and religious groupings, including respect; cooperation; development; success; social etiquette; responsibility; discipline; happiness; boundaries; troubleshooting; leadership; rules and regulations; obedience; age; expectations; decision-making; good manners; civilisation; humility; direction; bonding; fear; receptivity; compliance; family stability/cohesion; governance; centralisation; checks and balances; progress; penalty; and rules. This suggests that families were inclined to support

control and family unity/cohesion/stability as pivotal aspects of authority that influenced their families' meal behaviour. Consistent with Hofstede's (2003); and House et al (2013), the findings show that, power distance among families are hierarchical and power is centralised at the top with the power holders granted greater favour, status, privileges, and/or material reward, and that a clear distinction exists between superior and subordinate. The findings of this study show that, family unity, stability, cohesion, peace, and decision-making are key authoritative factors that influences families' behaviour in Sierra Leone. This implies that children in autocratic families have very little say in the decisions made by the head of the family at mealtimes and do not have the freedom to question those decisions, which sometimes can even limit their access to an appreciable quantity and quality of food.

Implications

The findings of the study provides an insight into the stratification of the Sierra Leonean society and demonstrates how class distinction affects the way families relate at mealtimes. Important social, economic, and cultural similarities and differences emerges between and within families of the same religious and ethnic groupings in terms of their judgement of how income, occupation, education and authority affects their families' meal behaviour. This indicates that the concept of social class despite similar; may differ from one family to another due to the social and economic division in society generally, which affects their consumption and meal interaction behaviour. The study demonstrates that, despite social class distinction affects how families relate with one another, but provides an excellent platform for nurturing and improving the behaviours of children, and most importantly refines their characters for the broader societal good.

It is apparent that social class distinction at the Sierra Leonean mealtimes are influenced by specific factors such as food quality, food quantity, food variety, happiness and control, but lateness, low participation rate, absenteeism, moral ethics, hygiene, family unity, knowledge sharing and hierarchy have been highlighted as key influences of families' meal social interaction behaviour. This implies that, Sierra Leonean families due to class stratification experience economic challenges in terms of not only access to sustainable food, but also most importantly faces daily social challenges of ensuring a healthy, cohesive and happy family. Future research, therefore, should build on these findings to highlight challenges faced by government in addressing these social and economic inadequacies experienced by families. Efforts should also be made in understanding the role of civilisation and/ modernity in

exacerbating the class distinction and its implications on families' meal social interaction behaviour.

Conclusion

The findings of this study concludes that, Social class distinction can be detrimental to families' meal social interaction behaviour as it limits access to not only affordable meals, but can adversely affect their meal interaction patterns, especially if parents continue to uphold the tenet of frequent absences and lateness at dinner times. This implies that, frequent absences/lateness creates gap in the social relation between parents and their children as well as other members of their families, which can have an adverse effect on the upbringing, control and regulation of the children's behaviour. However, it is noteworthy to mention that, social class fundamentally guarantees the inculcation of the right kind of social etiquette in children, which teaches them basic table manners. This shows that, observing table manners at mealtimes is symbolic in the meal behaviour of many families across the different spectrum of the social ladder in Sierra Leone, as it acts as the springboard for inculcating the right kinds of behaviour in children. The importance of this is that, the dinner table can be a perfect place for information sharing and/or transfer, which enables parents to teach children how to behave appropriately at mealtimes. Therefore, it creates an enabling environment for children to learn and inculcate good table manners and basic family ethics, which may guide them in the long-term. The implications of this conclusion are that adherence to these social etiquette can significantly reduce families contact with diseases and other health threatening sicknesses. It further implies that adherence to appropriate social etiquette teaches families the rights and wrongs in society, which guides them in learning new things and possibly revisit old ones.

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Appendix

Table 3: Personal Data of Families

Family category	Age (years)	Gender	Occupation	Ethnicity	Luxury food defined	Examples of luxury food
01FFI	30	Female	Procurement officer	Creole	Any special food eaten once in a while	Foo-foo + sauce, cassava leaves, vegetable salad, groundnut stew, krain-krain, potato leaves
	36	Male	Banker	Mende	Costly food normally consumed for comfort	Vegetable salad, shrimps +chips
02FFI	35	Female	Business woman	Temne	Luxury food is anything very expensive	Meat, fish, salad cous-cous, joloffrice, juice
	47	Male	Builder	Temne	They are food we mainly buy from the super markets	Wine, juice, fuits and drinks, biscuits, ice cream
03FFI	32	Female	Nurse	Yalunka	It is food provided to the family on special occasions	Rose apple, banana, chicken, salad
	52	Male	Teacher	Kono	Those items that the family needs, but not available at all times	Salad, chicken, meat
04FFI	46	Female	Geologist	Temne	It is anything which you buy with an amount that far exceeds what you will spend on normal food	Pizza, grapes, chicken, macaroni
	48	Male	Banker – Director	Mende	The food which the family wants, but it is not available on a daily basis	Pizza, apples

05FFI	35	Female	Business woman	Mende	They are supermarket foods	Hamburger, salad, sandwich, stew and chicken, meat, sweet potatoes
	40	Male	Inspector of police	Mende	It is ostentatious food	Chicken, snacks, mayonnaise, cocoa
06FFI	28	Female	Teacher	Kono	It is a food that is not prepared every day and are special foods prepared for special days	Salad, dessert, joloff, cous-cous, fried rice, fruits
	38	Male	Civil servant (Technical Coordinator)	Kissy	It is the food we do not normally eat, but eat once in a while with the appropriate ingredients	Meat, drinks, salad, rice, wine
07FFI	35	Female	Business woman	Temne	Food that doesn't get spoilt easily	Vegetables and fruits
	39	Male	Finance Officer (YMCA)	Kono	It is food that has all the nutrients to help the body grow	Ovaltine, cappuccino, milk, sardine, luncheon meat, salad cream, cornflakes
08FFI	46	Female	Social worker	Mende	A food that is not being purchased by everybody	Tin milk, eggs, vegetables, meat, chicken
	50	Male	Social worker	Mende	A food that makes you look special and you can't do without them	Hamburger, roasted chicken, ice cream
09FFI	49	Female	Mid-wife	Temne	It is when a sauce has good fish and meat as condiment	Joloff, fried rice, cassava leaves

	59	Male	Business man (self-employed)	Madingo	Is food containing protein, vitamins to build the body	Fruits, chicken, fish, meat
10FFI	36	Female	Teacher	Koranko	Food which can make the children grow well	Drinks, apple, fruits, meat
	45	Male	Civil engineer	Mende	Food used almost on a daily basis	Rice, foo-foo, cassava, potato, etc.
11FFI	38	Female	Teacher	Mende	Any food not always available to the family and very expensive	Fruits, ice cream, meat, milk, ovaltine
	43	Male	Civil servant	Mende	One though a staple, but not everybody can afford it every day or cannot afford it as a balanced diet	Rice, fish, meat, palm oil
12FFI	52	Female	Teacher/Pastor	Limba	Expensive foods	Meat, chicken, fish, salad, palm oil
	59	Male	Lecturer	Mende	It is something I eat and get good feeling from	Salad, meat, chicken, fish, rice
13FFI	26	Female	Nurse	Creole	Food that is needed at home for the daily sustenance of the family	Rice and provisions
	39	Male	Lecturer	Limba	Food that goes beyond your normal expenditure	Snacks

14FFI	42	Female	Teacher	Temne	It is food that is very expensive for the family to buy frequently	Salad, drinks, fruits
	50	Male	Agricultural Officer	Temne	Food that the family cannot prepare at home and the ingredients are not locally available. It is well balanced	Pizza, can foods, drinks
15FFI	59	Female	University Administrator	Creole	Very expensive foods that the family eat once in a week	Salad, hamburger, pizza, foo-foo and bitters
	64	Male	University Administrator	Creole	Foods that you don't eat ordinarily	Ice cream, sausages, bacon, pies
16FFI	42	Female	Principal	Mende	Any food that is expensive for a normal family to buy and it is usually outside the reach of a normal family	Pizza, meat, salad
	45	Male	Deputy Director (EPA)	Yalunka	They are delicacies eaten by the family	Meat, tin food, salad
17FFI	35	Female	Business woman (self-employed)	Temne	Food consume by the family with the right types of condiments	Stew Rice, salad, fruits, meat, chicken
	50	Male	Medical lecturer/tutor	Fulla	It is food that we eat every day at home	Rice and sauce, eba and okra, krain-krain

18FFI	43	Female	Teacher	Mende	It is everything you use as a family, including staple food	Rice, palm-oil, groundnut oil, onion, season, tomato, provisions
	52	Male	Businessman	Madingo	Food we eat in the home infrequently	Salad, fruits, drinks, sandwich
19FFI	45	Female	Housewife	Mende	Food that is purchased outside the home and are normally very expensive	Hamburger, sandwich, fruits
	52	Male	Civil Servant	Mende	Food that the family needs, but can only be provided on an infrequent basis	Meat, fish, drinks, salad
20FFI	40	Female	Social worker	Mende	Food that people buy from restaurants and stores	Milk, chicken, ovaltine, mayonnaise
	48	Male	Social worker	Madingo	Food that is needed by the family, but difficult to buy on a daily because it is expensive	Roasted chicken and meat, salad, provisions,

Table 4: Sample representation of the ethnic, religious and demographic composition of families who participated in the face-to-face semi-structured interviews

Families		Demographic	
Family 001	Wife	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Creole	**Type of occupation**: procurement office
		Family size: 3 **Religion**: Christianity	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Banker
		Family size: 3 **Religion**: Christianity	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 002	Wife	**Location**: HQ03 **Ethnicity**: Temne	**Type of occupation**: Businesswoman/self-employed
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP
	Husband	**Location**: HQ03 **Ethnicity**: Temne	**Type of occupation**: Constructor
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Christianity	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP
Family 003	Wife	**Location**: HQ04 **Ethnicity**: Yalunka	**Type of occupation**: Nurse
		Family size: 12 **Religion**: Christianity	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP
	Husband	**Location**: HQ04 **Ethnicity**: Kono	**Type of occupation**: Teacher
		Family size: 12 **Religion**: Christianity	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP
Family 004	Wife	**Location**: HQ04 **Ethnicity**: Temne	**Type of occupation**: Geologist

		Family size: 7 Religion: Muslim	District/Provincial headquarter town: EP
	Husband	Location: HQ04 Ethnicity: Mende	Type of occupation: Banker
		Family size: 7 Religion: Christianity	District/Provincial headquarter town: EP
Family 005	Wife	Location: HQ02 Ethnicity: Mende	Type of occupation: Businesswoman/self-employed
		Family size: 5 Religion: Christianity	District/Provincial headquarter town: SP
	Husband	Location: HQ02 Ethnicity: Mende	Type of occupation: Police Officer
		Family size: 5 Religion: Christianity	District/Provincial headquarter town: SP
Family 006	Wife	Location: HQ02 Ethnicity: Kono	Type of occupation: Teacher
		Family size: 5 Religion: Christianity	District/Provincial headquarter town: SP
	Husband	Location: HQ02 Ethnicity: Kissy	Type of occupation: Civil servant
		Family size: 5 Religion: Christianity	District/Provincial headquarter town: SP
Family 007	Wife	Location: HQ02 Ethnicity: Temne	Type of occupation: Businesswoman/self-employed
		Family size: 4 Religion: Christianity	District/Provincial headquarter town: SP
	Husband	Location: HQ02 Ethnicity: Kono	Type of occupation: Finance Officer
		Family size: 4	District/Provincial headquarter town: SP

		Religion: Christianity	
Family 008	Wife	**Location**: HQ02 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Social worker
		Family size: 10 **Religion**: Christian	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: SP
	Husband	**Location**: HQ02 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Social worker
		Family size: 10 **Religion**: Christian	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: SP
Family 009	Wife	**Location**: HQ03 **Ethnicity**: Temne	**Type of occupation**: mid-wife
		Family size: 4 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: SP
	Husband	**Location**: HQ03 **Ethnicity**: Madingo	**Type of occupation**: Businessman/self-employed
		Family size: 4 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP
Family 010	Wife	**Location**: HQ03 **Ethnicity**: Koranko	**Type of occupation**: Teacher
		Family size: 10 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP
	Husband	**Location:** HQ03 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Civil engineer
		Family size: 10 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP
Family 011	Wife	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Teacher

		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Civil servant
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 012		**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Limba	**Type of occupation**: Teacher/Pastor
		Family size: 6 **Religion**: Christian	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
		Location: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Lecturer
		Family size: 6 **Religion**: Christian	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 013	Wife	**Location**: HQ04 **Ethnicity**: Creole	**Type of occupation**: Nurse
		Family size: 4 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP
	Husband	**Location**: HQ04 **Ethnicity**: Limba	**Type of occupation**: Lecturer
		Family size: 4 **Religion**:	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP
Family 014	Wife	**Location**: HQ03 **Ethnicity**: Temne	**Type of occupation**: Teacher
		Family size: 5 **Religion**: Christian	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP
	Husband	**Location**: HQ03 **Ethnicity**: Temne	**Type of occupation**: Agricultural Officer
		Family size: 5	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP3

		Religion: Christian	
Family 015	Wife	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Creole	**Type of occupation**: University Administrator
		Family size: 4 **Religion**: Christian	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Creole	**Type of occupation**: University Administrator
		Family size: 4 **Religion**: Christian	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 016	Wife	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Principal
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**:Yalunka	**Type of occupation**: Deputy Director (Civil Servant)
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 017	Wife	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Temne	**Type of occupation**: Businesswoman/Self-employed
		Family size: 9 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Fullah	**Type of occupation:** Medical Lecturer
		Family size: 9 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 018	Wife	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Teacher
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01	**Type of occupation**: Businessman/self-employed

		Ethnicity: Madingo	
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 019	Wife	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Housewife
		Family size: 12 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Civil servant (Deputy Director General)
		Family size: 12 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 020	Wife	**Location**: HQ04 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Social worker
		Family size: 3 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP
	Husband	**Location**: HQ04 **Ethnicity**: Madingo	**Type of occupation**: Social worker
		Family size: 3 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP

Codes:

Freetown: HQ 01; Western Area: WA; Bo: HQ 02; Southern province: SP; Makeni: HQ 03; Northern Province: NP; Kenema: HQ 04; Eastern province: EP

Please note that, HQ means – Headquarter town