

A STUDY OF FACTORS AFFECTING
ADOLESCENT PERCEPTIONS OF PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT
AFTER PARENTAL DIVORCE IN GHANA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
General Significance and Potential Contribution of the Study	1
Theoretical Perspectives	4
Adolescent Internalizing Behaviors	7
Adolescent Externalizing Behaviors	8
Adolescent Social Adaptability types of Behaviors	8
Adolescent Ethnicity	9
Religion	12
Social Support network	16
Extended Family System	17
Marital Divorce in Ghana	19
Adolescent Gender	26
Statement of Problem	28
Significance of the study	29
Operational Definition of Terms	31
Summary	33
11 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	34
Ethnicity	34
Cultural component of Ethnicity	36
Social capital component of ethnic group	37
Religion	39
Adolescent Gender	45
Research Questions	52
Research Hypotheses	53
111 METHODOLOGY	56
Introduction	56
Research Design	56
Sample Characteristics	57
Detail Characteristics of the Sample	58
Pilot test of Draft Questionnaire [Adolescent Adjustment Checklist, (AAC)]	68
Test–retest Procedures and Measurement of Psychosocial Properties of AAC	70

Administrative Procedures and data collection	71
Ethics approval	71
Administrative Process for main Field Survey	71
Data Collection of main field survey	73
Debriefing session for distressing participants	75
Development of Research Instrument	75
Description and development of Research Instrument	79
Determination of internal consistency reliability	81
Measurement of content and construct validity	83
Methods of Data analysis	84
Data processing	84
Data and measurement scale screening	84
Statistical Procedures for analysis of data and hypothesis	85
Hypothesis testing	87
 IV RESULTS	 89
Descriptive Statistics of Adolescents of Divorced Families as measured by AAC	89
Analysis of Data to test Hypotheses	103
Summary	119
 V DISCUSSION	 112
Review of Research Objectives	112
Religion and adolescent psychosocial adjustment	125
Gender relationship to adolescent psychosocial behaviors	133
Gender relationship to adolescent internalizing behaviors	140
Ethnic group relationship to adolescent externalizing behavior outcome	145
Summary of Conclusion	148
Limitation of study	149
Future Research	152
Future research on religiousness	152
Recommendation for Practice in the Ghana context	153
Policy recommendation for Ghana	155
Bibliography	158
 APPENDICES	
A The Survey Instrument	192
B Letter to Cape Coast Regional Education Office	204
C Letter to Headmasters requesting permission to conduct survey	206
D Letter to Parent/ Guardian and Parent/Guardian Consent Form	208
E Letter to students and Student Assent Form	210
F Standard Code of Instruction	212

Summary

Considering the increasing number of single parent mother headed families in Ghana, more Ghanaian adolescents experience varying factors that affect their psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce. Complicating adolescents' developmental process with stress, parental divorce affects adolescents post divorce identity and psychosexual adjustment.

The purpose of the study was to examine a cluster of variables independently to determine their effects on adolescents' psychosexual adjustment following parental divorce.

The following independent variables were considered for the study: adolescent sex, adolescent ethnicity and adolescent religiousness.

The study was a cross sectional survey design which utilized a non probability, convenience sample with structured questionnaire for the collection of quantitative data involving multiple variables that were examined to detect patterns of association. Participants consisted of 564 secondary school boys (n=252) and girls (n=312) who have experienced parental divorce for at least two-years and were living with their divorced mothers at the time of the survey.

Adolescents' sex significantly predicted externalizing types of behavior; but did not predict internalizing and social adaptability types of behavior in this study. Confirming main stream research findings, adolescent boys who experienced parental divorce showed more externalizing types of behaviors than girls regardless of context in this study. However, the study did not confirm internalizing types of behaviors for adolescent girls than boys. Also, girls and boys in this study exhibited no significant difference in their social adaptability types of behaviors.

The overall impact of religion on adolescent girls' psychosocial adjustment was markedly significant in predicting lower internalizing behavior and different social adaptability behavior

outcomes. Contrarily, religious participation failed to predict lower externalizing types of behavior adjustment for girls and boys.

Girls who participated in religious counseling and guidance recorded significant lower internalizing behavior outcomes than boys. Contrarily, non participation in religious counseling and guidance for boys and girls did not significantly predict lower internalizing behavior outcomes.

Participation in religious activities did not predict lower externalizing behavior outcomes for girls than for boys. In a similar vein, non participation in religious activities did not predict lower externalizing behavior outcomes for girls than boys.

On the contrary, girls of different religious background significantly predicted different social adaptability behavior outcomes as is normally indicated in the literature.

Ethnic differences did not have significant effect on the internalizing or externalizing behavior outcomes of adolescent boys and girls.

Based on this study, future directional studies may include a longitudinal study of the effects of religiousness covering a time span of different developmental phases to deepen understanding and knowledge of the religiousness-delinquency literature in Ghana. The study recommends a Youth Skill building and Preventive Program as an intervention service program for youth psychosocial problems. At the family level, a family based religious coping program based on the centrality of the family to adolescent functioning is suggested. For policy consideration, it is suggested that efforts be made to establish quality after school youth programs to engage adolescents in several mentoring activities.

TABLE

LIST OF TABLE

1.	Changes in religious distribution in Ghana from 1960 to 2000	13
1.1	Regional Courts Performance on Registered marriage (Marriage Divorce from 2000, 2001, and 2004)	22
1.2	District Court Performance on customary marriage (2003/2004)	23
1.3	Statistical overview of matrimonial cases pending trial from 1996 to 1999	25
1.4	A Conceptual Model for the study of adolescent perception of psychosocial adjustment	55
3.1	Adolescent self-Reported Age at Time of survey	59
3.2	Adolescent self-Reported Ethnic groups Data	60
3.3	Adolescent Religious Participation self-Reported Data	62
3.4	Adolescent Religious Counseling and guidance participation self-Reported Data	63
3.5	Adolescent Religious Group Identification self-Reported Data	64
3.6	Adolescent self-Reported Age at Time of Parental Divorce	65
3.7	Adolescent self-Report on years post-Parental Divorce	67
3.8	Instrument and Scales consulted in developing Adolescent Adjustment Checklist (AAC)	76
3.9	Scale Reliabilities	82
4.1a	Descriptive statistics of Categorical Variables of AAC Section 'A'	90
4.1b	Frequency Table for Adolescent Ethnicity	91
4.1c	Frequency Table for Adolescent Religious Identity	92
4.1d	Frequency Table for Adolescents' Religious Participation	93
4.1e	Frequency Table for Adolescent Engagement in Religion	94
4.1f	Frequency Table for Adolescents' Maternal job classification	95
4.1g	Frequency Table for adolescents' who live with Relatives	96
4.1h	Frequency Table for Adolescents observation of Parental Violence	97
4.1i	Frequency Table for Age-related Variables in Section 'A' of AAC	98
4.2a	Descriptive statistics of Adolescents of Divorce as measured by AACEXT	100
4.2b	Descriptive statistics of Adolescents of Divorce as measured by AACINT	101
4.2c	Descriptive statistics of Adolescents of Divorce as measured by AACSD	102
4.3a	Results of t-Test analysis of Group Difference for Externalizing types of Behaviors	104
4.4a	Results of t-Test analysis of Group Difference for Internalizing types of Behaviors	105
4.5a	Results of t-Test analysis of Group Difference for Social Adaptability types of Behaviors	106
4.6a	Results of t-Test analysis of Group Difference for Externalizing types of Behaviors due to Engagement in Religious Counseling and Guidance	107
4.6b	Results of t-Test analysis of Group Difference for Internalizing types of Behaviors due to Engagement in Religious Counseling and Guidance	108
4.7a	Comparison between Religious Group Difference for Internalizing types of behaviors	109
4.7b	Result of One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on comparison of Religious Groups and Adolescent Girls Social Adaptability Types of Behaviors	110
4.8a	Results of t-Test Analysis of Group Difference for Externalizing	111

	types of Behaviors due to Participation in Religious activities	
4.8b	Results of t-Test Analysis of Group Difference for Externalizing types of Behaviors due to non Participation in Religious Activities	112
4.9a	Display of means of Ethnic Groups	113
4.9b	Results of One Way Analysis of Variance of effects of Ethnic Groups on Adolescent Girls Internalizing types of Behaviors.	114
4.10a	Display of Means of adolescents Ethnic Groups	
4.10b	Results of One Way Analysis of Variance for effects of Ethnic Groups on Adolescent Boys Externalizing types of Behaviors	115
4.11	Summary Table of Results of Analyses of Statistical Significance of study Hypotheses	116 117
5.1	Predictors of adolescent psychosocial adjustment to parental divorce	127

Chapter 1.

INTRODUCTION.

The research reported here was designed to identify the factors which affect adolescent perceptions of psychosocial adjustment following their parents divorce in Ghana.

This introductory chapter indicates the significance and potential contribution of the study with background information. It also presents the statement of problem, the theoretical perspectives, operational definitions of terms conceptualized for the study and finally, the rationale and limitation with a summary of the chapter.

General Significance and Potential Contribution of the Study

Parental divorce is a major social problem and continues with increasing concern to policy makers and helping professionals in Ghana (Judicial Report Review, 2003/2004; Ghana Demographic and Housing Statistics (GDHS), 2005; Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), 2002; Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), 2003; Census Bureau of Statistics, 1960). Parental divorce has complex implications for divorced parents and adolescents of divorced families.

Parental divorce complicates adolescents' developmental process with stress which ultimately affects their post divorce identity and psychosocial adjustment (Erikson, 1963; Gardner, 1977; Gutman, 1993; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Amato, 2001). Thus, the adolescents' developmental tasks, coupled with the stress of their parents' divorce, moderate the perception of the factors that affect their psychosocial adjustment (Hetherington & Kelly,

2002; Amato, 2001). Recent staggering figures have been reported for divorced single parent families in Ghana (GSS, 2005; Ghana Population Data Analysis Report, 2005) . According to the Ghana Statistical Service Report (GSS, 2005),

“The proportion of females heading households of sizes 2 – 6 is higher than that of males and this is true of all periods. This pattern also runs through both urban and rural localities.....more females assumed the responsibility of household heads since the 1960s, but in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions, the proportion of female headed households has remained under below 25 per cent. Prior to the 2000 Population Census, the majority of females, 50 years and older and in urban areas were heads of households but this has dropped to about 45 percent in 2000.

Another important feature is that female headship rates are much higher in urban than rural areas, irrespective of age and period of assessment”(Ghana Population Data Analysis Report, Vol.1, 2005:35-38).

Again, the Ghana Family and Development Research (GFDR,1994) indicated that fifty percent (50%) of single parent mother headed families were divorced; thirty percent (30%) were separated; fourteen percent (14%) were victims of transfer and two percent (2%) were widows (Elizabeth Ardeyfo Shandorf, 1995). Evidently, the divorced / separated single parent families according to this report constituted three million (3 million) which was eighty percent (80%) of the entire three million and seven hundred thousand (3.7 million)female headed households, whilst three hundred thousand (300,000) which constituted twenty percent (20%) was reported for non-divorced single parent families.

The more consistent picture of the divorce situation is that, the proportion of divorced/separated women has increased slightly from 7.2 percent to 8.2 percent in 2000 (Aryeh & Forson, cited in Ghana Statistical Service, 2005). The alarming picture of the divorce situation in Ghana is that it had reached twenty-nine percent by 1991 according to Neequaye, Neequaye and Bigger (1991). Ghanaian youth (15 -24years), on the other hand, constitute more than eighteen percent (18%) of the current population and has increased from 1.1 million in 1960 3.5 million in 2000 (GSS, 2002). Given the current birth rate of 0.3% and with 2.4 million increase in the youth population, and 3 million increase in the divorced families during the same period (1960-200), the issue of the study of factors affecting adolescents following parental divorce cannot be over-emphasized (GDPAR, Vol. 1, 2005;

GSS, 2002). Thus, the current trend of increasing marital divorce within the last four decades reflects the increasing numbers of Ghanaian children and particularly youths that are affected in their psychosocial adjustment following their parents' divorce (GDHS, 2005; GSS, 2002; 1999; ISSER, 2003; Census Bureau of Statistics, 1960).

Generally, adolescence has been considered a difficult stage in the process of development into adulthood. It has also been reported as a period of crises characterized by profound change (Erikson, 1963). The point of this study is to determine how adolescents adjust to parental divorce; this research therefore is designed to find out the factors that affect adolescent psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce.

By and large, the effects of various factors that affect adolescent adjustment will be explored, hitherto, in a non-clinical sample in Ghana.

The potential contribution of the findings of this research therefore will be the implications it will have for policy consideration to improve the psychosocial welfare of the increasing proportions of Ghanaian adolescents that suffer and endure the pain of parental divorce. The clinical practice implication of this study for social work and other helping professions will be toward facilitating the design of intervention strategies to help adolescents who experience adjustment difficulties to their parents divorce. Also, the findings may help in the design of early intervention strategy to reduce levels of adolescent distress to prevent mal adjustment crises.

Components of early intervention program based on findings of this study may seek to promote youth protective factors (Flay & Collins, 2003) with training in self management and effective communication skills (Williams, 2003) to enable them adjust positively to the challenging family and personal demands due to parental divorce (Schinke et al., 2002)

Finally, findings from the study will be published as additional academic information in this area of research. The results will be shared through panel/workshops and seminars in social work agencies and with non-governmental agencies (NGOs) in Ghana that specialize in promoting youth wellbeing.

Theoretical Perspectives.

The huge and fractured literature on adolescent psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce is indeed challenging as there is little coherence across studies with few integrative commitment to connect mini-theories, research programs and practical concerns (Moshan, 2004).

The large number of adolescents experiencing parental divorce makes the impact of divorce on adolescent a continuing concern for researchers, social work professionals and policy makers in Ghana (GSS, 2005). A variety of methods have been used to study the effects of divorce. These include case studies (McDermott, 1968; Trunnel, 1968), in-depth interviews (Hetherington, 1972, 1979), longitudinal studies (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1986; Cherlin et al., 1991), group comparisons (Herzog & Sudia, 1973; Stevenson & Black, 1988), and process oriented designs (Emery et al., 1984, Amato, 1987; Kelly & Emery, 2003).

Process oriented design (Barber & Eccles, 1992; Kelly & Emery, 2003; Amato & Sobolewski, 2001) is dynamic as opposed to the structuralist design (McLanahan, 2002; Capaldi & Patterson, 1991) and has been strongly suggested (Stevenson & Black, 1995) in the extant literature. Stevenson & Black (1995) have reported that: “one characteristic of

process approaches is that more data are available for analysis,...and it allows us to identify possible specific factors that differ between children in one-and two-parent families and to determine which variable influence other variables to enable the use of bivariate and multivariate statistical analysis” (p.17). Relationship measures have accounted for more of the differences in adolescent psychosocial behavior than has family type.

The process approach (Wallerstein, 1999; Kelly & Emery, 2003; Amato & Sobolewski, 2002) emphasize a general sensitivity not only to adolescents of broken homes as the structuralist view contends (McLanahan, 2002; Capaldi & Patterson, 1991), but emphasize a whole series of variables (e.g. ethnicity, religion, gender, household income, parental conflict, etc.) that effect adolescents psychosocial adjustment. The announcement of parental divorce may shock adolescents; although, the divorce decree itself will not bring about the effects of the parental divorce. The effects are caused by such variables as the quality of the marital relationship; the frequency and degree of inter parental violence, the parent–child relationship, the availability of social support network, and the level of financial resources available to the adolescent (Berber and Eccles, 1992). The process oriented approach is suitable in the identification of several variables that potentially predict adolescent psychosocial adjustment, and in this way, provides richer research data for a more sophisticated statistical technique to analyze data (Stevenson & Black, 1995).

Psychosocial and psychosexual developmental tasks converge during adolescence, thereby making this period a rather turbulent one, coupled with the stressful and tragic experience of parental divorce. Adolescents’ identity involves an integration of the sexual, intellectual, and moral self in all aspects of social functioning and it is during this period that Erikson (1963) conceptualized a polarity between identity achievement and role confusion.

In psychosexual theory (Erikson, 1963), the adolescent is understood to be imitating and actively identifying with significant adults of both genders, and this developmental process is challenged by parental divorce which affects their identity and esteem function.

However, research findings indicate that divorce does not necessarily have long term negative consequences for the psychosocial adjustment of adolescents.

Emery (1982), reported that, although parental divorce is reliably associated with increased aggression, more truancy and school drop out, the differences between children reared in divorced families and married families are small in magnitude. Amato (1991b, 2000) in his meta-analyses have expressed similar sentiments that the difference in the effects of parental divorce on adolescent adjustment is not remarkably huge from the adjustment of children of intact families. Hetherington and Kelly (2002) have indicated that although divorce is a source of considerable distress in and of itself, it is not the cause of lasting maladjustment in the children.

Emery (1982) argued further that family processes that often begin before and continue after the separation are the best predictors of children's psychological health. He concluded that the same principles of child development that apply to children of married families also hold for divorced families.

Older adolescents (15- to 19-years) appear to experience the effects of parental divorce differently from that of pre-adolescents (12- to 15-years), because of their developmental maturity, which enable them to be more involved in their own personal activities and make them independent from their parents. Although, they are less enmeshed in their parent's divorce, they may exhibit strong internalizing types of behaviors. (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b). When parental divorce appears sudden and unexpected, adolescents' identity

development is thrown ajar and their self confidence in their parents and other adults are undermined (Kelly & Emery, 2003). With the impending identity crises (Erikson, 1963), they develop several pathways which negatively affect their psychosocial adjustment (Kelly & Emery, 2003; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). Three psychosocial behavior patterns were identified for this research namely: internalizing types of behaviors, externalizing types of behaviors and social adaptability types of behaviors.

Adolescents' Internalizing types of behaviors:

Amato & Keith (1991a) have reported on research being more equivocal in establishing divorce as a risk factor for adolescents' internalizing problems. Internalization refers to problems that generally focus on emotional components such as sadness, worry, fear, hurt, fright and low self confidence (Zahn-Waxler et al., 2000; Kovacs & Devlin, 1998).

Kovacs and Delvin (1998) define internalizing problem behaviors as conditions whose central feature is disordered mood or emotion (p. 47.). Adolescents' internalizing behaviors are those inwardly troublesome, overcontrolled, overt behaviors that typically include depression, anxiety and low self esteem. Lerner & Steinberg (2004) have reported that adolescent depression, worry and anxiety ((Kirby, 2002; Simons et al., 1999; Hetherington and Clingenpeel, 1992; Skinhausen et al., 1987) and low self esteem, low self confidence, and fright (Kirby, 2002, Sun and Li, 2002; Berber & Eccles, 1992) due to parental divorce is not a clinical disorder, but just an aspect of separation distress which constitute part of their adaptive process. It is interesting to note that not all adolescents experience and cope with the factors associated with their parents' divorce in a negative way (Lerner and Steinberg, 2004).

Adolescents' Externalizing types of behaviors:

Externalizing behaviors are the perceived overt behaviors which are undercontrolled by adolescent and consist of anti-social behaviors, aggression and delinquencies. Generally, conduct disorder adolescents tend to be aggressive and delinquent and are associated with other types of anti-social behaviors (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004)

Lipsey and Derzon (1998) have reported that adolescents who experience parental divorce tend to act on their impulse, and their impulsiveness is the most crucial personality dimension that predicts externalizing behaviors. Adolescents from divorced families are anti-social and aggressive (Paterson and Zill, 1986), and are reported to commit more delinquent acts including drunkenness in public places, fighting, stealing and misdemeanors (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992). Still, other research (Wallerstein & Lewis, 1998; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; and Hetherington, 2003) have reported that adolescents from divorced families were more likely to engage in externalizing behaviors such as sex experimentation, smoking and abuse of drugs (Clarke-Stewart & Brentano, 2006)

Adolescents' Social Adaptability types of behaviors:

Social adaptability involves the ability to adjust to a wide range of social situations and to feel comfortable with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Adolescent who adjust favorably have social competence (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004). Social competence is the adolescent's ability to integrate thinking, feeling and behavior to achieve social task and outcome in the midst of the experience of parental divorce (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004).

Adolescent use their social skills within the period of parental divorce to predict important social adaptability (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004).

Different cultures and contexts value different social behaviors (Stevenson & Black, 1995); however, there is some broad consensus in most societies about what is desirable. Among Ghanaian adolescents, establishing and maintaining a range of positive social relationships, contributing collaboratively and constructively to the peer group, the family, the extended family and the community, and engaging in behaviors that enhance and protect health and avoiding behaviors with negative consequences for the adolescent or others or both are signs of positive social adaptability (Anarfi & Antwi, 1995; Naylor, 2000). Social adaptability behaviors may then include both overcontrolled and undercontrolled social behaviors (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004) and may include antisocial acts (Paterson & Zill, 1986) hostility, social irritability, social rejection, passivity, social misunderstanding, and social withdrawal or positive adaptability such as friendliness, cooperativeness.

Adolescent Ethnicity

Ghana is a sub-Saharan West African country that shares borders with the Ivory Coast, Togoland, and Burkina Faso to the east, west and north respectively. The southern border is a coastal stretch along the Atlantic Ocean with Cape Coast, a colonial capital and currently an educational hub and Accra, the current capital town also located along the coastal stretch. Since 1957, Ghana is an independent Commonwealth nation with a current population of about twenty one million,

(Ghana Census, 2000). About 92.1 percent of the population are Ghanaians by birth with European and other Nationalities totaling 3.9 percent.

Major ethnic groups are the Akans (49.1%), the Moshi-Dagomba (16.5%), the Ewes (12.7%), the Ga-Dangme (8%), and Gurma, (1%). Each tribe has their peculiar linguistic and cultural characteristics, thereby making it possible to study the effects of ethnicity on adolescent psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce.

Most customary marriages and dissolutions are considered family matters and may not require court or municipal council ratification since they were not registered in the first place (Simon & Altstein, 2003 p.99; Ghana Gazette, 1991¹; Manuh, 1997). The seeds of customary marriage rites are traceable to the practices and norms of family life; therefore, contraction and dissolution of customary marriages are the preserve of the family heads (Daniels, 1987). Since customary marriage are dissolved without legal ramifications, issues of child custody and as well as spousal alimony are usually overlooked (Ghana Gazette, 1991; Manuh, 1997). However, an unhappy spouse with child custody may arrange a hearing before a court for consideration of a legal sanction to be enacted upon the non-custodial parent for financial support and maintenance of the child. Civic education continues to raise awareness of the general population and especially, divorced mothers of rights to financial support from non custodial parents through family courts. Ghanaian Tabloids (Shandorf, 1994) continue to educate on rights of child maintenance.

¹ This Act amends Ghana Customary Marriage and Divorce (Registration) Act to make the registration of marriages performed according to customary law optional, rather than mandatory. The Act also makes optional the notification of the Registrar of the dissolution of marriages performed according to customary law that have been registered under the Act. Finally, the Act provides that a court shall apply customary intestate succession law to a marriage recorded under the Act if it is satisfied that the marriage was validly contracted under customary law. There are grave disparities in the application of customary law in cases of customary marriage dissolution that often do not benefit women and children. (<http://www.ponline.org/docs/1134/086415.html>, retrieved on 07/20/2008).

However, due to the deep belief and reliance on customary practices, among several groups of rural folks, divorced mothers and children may depend on the extended family system for financial support and parenting assistance (Sudarkasa, 2004). This is the case among the bulk of rural dwellers who endure the woes of marital divorce with their adolescent children. This apathetic situation is attributable to high illiteracy level coupled with extreme poverty and belief in tradition. Thus, tribal and customary practices exist in Ghana especially in the rural areas but, these practices differ among the major ethnic groups (Takyi & Oheneba-Sakyi, 1994).

Ethnic variance (Takyi & Oheneba Sakyi, 1994) therefore, explains differences in marital practice (Naylor, 2000), marital separation, child custody and support (Isuogo-Abanihe, 1985; Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1995), parenting practice and style, and inheritance of wealth from the previous marriage (Manuh, 1997). The prevalence of tribal influence and support system are more dominant in the rural areas than in the urban areas (Takyi & Oheneba Sakyi, 1994).

Ethnic groupings, commonly called tribes in Ghanaian parlance differ from each other in respect to parenting practice and process. Differences in parenting relate to the way adolescent perceive their psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce. Among the matrilineal² tribe (Naylor, 2000) like the Ashantis, adolescents from divorced families receive collective support from the maternal descent (such as the uncles, grand parents and aunts), without discriminating between the sexes, whereas in the patrilineal cultures, more social esteem and personal value is placed on the adolescent boy than the adolescent girl who

² All ethnic groups in Ghana are divided into several clans that divide into two main lineages called patrilineal and matrilineal. Ghanaians who trace their descent through the male line such as the Ewes, Dagombas and Gas are Patrilineal, and those that trace descent through the female line such as the Ashantis, Fantis and the Bonos are matrilineal (Naylor, 2000)

experience parental divorce (Salm & Falola, 2002). The consequence of such gender discrimination is that, adolescent girls in patrilineal cultures receive less qualitative physical, emotional, psychological, financial and educational support; than adolescent girls in matrilineal culture (Salm & Falola, 2002).

This research was intended to explore ethnic group variance and their relation to adolescent psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce. Another significant variable that this research considered is religion which is briefly discussed below.

Religion

According to a worldwide study by Gallup International Millennium Survey (GIMS, 2000), West Africans are most highly religious people, with 99% of the people belonging to a religious denomination, 82% attending religious services regularly, 97% giving God high importance in their lives, and 95% believing that there is a personal god or some sort of spirit or life-giving force.

Ghanaian religions are grouped into four main types including 'free thinkers', Christianity, Islam and Traditional African religion. The following Table 1a depicts changes in the distribution of religious adherents in Ghana for a period of four decades from 1960 to 2000.

Although, Christian adherents have grown from 41% to 69% making an increase of 28%, Islam has also grown from 12% to 15.6%, making a marginal increase of 3.6% for the same period of four decades from 1960 to 2000 (Population Census of Ghana, 2000; Ghana Census, 1984).

Table 1a. Changes in religious distribution in Ghana from 1960 to 2000

Religious groups	1960	1985	2000
Christianity	41%	62%	69%
Traditional African Religion	38%	17%	8.5%
Islam	12%	15%	15.6%
Free Thinkers	9%	8%	6%

Sources: Population and Housing Census of Ghana, 2000; Ghana Census, 1984.

On the contrary, Traditional African religion and Free Thinkers made marginal declines in their numbers for the same period. Marginal percentage decrease was greater for Traditional African Religion (29.5%) than for Free Thinkers (3%). (Population Census of Ghana, 2000; Ghana Census, 1984).

The question that naturally arises is, is religious belief and practices a correlate of adolescent psychosocial adjustment following the divorce of their parents? In other words, will differences in religion account for changes in adolescent psychosocial adjustment post parental divorce?

Northern Ghana is predominated by Islam through Islamic traders and clerics who came from peninsular Arabia for the Trans Saharan Trade in the fifteenth century (Owusu-Ansah, 1994). Islam advocates polygamy which incidentally affirms traditional marital concepts and so many Ghanaians easily identified with this religious tenet and converted to Islam among other reasons (Shenk, 1995).

The presence of Christianity has been among the coastal dwellers of Ghana since the Portuguese missionary eras in the fifteenth century (Owusu-Ansah, 1994). Contrary to the Islamic principles of polygamy, Christianity on the one hand advocated monogamy but, introduced marital divorce among numerous polygamous converts without presenting any meaningful socio-economic agenda for the divorced wife and the offspring of the divorced families (Shenk, 2001).

Although western education and the Christian doctrine of monogamous marriage has made successive incursions into most African cultures including Ghana, it is ironic to observe the very 'westernized culture' coming under the pressure of rapid breaking of marital ties and families. There is also a dramatic increase in the decline of intact families leaving divorced mothers with children to form single parent mother headed families, or blended families or step families (U.S Bureau of the Census, 1997)

African Traditional religious groups in Ghana continue to enjoy the privileges of polygamous marriages and create larger families than their monogamous counterparts (Ezeh, 1997). They have a 'guaranteed' ease of divorcing spouses (in matrilineal marriages) through a less rigorous customary rite without formal demands or commitment to either their spouses' maintenance or their children's financial support (Naylor, 2000).

Generally, religion plays a very important role in the life of Ghanaian families and especially influences the way adolescents' cope with the challenges following parental divorce (Taylor, Chatters, & Levin, 2004; Pargament, 1997). Religious groups like Muslims and Christians provide accessible systems of support and identification of needs for assistance to adherents including youth members. These groups through formal counseling address emotional and behavioral concerns and foster positive emotions, such as hope,

optimism, and empowerment that enhance adolescents' psychosocial functioning and processes.

Religious content, meaning, and behaviors are important in defining adolescent role identities, relationships, and behaviors. Family events such as Christmas, the Ramadan or the Odwira³ that occur within the context of religious rituals enhance family bonding and emphasize the notion of family continuity as well as adolescents' awareness of their position as part of a larger extended family, regardless of parents divorce. Thus, the several religious holidays, festivities and observances represent occasions for reflection and commemoration that reinforce the primacy of the extended family as well as the adolescent's particular roles within the divorced family (Naylor, 2000).

By and large, religion plays a part in the coping process of adolescents in single parent families with respect to specific coping behaviors and strategies (such as, receiving spiritual support from peers or general prayers, as well as the enhancement and use of coping resources (Taylor, Chatters, & Levin, 2004). Adolescent-religious-coping may function in a variety of ways, such as through anxiety reduction, search for meaning, and social cohesiveness (Ellison & Taylor, 1996; Taylor, Chatters, & Levin, 2004).

Prayer is by far the most widely used religious coping behavior and it is a complex process that involves a range of orientations, motivations, expectations and outcomes (Ellison & Taylor, 1996; Taylor et al, 2004).

Recent research (Krause et al., 2000b; Taylor et al., 2004) examining the nature of prayer and its role in adolescent coping with adversity indicated that prayer is a transformative personal

³ This is a religious event that involves the chief(s) the fetish priest and clan leaders of traditional families of the Akan Traditional Society. The event is organized to renew and strengthen relations with ancestors and their gods. Ritual food is sacrificed with pouring of libation to the ancestors. Prayers are made for protection, prosperity, peace and population increase (see The Akan Blackened Stool and the Odwira Festival (Sarpong, as cited in Asante & Abarry, 1996))

experience that changed the adolescent in several ways such as self forgiveness, in situations of guilt and shame due to parental divorce. Religious counseling, on the other hand, helps adolescents manage their internalizing and externalizing behavior problems, that otherwise could have escalated into life crises or daily hustles (Krause et al., 2000b; Taylor et al., 2004), and teach them how to manage their stress to improve psychosocial adjustment. As a form of religious coping behavior, requesting prayers and spiritual counseling from adherents signals the need for assistance and guidance (Taylor et al., 2004). This attitude enhances group cohesion and connectedness and may provide adolescents of divorced families with emotional and psychological wellbeing (McCullough, & Larson, 2001; Taylor, Chatters, & Levin, 2004).

Finally, Ghanaian society which is characterized by different religions (Population Census of Ghana, 2000; Ghana Census, 1984) presents a plethora of mystical activities to assist adherents through superstitious beliefs, psychic and performed medium rituals as well as prayers and libation to help families cope with life crises and to rebound. Will religion then relate in any way to adolescents' psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce? This study sought to explore the relationship between religion and adolescents' psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce.

Social Support Network.

The availability and utilization of social support is associated positively with the psychosocial adjustment of children and adolescent in both the general population (Cauce et

al., 1982) and the population of children from divorced families (Drapeau & Bouchard, 1993; Farber et al., 1985; Isaac and Leon, 1986).

Social support refers to the existence of people and experiences that lead the adolescents to believe that there are several others in the community that value and care for their wellbeing by way of offering advise and counseling, monetary and emotional support and behavioral guide during the critical period of parental divorce (Drapeau & Bouchard, 1993). Studies of social support for adolescents typically include peer group support, teachers, relatives and older companions support (Dubour and Tisak, 1989). The point is, if stress following parental divorce is associated with negative psychosocial outcomes for adolescents, it would seem logical that stress buffers such as social supports would help to reduce negative outcomes (Drapeau & Bouchard, 1993).

The Extended Family System

In Ghana, social support network is best explained by the concept of the 'extended family system' (Sudarkasa, 2004). The extended family system includes family members and relatives, as well as a long list of life long family relations. In rural Ghana, the extended family may comprise several households with children belonging to all adult members in the household (Sudarkasa, 2004). Adolescents on the other hand, responsibly acknowledge and call adult female members as either mother or auntie and adult male member as father or uncle, even though these adult members are not their biological parents (Sudarkasa, 2004).

The extended family system is important because many people are poor (per Capita GDP=US\$532, UN Statistics Division-Demographic and Social Statistics, 2006) and need

relatives to support and care for them in the event of major life crises such as parental divorce, loss of job, terminal sickness or even death. The extended family also serves as source of psychological, emotional and spiritual support (Sudarkasa, 2004; Takyi & Oheneba Sakyi, 1994).

In her study of conceptions of motherhood in nuclear and extended families, Sudarkasa (2004), reported that the African extended family is built around lineage ties and are presumed to be unbreakable. This has multiple implications. One is that although a couple may be divorced, the family may not be broken as the relationship between the divorced mother and the ex-husband is presumed unbreakable. Thus, marital stability and family stability are differentiated. Family stability rests upon the lineal descent ties which are presumed to exist in perpetuity (Sudarkasa, 2004). The implication is that in the event of parental divorce, adolescents continue to reside with fathers as in the case of patrilineal societies or may reside with divorced mothers as in the case of matrilineal societies (Naylor, 2000). In patrilineal societies, young children will have to be nurtured by the divorced mother until they reach adolescence when they return to their father's residence (Naylor, 2000). Generally, customary convention ensures the smooth transfer of custody rights with no litigation involved. Children whose biological mothers had divorced are nurtured and catered for by paternal grandmothers, custodial father's brothers' wives, step mother(s) and other relatives. Adolescents and children of divorce maintain respectful relationships with the mothers and aunties in the father's household (Sudarkasa, 2004).

The extended family system basically exist to ensure continuity of the family by extending diverse supports to foster wellbeing and adjustment to members who experience crises. In rural Ghana, the extended family system ensures distribution of residential lands

and farmlands to divorced mothers who relocate from urban centers to help them settle and start some economic farming activity. In the urban areas, members of the extended family organize social events and may discuss and plan for new strategies to promote solidarity and wellbeing of distressed members and this may include children of divorced families, of which the divorced mother is a relative (Naylor, 2000).

The extended family system helps to reduce parent-adolescent conflict through mediation of members (Daniels, 1987). As a result it helps to improve parenting abilities and adolescent's wellbeing. Although there will be no hypothesis set on social support network, this discussion is deemed significant to help the reader to understand the social network relationship of Ghanaian adolescents who experience parental divorce.

Marital Divorce in Ghana

The Ghana concept of marriage entails both Western and Traditional marriage concepts (Judicial Report Reviews, 2004; Ankomah, 2002). Ghanaian marriages have both the semblance of Western monogamous marriage with its legal definition and social functioning and at the same time are characterized by several customary practices such as polygamy, gender role stereotype, social restrictions and societal prescriptions regarding family life (Simon & Alstein, 2003; Ghana Gazette, 1991; Manuh, 1997). The plural concept of marriage delineates four (4) basic types of marriages which are; ordinance marriage, Christian marriage, Muslim marriage and Traditional or Customary marriage (Simon & Alstein, 2003).

Customary marriage is more prevalent and revered as the actual marriage with ordinance (legal) or religious blessings deemed as a significant social appendage, because of its legal definition and safeguard of provisions. The prevalence of customary marriage is not synonymous with prevalence in polygyny although polygyny⁴ is practiced exclusively in customary marriages. However, polygyny continues to characterize rural marriages and involves less educated older women (GPDAR, 2005).

In 1960, 26% of married men were in polygynous marriages (GSS, 2000). In 1980, 35% of all married women were in polygynous marriage. Interest in marriage and remarriage is high in Ghana, although divorce rate appears soaring at twenty-eight percent high (Neequaye & Neequaye, 1991). Ghanaians in general frown upon marital divorce and its associated social stigma, yet, marriages of all types; customary, ordinance, religious, continue to break up, leaving offspring to consequences that may affect their psychosocial adjustment (Sudarkasa, 2004; Manuh, 1997)

Studies (Atakpa, 1996; Anyagri, 1993) in Ghana have shown that girls in rural areas who marry early (between ages 15 and 20) with minimum education have high a high risk of marital divorce across all religions. With strong belief in a daughter's chastity, Islamic parents, according to Abukari – Mohammed (1996), withdrew their adolescent girls from school for marriage. This cultural promotion of early marriage which directly militates against girls' education and preparation for adult life constitute a major cause for marital breakdown with attendant consequences on offspring of the marriage (GPDAR, 2005).

⁴ Polygyny is a situation where one man marries multiple wives at the same time. In almost all Ghanaian societies, the practice of a husband having more than one wife is socially accepted. Its prevalence is greatest in the rural areas and among the less educated, farming and fishing communities. Ghana's 1960 Population Census reported 26% of married men as having more than one wife. The Ghana Fertility Survey (1979-1980) reported 35% of married women as being in polygynous marriage. In 1988, 33% of all married reported to have been in polygynous marriage (Ghana Population Data Analysis Report, Vol. 1, 2005; Agyei & Biritwum, 2000).

In appraising the extent and trend of divorce in Ghana from the Ghana Judicial Service Reports (2000-to 2005), caution may be exercised over data presentation which is incomplete with misleading estimates; and prone to faulty interpretation. In the Executive Summary of the Judicial Service of Ghana Annual Statistical Report (2001), the following remarkable statements were made:

“Unfortunately, the report does not show the exact number of cases dealt with by the courts in the year under review because of the following reasons:

1. Some courts do not submit statistical returns to the Research and Monitoring Department whilst others submit theirs very late (after reports have been published). Data for this report was thus captured from 2,114 returns and this constitutes 77.6% of the expected number of returns.
2. Figures quoted as number of cases brought before the courts are not representative of the exact situation. Most Registrars, by virtue of the kind of returns they submit cannot tell the exact number of cases placed before their courts and the number that was dealt with in a particular period of time. For example, it is only Registrars of 22 courts which represent 10.3% that could tell the number of cases placed before their courts in the year under review. It is worth mentioning that none of the High Courts (including Accra High Court which has at least 16 Judges sitting) or, the Community Tribunals are included in the 22 mentioned above
3. The statistical returns being used by the courts do not make adequate provisions for data on some cases that are dealt with by the courts and considering the fact that sound policy formulation, realistic budgeting, projections and forecasts for the courts depend on accurate returns, it is regrettable that the records being kept by the nations Courts are very disappointing.”

Although, the judicial statistics may be somewhat inaccurate, there is still strong evidence that marital divorce has become a disturbing social phenomenon which is affecting both the fabric and structure of society (GDHS, 2005; GSS, 2002; 1999; 1994; 1987; Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), 2003; Census Bureau of Statistics, 1960).

With reference to Table 1.1, according to the judicial Report Review (2004), 670 marital cases were dissolved legally by Circuit (324) and High courts (299). In the preceding years (2001, and 2002) sixty-five (65) and fifty-three (53) marital cases were granted divorce by

the courts respectively. The number of marital cases pending in the courts for legal dissolution was two thousand and ninety-three (2,093) in 2004 from Table 1.1

Table 1.1

Regional Courts Performance on Registered Marriages
(Marital Divorce Cases for 2000, 2001, and 2004)

Pending marital Divorce Cases	Newly filed Divorce Cases	Divorce Cases concluded	Total number of cases held	
Circuit Court 2004	1,336	514	324	2,174
High Court	757	-	296	1,053
Circuit Court 2001	-	-	-	-
High Court	564	71	65	700
Circuit Court 2000	299	55	2	356
High Court	280	170	51	501
	3,236	810	738	4,784

Source: Judicial Report Review, 2004

In Table 1.2, the court performance on customary marriages for the 2003/2004 legal year is presented.

Table 1.2

District Court Performance on Customary Marriages (2003/2004 Legal year)

<u>Legal Year.</u>	<u>1/10/2003 – 30/06/ 2004</u>			
District Courts	Circuit Court	District Court	High Court	Total
Customary Marriages Divorce cases pending	1,336	778	2,548	4,662
Customary Marriages Newly filed Divorce cases	518	495	1,418	2,431
Customary Marriages Divorce cases concluded	324	297	752	1,373
	2,178	1,570	4,718	8,446

Source: Judicial Report Review, 2003/2004.

A total of one thousand, three-hundred and seventy-three (1,373) customary marriages were dissolved by the courts whilst two thousand one hundred and seventy eight customary cases were pending for legal dissolution. Another, one thousand, five-hundred and seventy

(1,570) customary marriages were filed for legal dissolution in the same legal year -2003-2004.

In the three preceding years of 1996, 1997, and 1998, a total of three hundred and sixty-four (364) marital cases were dissolved by the courts. The highest number of divorced cases during this period was 1998 (162 divorced cases) followed by 1997 (115 divorced cases) and 1996 (87 divorced cases).

The number of divorced customary marriage in 2003/2004 legal year (752) was higher than the 3-years (1996, 1997, and 1998) divorced case estimate. Although, the estimate of customary divorced marriages for 2004 is non-available for comparison and comment with ordinance cases for the same year, it is clear that an increasing divorce trend is established from 1996 to 2004 (Neequaye, Neequaye & Bigger, 1991). Further, the total number of newly filed divorce cases and the cases that are pending at the court continue to rise for both customary and Ordinance marriage in Ghana (Judicial Report Review, 2003/2004).

In matrilineal communities (Simon & Altstein, 2003; Ghana Gazette, 1991), marriages are 'broken' with the exchange of tokens of money and drinks among the family members of the couples and there is no additional costs levied against the divorcing husband for the divorced wife or for the maintenance of the offspring of the marriage (Daniels, 1987); yet, the continuity of the family remains intact (Sudarkasa, 2004). Social trends and changes such as the women's movement, women's greater participation in the labor force, increased women literacy, and the increase in divorce rate brought pressure to bear on the government to pass the Women Intestate Law⁵ (1985)(Manuh, 1997).

⁵ The Intestate Succession Law (1985) seeks to protect the socio-economic interest of single parent families that have suffered the death of one parent. This law is designed to ensure that contrary to customary terms of handling the distribution of the wealth and property of the deceased among immediate family members and the extended family, a legal frame and its interpretation may be consulted to ensure fair distribution for

In Table 1.3, the number of court sanctioned divorce cases were one thousand and forty-six (1,046) in 1996 as against one thousand three hundred and one (1,301) in 1997. In 1998, a record high of one thousand four hundred and seventeen (1,417) court granted divorce cases were recorded. This again follows the increasing trend in divorce cases in Ghana over a decade period. The divorce cases pending as well as those currently filled also followed the same increasing trend.

Table 1.3

Statistical Overview of Matrimonial Cases Pending and Tried from 1996 to 1998.

	Pending Divorce Cases	Concluded Divorce Cases	Total Number of Divorce Cases
High Court 1996	920	55	975
Circuit Court	39	32	71
High Court 1997	1,161	94	1,255
Circuit Court	25	21	46
High Court 1998	1,212	120	1,332
Circuit Court	45	42	87
	3,402 364	3,766	

Source: Judicial Report Review 1996; 1997; 1998.

concerned members. Unfortunately many rural marriages are still customary, and may not benefit from the intestate succession law. It appears customary practices operate along side the intestate succession law and this plurality of cause undermines the goodwill and the spirit of the interstate Succession Law.

Thus, in 1996, there were nine hundred and fifty-nine (959) marital court cases pending according to the Judicial Review Report as compared with the 1997 and 1998 estimates of one thousand and one hundred and eighty-six (1186) and one thousand two hundred and fifty-seven (1,257) respectively. On the whole marital divorce has been on the increase (Neequaye, Neequaye & Bigger, 1991) and continues to expose children and adolescents to factors which affect their psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce.

Adolescent Gender

Adolescents of divorce families are not a homogenous group in Ghana. They have ethnic, religious, and gender orientations that differ from one another; hence, they react to parental divorce in dis-similar ways based on their particular situations.

To date, there is no published work on gender difference in adolescent psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce in Ghana (Ankomah, 2002).

An increasing number of adolescents from divorced and poor families migrate from rural communities to big cities (e.g. Kumasi, Accra) and roam the streets looking for employment (Naylor, 2000). Ghanaian youths have been severely hit with unemployment such that about sixty percent (60%) of the total unemployment persons were within the 15-24-years age group; which incidentally, is also the school going population (GSS, 2005). Gross gender imbalance exist within adolescent education (Dolphine, 1997) and girls have less opportunity to education than boys due to religious beliefs, cultural practices, economic conditions and literacy of parents (Boakye, 1997).

Without empirical basis it is difficult to state whether parental divorce is the sole cause of the increasing number of adolescent-school drop out and as well the youth unemployment issue. Although, boys in Ghana exhibit externalizing behaviors (Weinberg, 1964; Arthur, 1996), some of which include criminal acts like stealing and arm robbery, several other factors (such as general family poverty and peer pressure, youth unemployment) may be the basis for such acts, in addition to the impact of parental divorce (GSS, 1995b; 2005)). Also, adolescent girls migrate to big cities to look for employment (Naylor, 2000), some engage in antisocial behaviors (Anarfi & Antwi, 1995) and commit other delinquent acts that expose them to legal sanctions (GSS, 2005). It is difficult to single out divorce as the cause of externalizing behaviors for adolescent girls who migrate to big cities in search of work.

In either case, it is difficult to determine whether the adverse impact of parental divorce is related to adolescent psychosocial adjustment in the first instance and, moreover, whether the impact of divorce is greater for boys than for girls.

Furthermore, it is difficult to determine the effects of divorce on adolescent psychosocial behaviors because the effects of divorce may be qualitatively different for boys and girls. Factors that may determine the over all impact of parental divorce on adolescent psychosocial adjustment may include the age of the adolescent at the time of parental divorce, the custody arrangement for the adolescent; the availability of a social support system and the effectiveness of mediation between the divorcing parents which may also contain issues of parental conflict.

Peer and other social network of adolescents may be more influential such that the effects of father absence may be less deleterious and detrimental for both boys and girls (Drapeau & Bouchard, 1993; Isaac & Leon, 1986). However, an increasing number of Ghanaian

adolescents develop a drug culture and engage in smoking, drinking of alcohol and prostitution. These adolescents show low self esteem and low self confidence (Anarfi & Antwi, 1995); are angry and anxious, and their behaviors indicate lack of clear path to mature identity (Erikson, 1963). Most of them have dropped out of school (Ghana Education Service (GES), 1995b) due to financial constraints (GSS, 1995b; 2005) and social pressure (Anarfi & Antwi, 1995) due to impact of parental divorce. It still remains difficult to determine the extent to which parental divorce correlate adolescent psychosocial behaviors when there are no studies done in this area. This study is timely to fill in the gap with empirical literature on the effect of parental divorce on Ghanaian adolescent boys and girls from single parent mother headed families.

Statement of the Problem

Given the increasing numbers of single-parent mother-headed homes in Ghana, more Ghanaian youths (3.5 million) continue to experience varying factors that affect their psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce. The social issue of ever-increasing single parent mother-headed families with adolescents was the driving force for this study.

Given the serious lack of Ghanaian literature on divorce studies (Ankomah, 2002) and its effect on adolescent's psychosocial adjustment, social work, other social service professionals, and government officials largely depend on the wholesale import and reception of American literature and recommended practice for Ghanaian practice and policy formulation. To date, no study has related the psychosocial adjustment of adolescent to a comprehensive set of predictor variables that included Ghanaian adolescent participants.

This study is intended to fill the gap in the divorce literature in Ghana. It will also provide explanations to the way adolescents' perceive psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce with theoretical perspectives.

Given the differences in the marital cultures of Western and non-Western countries like Ghana; there is a need for an indigenous research data set of the factors which affect adolescent psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce to inform practice and policy formulation. This study therefore, sought to provide a contextual lens to the study of factors affecting adolescent perception of psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce by including variables such as ethnicity and religion.

Although, several non- Ghanaian studies have identified one or more correlates (Sun & Li, 2002; Hetherington and Kelly, 2002) of psychosocial adjustment for adolescents of divorced families, no study to date has examined the psychosocial adjustment in relation to predictor variables including ethnicity, religion, and adolescent gender in the Ghanaian context. This research was designed to address this problem.

In sum, the predictor variables of adolescent psychosocial adjustment in parental divorce are:

1. Gender of the adolescent
2. Adolescent's ethnicity
3. Adolescent's religion

Significance of the study

This study was designed to provide the first empirical study in Ghana to examine a cluster of variables independently to determine their effects on adolescent psychosocial adjustment.

The import of the study was to identify variables that strongly relate to psychosocial adjustment of adolescents who have experienced parental divorce so that social work practitioners will get empirical data can help develop intervention goals and programs. The general absence of Ghanaian studies on adolescents' psychosocial adjustment following their experience of parental divorce has meant that social work intervention goals has depended on program objectives based on U.S studies. This 'one size fit all' approach has not augured well for local social work practice because of context (Stevenson & Black, 1995) and instrumentation (Hetherington, 1972). This study was significantly designed to use a carefully crafted research instrument of contextual relevance with Ghanaian adolescent.

In the same way, school counselors and teachers, counselors from youth programs, religious settings and other non government organizations may be able to plan effective intervention goals to run programs for youth from divorced families by utilizing findings from this study. Non Government Organizations may utilize the findings of this study as basis of new program s or strengthen the approach of existing youth programs to increase program effectiveness.

Policy enactment on programs to help youths that have experienced parental divorce may be informed by the findings of this study. Findings of the effects of religion, ethnicity, and adolescent gender for psychosocial adjustment may enable local government and District Councils to plan and support agencies whose intervention strategies are based on local data and relevant findings from this study.

Finally, the study was designed to provide a contextual balance to the existing literature on factors affecting adolescents' psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce. It was intended to lay the ground for further academic exploration as well as to increase

dissemination of findings through peer reviewed publications, seminars and national social work workshops.

Operational Definition of Terms

Adolescent:

Adolescent in this study refers to participants from the two Senior Secondary schools within the Cape Coast Municipal Educational Center that were studied. The chronological age of the participants ranged from 15- to-19+-years which corresponded to the period of adolescence (Erikson, 1963; Demaris and Grief, 1992; Neighbors et al., 1993; Dosier et al., 1993)

Psychosocial adjustment:

In this study psychosocial adjustment refers to multidimensional behaviors of adolescents post divorce adjustment (Hetherington, Cox, and Cox, 1978; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980). Moreover, it refers to a broad range of positive and negative outcomes in the domain of psychopathology and involves internalizing and externalizing behavior outcomes (Achenbach, 1991) of Ghanaian adolescents who experience parental divorce and live with custodial mothers.

Psychosocial adjustment in this study was defined operationally by scores of the three sub-scales of the Adolescent Adjustment Checklist (AAC); The Externalizing Behavior Sub-scale and, the Internalizing Behavior Sub-scale.

The Internalizing Behavior Sub-scale measured scores on perceived covert behavior; the Externalizing Behavior Sub-scale measured scores on perceived overt behavior. Internalizing

behaviors include over-controlled behavior such as anxiety, low self esteem, fear, hurting feelings, depression, and unhappiness.

Externalizing behaviors include under-controlled behaviors such as truancy, delinquency, compliance, precocious sex, anger, aggressiveness, conduct disorder and hostility.

Extended Family System:

Extended family system refers to the availability of a community of family members, relatives and others who extend basic emotional, financial, psychological and social assistance to adolescents and family members who experience divorce. The presence and availability of the extended family system offer basic dependence and substantial support to adolescents who experience parental divorce.

Single Parent Family:

Refers to a family unit comprising of a divorced mother and adolescent(s) living in the same household. Although there were responses of adolescents living in single parent families with custodial fathers, this study was particularly concerned with adolescents living in mother-headed households, and so the study excluded responses of adolescents living with custodial fathers

Summary

This introductory chapter sets the focus of the study on factors affecting adolescent perception of psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce in Ghana.

The chapter discussed the general significance and potential contribution of the study which was followed by theoretical and background information that related to adolescent perception of psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce in Ghana.

Last but not least was the discussion of operational definitions of the key terms used in the study. In sum, this study represented the first empirical effort to investigate the relationship between adolescent psychosocial adjustment and selected variables in the Ghana context.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study described here was designed to determine the relationship of adolescent adjustment to three predictor variables associated with the psychosocial adjustment of adolescents who experience parental divorce in Ghana. This chapter presents a review of the literature regarding the variables which affect adolescent perception of psychosocial adjustment following the experience of parental divorce. Each of the variables included in the study is discussed with reference to the existing body of literature and with notation of their theoretical foundations.

Ethnicity

This study intended to address issues of adolescent ethnic groups to understand how ethnic differences affect their psychosocial adjustment after they experienced parental divorce. It seeks to determine the extent to which ethnic differences for adolescent boys and girls predict different scores of psychosocial types of behaviors.

Ethnicity refers to a people-group with specific cultural characteristics and traditional origins (Modood et al., 2002; DeVos, 1995). This community of people may share socio-cultural, historic, linguistic, food, geographical, tribal, religious, kinship descent, marital and parenting characteristics (Verkuyten, 2000; Wolf, 1994; Frable, 1997).

Studies which try to isolate ethnic differences dwell on limited sample sizes, which make it difficult to analyze statistically (Neff and Schulters, 1993). They emanate from a series of

theoretical backgrounds and are best explained by a sociocultural contextual model (Lerner, 2002) which posits a continuous and reciprocal dynamic interaction between the adolescent and the different ethnic communities they live in (Chun, 2003).

Although demographic research has provided more data on racial and ethnic differences in marital divorce, little is currently known about how ethnicity affect the psychosocial adjustment of adolescents who experience parental divorce (Kiston, 1992).

In the United States, there is relatively little research on Blacks, Latinos and Asian Americans. However, Kiston (1992) has reported that Black adolescents are less stigmatized by parental divorce and have fewer psychosocial adjustment difficulties than White participants who felt stigmatized and experienced more difficulties in adjustment following parental divorce.

Although, Amato (2000) concluded his examination of the limited data on adjustment to divorce by race and ethnicity by noting that research does “not suggest strong racial difference in divorce adjustment in the United States”; several other researchers (Fine, McKenry, and Chung, 1992; Kiston, 1992) have indicated that more examination of this issue is needed as finding is more mixed than Amato (2000) suggested.

Amato (1994), compared the literature on the impact of divorce in India and America, and interviewed divorcees, officials and researchers connected with the divorce process in India. Whilst he emphasized the fact that divorce creates stress for both children and parents in both countries, he also identified common factors that facilitate adjustment in both cultures, although, religion and cultural differences made the comparison difficult. Most of the research he examined in India were of Hindu marriage traditions where women came out as more disadvantageous than men, because of gender disparity in India and unlike America

where there is more equality for the sexes with more women having some economic independence. This seminal study did not say anything about how offspring of divorced marriages in India perceive their psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce and leaves a huge gap in the literature waiting to be filled.

Cultural component of Ethnicity:

Ethnicity is often used as a synonym for culture; however, Geertz (cited in Roehlkepartain et al., 2006) writes on culture as “denoting a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life” (pp.285-286)).

Most adolescent who experience parental divorce face acute economic constraints (Carlson & Corcoran, 2001) because of low household incomes (McLanahan, 1999). Due to financial hardship, adolescent in rural areas drop out of school (Downey, 1994), and relocate to urban centers to look for job for survival. In the process of working and living in these cities (e.g. Accra, Kumasi, etc.), they assimilate new values and behaviors and become acculturated with time (Burnam, 1987). They undergo psychological changes in their cognitive, affective and behavioral domains (Berry, 1980) and adapt (Ward, 1996) through social learning and coping mechanisms to assimilate and integrate new psychosocial adjustment skills and competencies (Berry et al, 2006).

However, adolescents may equally, experience acculturation stress because of the possible feelings of guilt, confusion, loss of value and alienation from the culture of origin.

According to Piontkow et al., (2000), the psychological adaptation of acculturation to a new environment can be a fundamental change which includes relearning the meaning of symbols, readjusting to a new system of values and relinquishing some old customs, beliefs and behaviors which will change the cognitive schema and affect psychosocial adjustment of adolescents who have relocated to new cities because of the effects of their parents' divorce.

Social Capital component of Ethnic groups

The concept of social cohesion is one component of what is called social capital (Sam & Berry, 2006). According to Coleman (1990), social capital is defined as the features of social organization that facilitates cooperation for mutual benefits, and it includes mechanisms such as interpersonal trust among individuals, community participation, norms of reciprocity, and availability of civil organization” (Coll & Pachter, 2000, pp.9). Social capital is an ecological community-level construct (Coll & Pachter, 2000). Ethnic Communities with high levels of social capital (as exemplified by the availability of social organizations) that promote cultural, ethnic awareness and pride, child care options, positive parenting options, and other civic associations are the basis for providing a context for promoting single-mother parenting and adolescent psychosocial adjustment (Sam & Berry, 2006).

Adolescents of divorced families who access the benefits of social capital due to membership of the ethnic community may have less problematic psychological adjustment than adolescents who belong to ethnic communities with less social capital (McLanahan, 1999). Adolescents with strong family and community attachment who invest time, energy and personal resources into commitment to social norms and expectations can engage in

delinquent behaviors, however, they are more likely to contemplate their decisions and avoid deviance because of probable dismay from valued attachments (Hirschi, 2005)

Parent-adolescent relations and parenting styles differ according to ethnic customs, beliefs and practices (Steinberg et al., 1991). In certain ethnic groups, positive adolescent-parent relations emphasize a liberal or democratic approach, whereas other ethnic groups may emphasis on authoritarian parenting (Dornbusch et al., 1985, Sternberg et al., 1991). Research has indicated that authoritarian parenting (high in control but low in warmth) is more prevalent among ethnic minorities (African Americans, Latinos, American Chinese) than among European American families, even after ethnic differences in socio-economic status are taken into account (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg et al., 1991).

Variations in parenting, parental autonomy, adolescent-parent conflict and harmony are issues within ethnic groups that may affect the psychosocial adjustment of adolescent post parental divorce. Parenting practices are often linked to cultural values and beliefs (Dornbusch et al, 1985, Sternberg et al;, 1991). Some researchers according to Steinberg and Silk (2002)(cited in Parenting Handbook, Vol.1, 2002, p.119) have found that conflict between adolescents and parents are less frequent in ethnic minority families although the topics of adolescent-parent disagreement are similar across ethnic groups (Barber,1994). African American single mothers have been found to expect more independent and autonomous behavior from their children than European American single parent mothers (McKenry and Fine, 1993) and this ethnic parenting practice affect the psychosocial adjustment patterns of their adolescents.

Religion

Religion is an organized system of beliefs, practices, rituals and symbols that facilitate closeness to the sacred or transcendent God; and fosters an understanding of an individual's relationship and responsibility to others in the community they live in (Koenig et al., 2001). Religion has been understood to bring about a positive reordering in the lives of adherents including adolescents who suffer major life trajectories such as parental divorce and live with custodial mothers (Taylor, Chatters & Levin, 2004; Pargament, 1997; Idler & George, 1998).

Religious faith and belief give meaning to the demanding experiences of adolescent who experience familial crises (Gall & Cornblat, 2002; Lazarus, 2000; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000) and this religious experience enhance their ability to adapt positively. Religious adolescents and families use religious coping (Pargament, 1997; Ai et al., 2003; Bjorck et al., 2001) to deal with the interpersonal and interfamilial problems. They use reactive coping to deal with their emotional and psychological and social problems (Ker & Bowen, 1988; Spencer et al., 2006). Families of religious inclination deal with several of their problems by interacting (Endler, 1983) personal and familial factors with ecological to find meaning and determine positive adaptation. In general, religious experience provide adolescents with an environment of intergenerational support that foster enduring values, meaning, identity and a sense of belonging and connectedness beyond themselves (Garbarino, 1995).

A review of the theoretical orientation of studies on religion and family (Dollahite, Marks, & Goodman, 2004; Jenkins, 1991; Thomas & Cornwall, 1990) has identified conceptual, measurement and analytic issues (Dollahite et al., 2004; Thomas & Cornwall, 1990). Several theoretical and conceptual frameworks have been proposed that link religion to family life and behaviors (Ellison, 1994) as well as psychosocial and general well-being (Taylor,

Chatters & Levin, 2004; Pargament, 1997; Idler & George, 1998). Two theoretical perspectives explain the relationship between families and religion. They are the 'Family Ecology perspectives' and the 'Risk and Resilience perspectives'.

Within the family ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1998; Albrecht & Miller, 2001), the family is viewed systematically with enduring commitment to relationship, responsibility and support and defines social control, group norms, communication and conflict resolution (Demo & Acock, 1996). A primary feature of ecological theories (Bronfenbrenner, 1998) is the premise that the development for individuals and for families is contextual (Demo & Acock, 1996). Although the family ecology perspective does not provide insights into the mechanisms underlying how these systems affect families, it directs attention to factors accruing within the family such as interfamilial dynamics as well as to the layered influences of factors occurring outside of the immediate family such as interaction between families and religious institutions (Albrecht & Miller, 2001; Demo & Acock, 1996).

The risk and resilience perspective (Masten, 2001; Rutter, 1994) describes exposure to experiences or conditions that raise the probability of negative outcomes for individual or groups as risk factor (Demo & Acock, 1996). For example, adolescent's exposures to hostile, stressful or parental divorce are risk factors that may elevate the probability of adjustment problems. Resilience (Walsh, 1998; Margolin, Oliver, & Medina, 2001) then, is the ability of the adolescent of divorced family to overcome life's challenges to the family transition, to rebound from the crises, and to grow stronger as result of dealing with the adverse conditions.

In the risk-resilience framework (Masten, 2001; Garmezy, 1994), differential outcomes to apparently similar stressors result from interactions among risk factors, risk mechanisms, and

protective factors (Margolin et al., 2001). Risk factors raise the likelihood of negative developmental outcome.

Risk mechanism explains how and why the adolescent is vulnerable in parental divorce (Rutter, 1994). Protective factors promote resilience and include adolescent positive attributes, family resources, interactional process, and environmental-contextual factors that buffer the effects of the risk (Masten, 2001; Garnezi, 1994; Demo & Acock, 1996). Thus the family resilience approach emphasize identification and enhancement of the coping resources, the social, economic, psychological, emotional, and physical assets that enable adolescents to overcome the effects of parental divorce (Walsh, 1998).

Another means to discuss adolescent religion in Ghana is to consider Allport's (1950) intrinsic-extrinsic religiosity perspective. Allport (1950) distinguished between two types of religious sentiments: Intrinsic religiousness and extrinsic religiousness.

Intrinsic religiousness is the view that considers religion as meaning-endowing framework in terms of which life is understood (Allport, 1950, Allport & Ross, 1967).

Extrinsic religiousness in contrast is the religion of comfort and social convention, a self-serving, instrumental approach to suit oneself (Allport, 1966; Hood, 1995).

According to Allport & Ross (1967), intrinsic religious motivation refers to internalized attitudes that guide the respondent's life, whereas extrinsic motivation involves pursuing religion for utilitarian purposes, such as emotional comfort or social benefit (Allport & Ross, 1967; Allport, 1950; Hood, 1995). Allport's view indicates that extrinsic but not intrinsic religiosity typically correlates with more dysfunctional psychological constructs.

Berger and Berger (1983) reported that religious meetings provide mediating institutions that promote responsible actions and psychosocial wellness. Recent analyses of a large

($N=20,020$) database of adolescents reported strong evidence that religious involvements enhanced social support, empowerment, social competencies and a positive identity (Furrow and Wagener et al., 2003)

Adolescents' religious belief and practice may relate to their perception of psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce (King & Furrow, 2004; Smith, 2003). Religious faith affects both their externalizing and internalizing behaviors and may reduce incidence of social misconduct, delinquent activities and immoral acts (Donahue and Benson, 1995; Wright et al., 1993).

In two studies (Pearce et al., 2003; Wills, Yeager, and Sandy, 2003), items assessing religious coping (Pergament, 1997; Ai et al., 2003) behavior were combined with more general items on religious beliefs or practices. Although this measurement approach confounded the effects of religious functioning, higher scores on the different indices were linked to lower rates of drug culture (Wills et al., 2003) and serious conduct problems in respond to difficult life situations (Pearce, Jones, et al., 2003).

In another recent study, Pearce et al., (2003) combined adolescents who responded to items about whether their religious congregation would offer help if they became sick or if they needed support in difficult situations. After controlling for demographic and global religious variables, adolescents' speculations of receiving inter-personal religious support were related to lower levels of internalizing behavior. In contrast, scores from two items that assessed whether the congregation was generally demanding or critical of teens correlated with more depressions. This study reported two differential effects of positive and negative religious coping resources, yet it is limited by the fact that adolescents were not asked about other people's responses in the context of an actual stressful event like parental divorce.

In a national survey, Heath et al., (1999) found that the less adolescent said that they relied on religious beliefs to deal with day to day living, the more they used alcohol or tobacco after controlling for ethnicity, family socio-economic level, family religious affiliation, and church attendance. However, no links emerged for two items that directly assessed religious coping (that is, relying on religious teaching when a problem occurs) or turning to prayer when facing personal problem.

Another recent study (Vaughn and Roesch, 2003) used a four-item scale of religious coping as one of fifteen types of coping that is used by low-income, high school sample. After controlling for other types of coping, religious coping predicted Mexican American and Asian American students, retrospective reports of more positive social relations as a result of experiencing a stressor in the previous year. This study did not specify the stresses adolescents experienced and therefore, the positive social relationship could not be associated with adolescent religious coping after experiencing parental divorce.

Furthermore, research indicating adolescents' use and benefit from religious coping global markers of religiousness (for example, affiliation, frequency of prayer, or religious attendance) abound. For instance, research indicate that global religious variables are consistently tied to lower rates of adolescent's delinquency, smoking, alcohol use, premarital sexuality and early parenting (Donahue and Benson, 1995) as well as to more positive psychosocial functioning (Regnerus, 2003). These findings imply that religion may relate to adolescent's psychosocial adjustment patterns following their experience of remarkable stressful events which may include among others, a parental divorce experience.

Moreover, greater church attendance has been shown to relate to less internalization of negative racial stereotypes by African American adolescents (Pergament, 1997). However, in

another longitudinal study (Sorenson, Grindstaff, and Turner, 1995) greater church attendance by unmarried adolescents during pregnancy was linked to higher levels of post birth depression, particularly for those affiliated with certain religious groups. These inconsistent findings imply that religious coping can present both positive and negative adjustment for adolescents who suffer stressful events.

In another recent study, Pearce et al., (2003) reported that adolescents who anticipated greater support from fellow believers in the event of an illness or problem reported lower current depressive symptoms whereas the reverse was true for perceiving one's religious community as generally demanding or critical. The implication of this study is that adolescents encountered inter-personal religious support or strife when they faced with the occurrence of a negative event and this affected their psychosocial wellbeing (Pearce et al., 2003).

Finally, adolescents and other members of the single parent family may engage in overt religious activities together as a unit to cope with the experience of parental divorce through activities like performing joint prayer rituals, attending religious meetings, or seeking religious counseling and guidance. To be effective, such activities would depend on the consensus between adolescent family members on the religious values and practices. The level of agreement on global religious variables such as affiliation, church attendance and importance of religion between adolescents and their custodial parent has been reported to be longitudinally predictive of positive adolescent psychosocial outcome and better parent-adolescent relationship (Regnerus, 2003). Thus, religious belief and practice inferentially predict psychosocial adjustment patterns of adolescents who experience stressful events which may include parental violence and divorce. This study included religion as a

moderating variable to determine how it relates to adolescent's psychosocial adjustment outcomes following the experience of parental divorce among Ghanaian adolescents

Adolescent Gender

The developmental systems approach is an orientation to the study of human development and it recognizes the embeddedness of the individual in multiple, interrelated contexts (Lerner, 2002; Bronfenbrenner, 1997). The ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1998) which is very similar to the developmental approach (Lerner, 2002) rather adopts a systems framework (Bowen, 1978) to understand the ways in which adolescent psychosocial adjustment is affected after parental divorce. The ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1998) focuses on the mutual interaction between the adolescents, their families, the communities they live in, and the wider society. Thus, according to both perspectives, the adolescent experience is shaped by involvement in and exposure to contexts such as the family, school, peers, community and culture. This system further acknowledges reciprocal or bidirectional relations between the individual and the contexts of which he or she is part.

The Bowen's family system theory (Bowen, 1978; Ker & Bowen, 1988) views the family as an emotional unit and uses systems thinking to describe the complex interaction in the unit. Bowen's family system theory views the family from a broader perspective beyond the immediate family (i.e. the single parent family) and includes the extended family of relatives and friends and the community at large (Ker & Bowen, 1988). The theory provides a comprehensive understanding of the multiple factors which interact before, during and after parental divorce to predict adolescent psychosocial types of behaviors. For example, it

explains the process of parenting and how distressed mothers transmit their emotional problems to their adolescents which impairs their psychosocial functioning (Meddan-Derdich & Arditti, 1999). It also explains the process by which adolescents who experience family emotional distress reduce tension of family interactions by cutting off from the family and joining peers to meet their needs (Ker & Bowen, 1988), or may choose to stay with mothers who renegotiate their privacy boundaries and rules (Petronio, 2000).

Another theoretical account of adolescent externalizing behaviors may be explained by the Freudian notion of displaced aggression. This theory of displaced aggression (Freud, 1946; Wallerstein, 1983; Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Sun & Li, 2002) explains how adolescent boys become frustrated with family tension and mothers hostility but chooses to direct their frustration away from the family and the divorced mother. Although the adolescent boys' frustration builds up internal aggression forces (Freud, 1946), the resulting externalizing types of behaviors are targeted at other people and objects.

Adolescents in this study experienced parental divorce at different developmental ages. Given the wide age-variation (1-5-years-to-15+years) in the timing of parental divorce, three different time-related perspectives (Kalter & Rembar, 1981) are noted; the Cumulative effect theory (Gardner, 1977; Silitsky, 1996; Buchanan et al., 1996; Koerner et al., 2002; Lamb et al., 1999; Sandler et al., 1991); the Critical stage hypotheses (Neubauer, 1960); and the Recency theory (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1976; Kelly & Wallerstein, 1976).

According to Twaite, Silitsky and Luchow (1998), the critical stage theory suggests that the effects of divorce on children vary as a function of the particular developmental challenges faced by the child at different stages in his or her development (p. 109). The critical stage

theory predicts that the worst possible time for a divorce to occur is when the child is in the oedipal stage (Freud, 1905), and that it can be permanently devastating (Gardner, 1977). The cumulative effect hypothesis explains that the effect of divorce starts from the period prior to divorce, right through the actual divorce stage itself, and stretches over the developmental life of the child. Kalter and Rembar (1981) have indicated that:

“... the younger the child the more affected he or she will be by the loss of a parent” (p.3).

The third theory identified by Kalter and Rembar (cited in Twaite et al., 1998) is the Recency theory which holds that parental divorce is traumatic at any time in the life of the child, but the effects of this trauma are relatively transient, such that the child is able to recover within one or two years (p. 109).

The theories stated above are not mutually exclusive, and that the critical stage theory and the cumulative affect hypothesis both predict that divorces that occur relatively earlier in the life of the child should be associated with more negative outcomes (Twaite et al., 1998)

The greatest number of empirical research on adolescent's gender have reported an adverse effect of divorce for boys than for girls (Hetherington, 1981; Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1982; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b; Allison & Furstenberg, 1989; Lewis & Wallerstein, 1982; Guidubaldi & Perry, 1985; Kline et al., 1989).

Hetherington & Kelly (cited in Clarke-Stewart & Brentano, 2006, p.155) have given reasons for boys recording more psychosocial problems than girls. They stated that boys are physically more vulnerable to stress than girls (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002) and that parents and teacher are stricter with boys outburst (Amato, 1991b) than girls. Another reason they stated for boys externalizing behaviors is that boys have lost their role model and yet get less

emotional support from distressing mothers who find their demandingness, opposition, noisiness and physicality more exhausting and difficult to parent” (Hetherington, 1989; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002)

There are still a substantial number of studies that have addressed the issue in a reverse manner, indicating that divorce is more devastating for girls than for boys (Forehand et al., 1988; Furstenberg & Allison, 1985; Santrock et al., 1982a, b). The third scenario of outcomes of divorce on adolescent gender contains a number of studies that indicate no gender difference in adjustment (Acock and Kiecolt, 1989; Kurdek et al., 1981, Kinard & Reinherz, 1984). The recorded differences in the divorce effects on adolescent gender may be attributed to differences in methodological approach (Baker et al., 1987; Hetherington, 1993; Shook & Jurich, 1992).

Kalter and Rembar (1981) designed a study to determine the effects of gender differences for adolescents who experienced parental divorce. With a sample ($N=144$) consisting of sixty-nine females and seventy-five males, the participants were divided into a (1) latency-aged group (7-11.5-years) and (2) adolescent-aged-group (11.5-17-years old). Data were analyzed separately for boys and girls in the two groups. For the adolescent group, boys displayed more externalizing behavior problems such as acting-out, aggressive, anti-social, with school problems, including fighting and being more angry than adolescent girls. Adolescent girls on the other hand, displayed more self destructive behavior including drug and alcohol abuse, sexual behavior and home desertion more than adolescent boys. The findings in the study reported that divorce affected the psychosocial adjustment of both adolescent boys and girls. The effect of parental divorce was more on adolescent girls' self destructive behavior than adolescent boys' externalizing

behavior problems. This is a non-generalizable finding since the sample size was small and restricted to adolescents from White middle class population.

Another explanation for gender differentiated outcomes is that in the period following divorce, adolescents manifest behavioral disruptions and emotional upheaval; they respond to their grief for the absent parent, and the stresses associated with parental conflict and family disorganization as well as the confusion and apprehension resulting from the changing relationships with parents (Kirby, 2002; Sun & Li, 2002; Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992). Both adolescent boys and girls have been reported to experience anger, resentment, anxiety, depression and even guilt (Simon & Associates, 1996; Simon et al., 1999; Forehand et al., 1991)). Other reactions that have been reported include increments in problem behaviors such as aggressive, non compliant and acting out behaviors, decrements in prosocial behaviors, academic achievement and school adjustment and disruptions in peer and heterosexual relationships (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Kirby, 2002; Workman & Bear, 1992).

Klyman (1985) reported that the effect of father-absence depends partially on whether boys have male surrogate models that become substitute models for the paternity deprived boys. A role model is a person whose behavior in a particular social setting is imitated by others especially by younger persons (Webster American Family Dictionary, 1998). Role models play a mentoring role (Bronfenbrenner,1988) that develop the character and competencies of the adolescent by guiding them to acquire mastery of progressively more complex skills and tasks in which the mentor is more proficient. (Bronfenbrenner,1988). Thus, mentors help diffuse the stresses of parental divorce by helping adolescents to make

more appropriate decisions that foster positive psychosocial adjustment following their experience of parental divorce (Bronfenbrenner, 1988).

Consistently, father-adolescent relationships are the most likely to deteriorate following divorce and that the gender of both parents and that of the adolescent are key factors in differentiating psychosocial outcomes for the post-divorce parent-adolescent relationship (Cooney, 1987; Cooney et al., 1986; Kaufmann, 1987).

Generally, changes in family relationships and environmental circumstances before and after divorce, rather than the divorce itself are the critical determinants of children's post-divorce adjustment problems (Emery, 1982; Emery et al., 1991). These risk and protective factors influence the extent to which adolescents will be adversely affected by parental divorce.

In more recent studies, gender difference has been less pronounced and less consistent than the early studies. A number of investigations (Lewis & Wallerstein, 1987; Allison & Furstenberg, 1989; Sun & Li, 2002) have failed to find significant differences between boys and girls and meta-analyses (Amato, 2001; Amato & Keith, 1991b) reveal that boys are not worse in terms of psychosocial and academic achievements.

Amato (2001) and Amato & Keith (1991b) reported that boys have recorded significantly worse in social adjustment than girls; with more problems in loneliness, cooperativeness and parent-adolescent relations.

Large scale divorce studies report boys to have more emotional and psychological problems than girls (Cherlin et al., 1991; Morrison & Cherlin, 1995; Simon & Associates, 1996) and that boys suffer the effects of divorce more than girls in terms of their internalizing behaviors (Vandervalk et al., 2004). On the whole there seems to be a consistent emerging pattern of behavior outcomes for boys and girls following parental divorce. According to

Clarke-Stewart & Brentano (2006), “boys and girls are both affected by divorce but they express divorce effect in different ways; boys more likely externalize their distress and girls internalize their distress” (p.155).

Other research have indicated in their findings that adolescent girls from divorced families have more long term anxiety, depression and relational difficulty (Dixon, Charles and Craddock, 1998; Feng et al., 1999, Rodgers et al., 1997; McCabe, 1997) and that adolescent girls show negative effects prior to their parents’ divorce whereas adolescent boys showed negative effects after their parents divorce (Doherty and Needle, 1991).

Another large scale study was conducted by Zill, Morrison and Coiro (1993) which examined the gender difference on the long term psychosocial adjustment of adolescents who experienced parental divorce. The study utilized a large sample ($N = 1,049$) from the 1976, 1981, 1987, National Survey of Children in the United States. This study particularly sought to determine the moderating effects of age (at the time of parental divorce) on the psychosocial adjustment outcome of the adolescent of divorced families. Data were collected in three waves at the time when participants ages were 7-and-11-years old (first wave), 12-and-17-years old (second wave), and 18-and-22-years old (third wave). About 240 parents of participants separated before the children reached age 16. For the second wave (12-17-years-old) analyses of the data, Zill et al., (1993) reported that adolescent boys displayed more acting out behavior at home and school whereas adolescent girls responded more to a long lasting internalizing behavior problems such as depression, anxiety, fear and sadness. Older adolescents in the third wave (18-22-years old) were reported to have developed poor relationship with their parents with high levels of emotional distress and school problems that resulted in expulsion.

This study provides a weak support for gender difference in the psychosocial behavior of adolescent boys and girls who experienced parental divorce; yet, it suggests that although both adolescent girls and boys exhibit negative psychosocial outcomes, gender differentiates the pattern of adjustment.

In conclusion, although several number of studies have reported greater effect on adolescent boys than girls (Hetherington, 1989; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980b; Kline et al., 1981), other recent studies have stated their findings on the contrarily (Amato, 2001; Simon et al., 1991), still others have maintained a zero-impact for both adolescent boys and girls (Stevenson & Black, 1996; Acock & Kielcolt, 1989; Kurdek et al., 1981). The inconclusive findings (Stevens & Black, 1996) on gender differentiated outcomes and the use of clinical samples justify the inclusion of adolescent gender as a predictive variable in this study. In addition, gender was included as a predictor variable because prior studies (Zill et al., 1993; Hetherington, 1993; Shook & Jurich, 1992) have indicated gender difference in children and young adolescents, but the effects of gender had not been tested on older adolescent sample of 15-19+-years.

Research Questions

Based on the divorce literature, the following Research Question were raised:

1. Do the effects of parental divorce show differently in adolescent boys than in adolescent girls?
2. Does the mean difference in the scores of social adaptability differ among girls of the 4 religious backgrounds?

3. Is there a mean difference in scores of internalizing types of behaviors for girls of different ethnic groups?
4. Is there a mean difference in the scores of externalizing types of behaviors for boys of different ethnic groups?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the review of the extant literature on parental divorce and its effects on adolescent psychosocial adjustment, the following hypotheses were proposed:

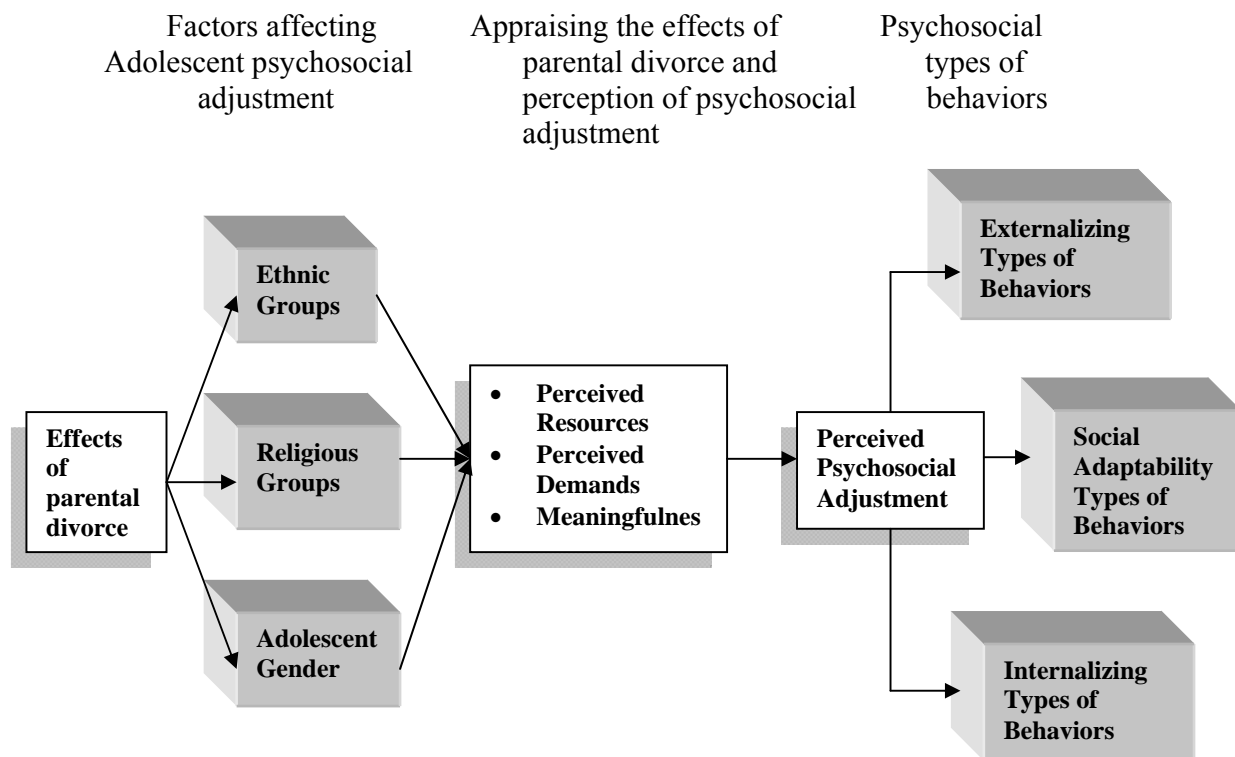
1. There will be a significantly more externalizing types of behaviors for adolescent boys than for adolescent girls following the experience of parental divorce
2. There will be significantly more internalizing types of behaviors for adolescent girls than for adolescent boys following the experience parental divorce.
3. There will be significantly more social adaptability types of behaviors for girls who experience parental divorce than for adolescent boys who experience parental divorce.
4. Adolescent girls who seek religious counseling and guidance have lower internalizing types of behaviors than adolescent boys.
5. Adolescent girls of different religious background have different social adaptability types of behaviors.
6. Adolescent girls who participate in religious activities have lower scores of externalizing types of behaviors than adolescent boys.

7. Adolescent girls from different ethnic groups have different mean scores of internalizing types of behaviors.
8. Adolescent boys from different ethnic groups have different mean scores of externalizing types of behaviors.

A conceptual model for the study of adolescent perception of psychosocial adjustment

following parental divorce

Table 1.4



Adolescent psychosocial experience is informed by a dynamic interaction⁶ of perceived factors (resources and demands) in an integrative mode with ecological (ethnic and religious factors) and adolescent gender characteristics. This interactive process produces a meaning appraisal which forms the basis of the adolescent's perception of psychosocial adjustment following the experience of parental divorce.

⁶ Dynamic interaction is an aspect of transactional model. It is a process that incorporates both the adolescent's personal characteristics and family factors within the social context that react together to influence psychosocial functioning and outcomes. It involves dynamic coping which is the ongoing action the adolescent takes as a result of dealing with the multiple stresses of parental divorce from the family and the social context (Bowen, 1984; Spenser et al., 2006)

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction:

The methodology chapter provides a description of the method used in the study and a description of 564 participants who had experienced at least two years of parental divorce. This chapter begins with a presentation of the research design and a detailed account on sampling and sampling characteristics. It is followed by procedures for tests on the research instrument, to reduce measurement error and to define psychometric properties and administrative process for data collection. The chapter ends with the development and description of the research instrument and methods of data analysis with strategies for hypotheses testing.

Research Design

This study was a cross sectional survey design which utilized a non-probability, convenience sample with structured questionnaire for the collection of quantitative data involving multiple variables that were examined to detect patterns of association.

Sample Characteristic

Research participants for this study consisted of 564 adolescent-students who have experienced parental divorce for at least two-years and were living with their divorced mothers at the time of the survey.

The two-year baseline⁷ experience of parental divorce is consistent with several studies which indicate that children and adolescents experience decrements in psychosocial wellbeing within the first couple of years following parental divorce (Harland et al., 2002; Amato and Keith, 1991b; Guidubaldi & Perry, 1985; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980b).

Participants' ages ranged from 14-through-to-19+-years and were drawn from Public co-educational secondary schools within the Cape Coast educational district in the central region of Ghana. The 14-to-19-years age range of participants was based on developmental theories which indicate that adolescents attain cognitive competence and measurement of intelligence because of their age progression (Erikson, 1963; Piaget, 1967) and therefore have the capacities that are conducive for both the understanding and effective participation in a survey exercise.

Gender analysis [(N = 564, M = 1.55, SD = .50), (Boys) N = 252, 44.7%), (Girls) N = 312, 55.3%)] also indicated a wide range of demographic diversity in terms of the age of the adolescent at the time of the survey, adolescent ethnic groups, adolescent religious group identification, adolescent religious participation, adolescent engagement in religious counseling and guidance, adolescent age at the time of parents divorce, and length of time of parents divorce. Further, the sample characteristics indicate several strengths of the study.

For instance, the sample size (N=564) conforms to Edwards (1985) recommendation to

⁷ The first two years post-divorce is typically considered the most distressing and emotionally troublesome period with significant adjustment problems (Burns & Dunlop; Amato & Keith, cited in Clarke-Stewart & Brentano, 2006).

recruit a minimum of 15 participants for each predictor variable to be used in a multivariate analysis. Furthermore, with respect to the test of bivariate relationship between psychosocial adjustment and each predictor variable, a statistical power analysis indicated that with $N=564$, the test for the significance of a Pearson Correlation at the .05 level had a power exceeding .99, assuming a moderate effect size (true population Correlation, $r = .50$) (Cohen, 1988; Kraemer, 1987).

Finally, the demographic diversity of the sample size ($N=564$) and the calculated sample error enhanced the study's external validity (De Vaus, 2002:149; Janesick, 2005, p.215).

Detailed Characteristics of the Sample

This section is devoted to presenting a detailed description of the sample for the study. This is intended to provide the reader with substantial information on the characteristics of the sample. Additionally, it is considered a priority to provide a detailed within-gender-analyses of the data to enable clarity in the discussion of the results of the data analyses as all hypotheses of the study are gender based. Following, therefore, is a presentation of frequency tables on the socio-demographic and background data of the diverse characteristics of the sample with brief explanations.

Table 3.1

Adolescent Self –Reported Age at Time of Survey (N = 564)

Characteristics	Boys (N=252)	Girls (N=312)	Percent
14 – 15 years	109	186	52.3
% within Gender	43.3	59.6	
16 – 17 years	68	59	22.5
% within Gender	27.0	18.9	
18 – 19 years	45	36	14.4
% within Gender	17.9	11.5	
19 + years	30	31	10.8
% within Gender	11.9	9.9	

From Table 3.1 above, adolescents aged between 14 -15-years at the time of the survey consisted of the highest age-group (N=295) and constituted 52.3% of the entire sample size (N=564) . Percent gender ratio was higher for Girls (N=186, 59.6%) than Boys (N=109, 43,3%). Older adolescents aged between 18-19 years (N=81) and 19+years (N=61) had dwindling group sample size compared to adolescents aged between 16-to-17-years (N=127) with higher percent ratios for Boys (N=68, 27%) and Girls (N=59, 18.9%) than 18-to-19-years age group; Boys (N=45, 17.9%) and Girls, (N=36, 11.5%) and 19+-years age group; Boys (N=30, 11.9%) and Girls (N=31, 9.9%). Overall, adolescents aged 14-to-17-years (N=422) constituted approximately 75% of the entire group sample size with adolescents of 18-19+-years (n=142) comprising 25% of the entire sample. The statistical implication for

this age-analysis is that, for this study, analysis of the reported data reflected in the main, adolescents who were between ages 14-to-17-years (N=422, 74.8%) more than it reflected older adolescents between ages 18-to-19+years (N=142, 25.2%).

Table 3.2

Adolescent Self Reported Ethnic Groups Data (N = 564)

Characteristics	Boys (N=252)	Girls (N=312)	Percent
Ga	38	68	17.9
% within Gender	15.1	19.9	
Dagomba	26	18	7.8
% within Gender	10.3	5.8	
Ewe	29	35	11.3
% within Gender	11.5	11.2	
Frafra	12	40	9.2
% within Gender	4.8	12.8	
Akan	107	98	36.3
% within Gender	52.2	47.8	
Nzema	20	31	9.0
% within Gender	7.9	9.9	
Bono	20	28	8.5
% within Gender	7.9	9.0	

On the whole, 7 ethnic groups of adolescents were identified for this study in Table 3.2 with the mid-Ghana Akan group (N=205, 36.3%) and the southern coastal Ga group (N=100, 17.9%) constituting the highest number. The Bono group of the Brong Ahafo Region (N=48, 8.5%) and the Northern group of the Dagomba (N=44, 7.8%) were the smallest group in this study. Gender analysis for the different ethnic groups is important since the study hypothesized different psychosocial behavior outcomes for girls of different ethnic groups as well as for boys of different ethnic groups. Girls from the following ethnic groups constituted the highest number: Akan (N=98, 47.8%), Ga (N=68, 19.9%), Frafra (N=40, 12.8%), Ewe (N=35, 11.2%). Girls with the least representation were from Nzema (N=31, 9.9%), Bono (N=28, 9.0%) and Dagomba (N=18, 5.8%).

Adolescent boys from the following ethnic groups constituted the highest number: Akan (N=107, 52.2%), Ga (N=38, 15.1%), Ewe (N=29, 11.5%) and Dagomba (N=26, 10.3%).

Adolescent boys from the following ethnic group constituted the smallest number: Bono (N=20, 7.9%), Nzema (N=20, 7.9%) and Frafra (N=12, 4.8%).

Table 3.3

Adolescent Religious Participation Self Reported Data (N = 564)

Characteristics	Boys (N=252)	Girls (N=312)	Percent
Adolescents who participated in religion	170	216	68.4
% within Gender	67.5	69.2	
Adolescents who did not participate in religion	82	96	31.6
% within Gender	32.5	30.8	

From Table 3.3, the total number of adolescents who reported participation in religion (N=386, 68.4%) were more than adolescents who reported no participation in religion (N=178, 31.6%). Although, the study focused on the 68% of adolescents who participated in religion, further analysis on the 32% of adolescents who did not participate in religion was considered necessary to explain the actual psychosocial behavior pattern of the sample that reported participation in religion. The reason for this gender analysis was to determine if 32% of adolescents (N=178) who did not participate in religion showed the same or different pattern of psychosocial behavior outcomes compared to 68% of adolescents who participated in religion. This gender analysis of adolescents' religious participation, helped to explain the effect of religious participation for adolescents in the study.

Table 3.4

Adolescent Religious Counseling and Guidance⁸ Participation Self Reported Data(N = 564)

Characteristics	Boys (N=252)	Girls (N=312)	Percent
Adolescents who participated in religious counseling and guidance	185	230	73.6
% within Gender	73.4	73.7	
Adolescents who did not participate in religious counseling and guidance	67	82	26.4
% within Gender	26.6	26.3	

From Table 3.4, the total number of adolescents who reported seeking religious counseling and guidance (N=415, 73.6%) were more than adolescents who reported no participation in religious counseling and guidance (N=149, 26.4%). Although, the study focused on the 74% of adolescents who participated in religious counseling and guidance, further analysis on the 26% of adolescent who did not participate in religious counseling and guidance was considered necessary to compare the actual psychosocial behavior pattern of

⁸ Religious counseling and guidance is applied counseling program involving the integration of combination of religion, psychology and psychotherapy. It extends beyond the purely theological counseling and deals directly or indirectly with the psychosocial, spiritual and physical health of religious adherents seeking help (Bullis & Mazur, 1993)

the sample that reported participation in religious counseling and guidance. The reason for this gender analysis was to determine if 26% of adolescents (N=149) who did not participate in religious counseling and guidance showed the same or different pattern of psychosocial behavior outcomes compared to adolescents who participated in religious counseling and guidance

Table 3.5

Adolescent Religious Group Identification Self Reported Data (N = 564)

Characteristics	Boys (N=252)	Girls (N=312)	Percent
Muslim	61	88	26.4
% within Gender	10.8	26.4	
Christian/Protestant	142	154	52.5
% within Gender	56.3	49.4	
Free Thinker	17	30	8.3
% within Gender	6.7	9.6	
African Traditional Religion	32	40	12.8
% within Gender	12.7	12.8	

From Table 3.5, four main religious groups were identified with adolescent

Christian/Protestants (N=296, 52.5%) and Muslim (N=149, 26.4%) constituted the highest

number. Adolescent Free Thinkers (N=47, 8.3%) and African Traditional Religions (N=72, 12.8%) were the least represented for this study.

Gender analyses scores of girls of different religious background from the highest to the least are thus presented: Christian/Protestant (N=154, 49.4%), Muslim (N=88, 26.4%), followed by African Traditional Religion (N=40, 12.8%) and Free Thinker (N=30, 8.3%). Gender analysis scores of boys of different religious background from the highest to the least are thus presented: Christian/Protestants (N=142, 56.3%), Muslim (N=61, 10.8%), African Traditional Religion (N=32, 12.7%) and Free Thinker (N=17, 6.7%).

Table 3.6

Adolescent Self –Reported Age at Time of Parental Divorce (N = 564)

Characteristics	Boys (N=252)	Girls (N=312)	Percent
1 – 5 years	29	31	10.6
% within Gender	11.5	9.9	
6 - 10 years	20	25	8.0
% within Gender	7.9	8.0	
11 - 15 years	120	168	51.1
% within Gender	47.6	53.8	
15 + years	83	88	30.3
% within Gender	32.9	28.2	

From Table 3.6, participants who reported that their parents divorced during their adolescent years (11-to-15+years) totaled 459 and constituted 81.4% of the sample size. Participants who reported that their parents divorced during their latency years (6-to-10 years) totaled 45 and constituted 8% of the sample size. Participants who reported that their parents divorced during their pre-school years (1-to-5+years) totaled 60 and constituted 10.6% of the sample size.

Gender analysis from Table 4.9 indicates that; Boys (N=203, 80.5%) and Girls (N=256, 82.0%) reported that they were in their adolescence (11-to-15+ years) at the time their parents divorced. Boys (N=20, 7.9%) and girls (N=25, 8.0%) reported that their parents divorced when they were in their latency (6-to-10 years) years. Boys (N=29, 11.5) and girls (N=31, 9.9%) reported that they were in their pre-school years at the time their parents divorced. Several studies have posited a relationship between the age of a child at the time of parental divorce and the subsequent psychosocial adjustment of the child (Kalter and Rembar, 1981; Gardner, 1977). Three different theoretical positions are feasible explanations for different psychosocial adjustment outcomes of this sample that experienced parental divorce at different developmental stages namely: The critical theory (Neubauer, 1960), the cumulative effect hypothesis (Gardner, 1977) and the recency theory (Kalter & Rembar, 1981; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976). These different developmental stages of the sample in relation to their experience of parental divorce will help with critical discussion of the analyses of the result of the study.

Table 3.7

Adolescent Self –Report on years post-Parental Divorce (N = 564)

Characteristics	Boys (N=25)	Girls (N=312)	Percent
1 – 5 years	201	266	82.8
% within Gender	79.8	85.3	
6 - 10 years	17	14	5.5
% within Gender	6.7	4.5	
11 - 15 years	14	11	4.4
% within Gender	2.5	2.0	
15 + years	20	21	7.3
% within Gender	7.9	6.7	

From Table 3.7 above, adolescents who reported that their parents had divorced within a period of 1-to-5-years totaled 467 and comprised 82.8% of the entire sample (N=564) of the study. Adolescents who reported that their parents had divorced for a period of between 6-to-10-years totaled 31, and consisted of 5.5% of the entire sample of the study. Adolescents who reported that their parents have divorced within a period beyond 11-to-15+-years totaled 66 and comprised of 11.7% of the entire sample of the study. In all, Boys (N= 201, 79.8%) and girls (N=266, 85.3%) reported 1-to-5 years parental divorce as against boys (N=17, 6.7%) and girls (N=14, 4.5%) who reported parental divorce within 6-to-10 years. Boys (N=14, 2.5%) and girls (N=11, 2.0%) reported parental divorce beyond 11-to15+ years.

Pilot test of Draft Questionnaire and Improvement of Scale Measurement

Investigator negotiated access to the field by consulting the Regional Education Ministry at Cape Coast to discuss aims, objectives and ethical considerations of the study.

Initial permission was sought for to conduct the study in schools under their jurisdiction in the Cape Coast district. With permission granted, investigator contacted the principal of a public co-educational senior secondary school for permission to recruit students for the purpose of running a pilot test of the research instrument.

The rationale for the pilot test was to identify ambiguity in the survey questionnaire, or in the procedures of survey administration, as well as in the instructions for the participants. Over all, the pilot test explored means to improve research items, format, and scales. With permission granted, 30 test-participants were recruited, and administered with consent forms and a brief introduction of the study (Please see Appendix D for student consent form). The test was scheduled to take place after two days interval from the day of distribution of consent forms.

Signed consent forms were collected and the aim of the study and ethical considerations of anonymity, voluntary withdrawal and confidentiality were again explained before administering the test on the third day.

Principal investigator supervised the pilot exercise and was available to explain and clarify items that respondents found difficult to understand. Questions asked were indicative of problems in the questionnaire. For example in item number four (4), the original ethnicity classification was into five (5) main groups which were: Ga, Dagomba, Ewe, Akan, and

Nzema. Participants indicated that the classification was not mutually exhaustive and suggested that “Bono” should be differentiated from the Akan and “Frafra” also be differentiated from Dagomba. Thus, the new ethnicity classification increased from five to seven. Moreover, item eight was originally framed as following: “My mother is unemployed”. Participants suggested that the idea of maternal unemployment connoted a negative value statement and that most participants will bias their respond to it. They suggested “My mother is a home-maker” as a better preference. Finally, on item sixteen, the original question was: “Are you currently living in a single parent home?” Participants indicated that the question generally captured responses of participants living in single parent home without indicating whether they live with custodial mother or father. Item sixteen was therefore reframed as: “Are you currently living in a single parent home with your biological mother?” Thus, feedback from the pilot exercise was used to review and amend the questionnaire in order to reduce measurement error (Oppenheim, 1992).

Thirty completed self-report questionnaires were collected and thoroughly reviewed and analyzed. Two typing mistakes identified by the pilot group were corrected in the final version of the questionnaire. Over all, the participants indicated that the items and instruction were easy to understand and that the process of administration was clear and effective.

Test – retest Procedures and Measurement of Psychometric properties of AAC sub-scales

Investigator sought permission from another educational district in Winneba to conduct the Pre-test-Post-test exercise and with permission granted, consulted the principal of a public co-educational senior secondary school for permission to conduct the test-retest exercise with selected participants after explaining the aims, objectives and ethical considerations of the study. With permission granted, forty participants were recruited for the pre-test exercise and were given brief information on the aims and objectives of the study and consent forms that explained the relevant ethical issues of voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality. The test was slated for the following day and retest was taken after eight weeks. Investigator ensured that the test conditions were the same in both test exercises. Basically, the test-retest exercise was used to evaluate the adequacy of the questionnaire, to try out systematically all procedures for the main study, to establish and evaluate codes for questionnaire responses and to gauge the length of the survey. It was also used to establish reliability for the research instruments (Oppenheim, 1992). A Pearson correlation was computed to assess the test-retest reliability of individual scores for the AAC Scale for forty participants within an eight week interval between administrations; $r(40) = .69$. Although, there are no concrete rules for determining how strong the test-retest coefficient of stability needs to be, correlation of .69 and above for a period of four weeks between administrations is considered a reasonable degree of stability (Cronbach, 1990, p.144).

Administrative Procedures and Data Collection

This section describes the administrative process encountered prior to the main data collection and the procedures for the data collection

Ethics Approval

For this doctoral research, investigator submitted a research protocol that set out in detail the procedure to be followed during the field survey. The protocol highlighted the proposed research design, methodology, written consent forms for parents and students and explanatory literature in the procedures for ensuring confidentiality, voluntary participation, and anonymity. In addition, information on the objectives of the study and a debriefing session for participants immediately following administration of questionnaires was presented. This research was approved by the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Social Work (FASS, NUS) that ensured that the research design and field work procedures did not violate ethical considerations.

Administrative Process for main Field Survey:

The study was granted ethics approval by the Research and Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Work and funding was granted by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore, Singapore.

Two schools were randomly sampled from the main listing of Public secondary in the Cape Coast Municipality. Public schools were selected because of their large students' population and national character.

Formal written letters to request permission to conduct the main study in selected schools in the Cape Coast Region were subsequently given to two principals. Additionally, investigator submitted a briefing letter on the aims and objective of the study with ethical considerations to the school principals and requested them to endorse the attached Acceptance and Approval form for the study to be conducted in their schools. The letters to the Regional Educational Centers and the principals asking permission and approval to conduct the study in the Cape Coast District and selected High schools are presented in Appendices A, and C respectively.

With permission granted by the principals, investigator solicited the assistance of teachers in the two schools and trained them as Research Assistants for the study. Investigator introduced himself to the teachers (N=10) as a doctoral research student who intended to conduct a research survey that will involve students in their schools to meet the requirement for the doctoral degree at the National University of Singapore, Singapore. Investigator explained that the study was designed to determine the factors affecting adolescent perceptions of psychosocial adjustment after parental divorce in Ghana. It was emphasized that only students who have experienced parental divorce at least for 2-years were required for the study.

However, in order to avoid stigmatization and possible psychological effect on test performance and participants' self esteem during and after the exercise, investigator emphasized the need to allow all conveniently selected students to participate in the study

with the intention of using a filter question (question no. 16, Section A) to separate the responses of participants of intact families from participants of divorced families. Filtering is used to exclude a respondent from a particular question sequence if those items are irrelevant (Oppenheim, 1992:32)

Standardization of administration of the research instrument to the participating student groups was emphasized. A common instruction on the study was drafted for the Research Assistants to be read aloud before administering the research instrument to participants. A copy of the standard code of instruction is presented in Appendix D.

Investigator assured the Research Assistants that he will oversee and supervise the entire exercise in the two schools and will address issues arising from the exercise.

Data Collection of main Field Survey

One thousand and one hundred (1,100) parent and student consent forms were distributed to students and nine hundred and eighty six (986) were endorsed by parents and students and returned within a period of fourteen (14) days, to indicate willingness to participate in the study. (Please see Appendix B and E for Students and Parents consent forms). One hundred and fourteen (114) parents and students refused to consent to participation in the exercise. Nine-hundred and eighty-six parents consented to their wards participation in the survey. Nine-hundred and eighty-six participants were divided into 20 clusters by non probability convenience method. Each cluster consisted of 49 participants except two that consisted of 52 participants each.

At School “A”, 10 clusters of participants were settled into various classrooms under the supervision of the Research Assistants. Parents and Students Consent forms were collected and counted to tally with the number in the class. Issues of ethical concerns on voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality were discussed followed by reading aloud the standard code of instructions on the research instrument. The investigator was present in each cluster to inform participants of the aim of the study and to address emanating concerns from participants before administering the research instruments.

Each participating cluster of participants thus, received the standard code of instructions in the same format before responding to the questionnaire. This practice was repeated in School “B” after School “A” completed the exercise and all questionnaires collected, counted and submitted to the investigator. All ten (10) Research Assistants assisted with the conduct of the study in School “B”.

The use of participants’ class teachers as Research Assistants in the same school venue, and during class period reduced participants test anxieties and ensured a conducive and a more relaxed atmosphere that reflected in the non-withdrawal rate. Participants responded to all items in the survey. The non-discriminatory, generally inclusive participation of respondents of intact and divorced family backgrounds ensured family background anonymity which essentially boosted test participation of all participants irrespective of the type of family backgrounds they came from.

At the end of the exercise, the Research Assistants were given cash allowance of S\$75.00 each. However, research participants did not receive honoraria except that they benefited from the knowledge they acquired from the study as well as the experience of participating in the study. A special word of acknowledgement and appreciation for their participation was

rendered. After the entire exercise ended, the investigator went to the principals of the two schools to render a special word of gratitude for their permission and cooperation in making the study successful.

With data collected, coding and preparation for statistical analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) data entry procedures was the next agenda. The following section presents methods of data analysis.

Debriefing Session for Distressing Participants.

A debriefing session (Stallard & Salter, 2003; Regal et al., 2007) for participants who were thought to have been psychologically stressed through their participation in the exercise was organized, but no participant turned up to utilize the service. The investigator intended to hold a short interview with research participants immediately following their participation in the survey exercise to deal with emotional residuals of the exercise and to promote normal recovery. Since no research participant turned up for the debriefing session, it was assumed that there was no psychological or emotional effect of the survey exercise on participants.

Development of Research Instrument:

Formulated research questions and hypotheses basically informed the development of research items in addition to reference made to several instruments and scales used in other studies. Relevant items were reviewed for the study. Table 3.8 provides examples of the Instruments and scales that were consulted for present study.

Table 3.8

Instruments and Scales consulted in developing Adolescent Adjustment Checklist (AAC)

Scales with selected questions number	AAC Item	Revised item in AAC
<u>Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experience (A-COPE)</u> (McCubbin & Thompson (eds.) 1991)		
I get professional counseling.	38	Counselors in the community program trained me to be able to think through with hurting feelings
<u>Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)</u> (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley (eds.) 1988)		
My friends really try to help me.	40	My social contacts with friends gave me confidence in the community.
I get the emotional help and support I need from my friend.	37	Relatives who visited our family advised me on how to get over with personal anger.

Instruments and Scales consulted in developing Adolescent Adjustment Checklist (AAC)

Scales with selected questions number	AAC Item	Revised item for AAC
<u>Measures in Health Psychology</u> (Weinman, Wright & Johnston (eds.) 1983)		
I seek God's help.	21	Grounded in religious faith, I was satisfied with myself, despite the problem of my parent's marriage.
I pray more than usual.	19	My prayer helped me to respect my mother.
<u>Adolescent Family Inventory of Life events and changes (A-FILE)</u> (McCubbin & Thompson (eds.), 1992).		
Teenagers began having sexual intercourse.	24	I got involved in sex
<u>Emotional/Social Loneliness Inventory (ESLI)</u> (Harry Vincenzi & Frank Grabosky, 1987)		
I feel lonely	23	I feel lonely

In addition, a thorough examination of the theories that were relevant to the research questions in order to identify concepts that had bearing on psychosocial adjustment measures of adolescents of divorced families were also considered.

Questions were also drawn with the statistical analysis of the data in mind, considering the significant role each item, concept or variable measured would play in the final analyses.

Thus, the AAC was designed to assess in a standardized format, the psychosocial behavior issues of adolescents 14-19+ years of age, who have experienced parental divorce for at least two years. The 40 item behavior checklist covered a broad range of behaviors which were grouped statistically by factor analysis into three subscales from which a total score was obtained. The AAC purports to yield an over all measure of psychosocial adjustment in the form of the total problem score. It was also designed to yield subscale scores representing three specific behavioral problem areas. In addition to the total score (AACTOT), the AAC offered an Internalizing sub-scale score, (AACINT) an Externalizing sub-scale score,(AACEXT) and a Social Adaptability sub-scale score (ACSAD). The total AAC score is the sum of the three sub-scale scores.

Although Internalizing, Externalizing, and the Social Adaptability sub-scales reflect contrasting behaviors, they are positively correlated with one another. The broad-band groupings correspond to the distinction between fearful, inhibited, overcontrolled, or internalizing behaviors and aggressive, undercontrolled or externalizing behaviors (Achenback and Edelbrock, 1983). The Social adaptability subscale assessed anti-social behaviors as in passivity, withdrawal, mistrust, disengagement and irritability.

Respondents rate the degree to which each item described their post divorce psychosocial types of behaviors using the 5 point rating scale. The 5 point rating scale was maintained during data analysis.

Description and Development of Research Instrument.

The research instrument crafted for this study was titled: “The Adolescent Adjustment Checklist (AAC)”. The AAC is a 40 item self reporting research instrument utilizing Likert-type response scale which facilitated numerical coding of data. The entire instrument was arranged into content sub-sections ‘A’ and ‘B’.

Section ‘A’ consisted of eighteen demographic and background survey items: Question no.1. was on gender and was coded 1 = male and 2 = female. Two questions were set on adolescent age range. They were questions no.2. and no. 17. The rating scale used was coded as follows“. (a). 1 = 1-5-years, (b). 2 = 6-10-years, (C). 3 = 11-15-year, (d). 4 = 15+-years
The coded rating scale of 1 = Yes, and 2 = No. applied to the following binary questions; nos. 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16. Question no. 4 which addressed adolescent ethnicity, was coded as follows : (a) 1 = Ga, (b) 2 = Dagomba, (c) 3 = Ewe, (d) 4 = Frafra, (e) 5 = Akan, (f) 6 = Nzema (g) 7 = Bono. Question 5 explored adolescents’ religious background and identification. The four religious groups were coded as follows,- (a) 1 = Muslim, (b) 2 = Christian, (c) 3 = Free Thinker, (d) 4 = Traditional African Religion. Question no 10 was on maternal job classification and had five categories. The coding for the rating scale used was 1= Trader, 2= Civil Servant, 3= Professional, 4= Farmer, 5= Business Executive. Question no twelve explored adolescents’ household compositions and the categories were coded as follows, - 1 = Grand mother, 2 = Aunt, 3 = Grand father, 4 = Uncle, 5 = Cousin.

Question thirteen explored adolescent financial support sources. The coding used for the sources of financial support were (a) 1= Relatives, (b) 2= Religious Institution, (c) 3= Non Government Organization, (d) 4= Friends, (e), 5= Community Program. The last question on the demographic survey determined the number of years of adolescents' parents' divorce: The coding for question no. eighteen that sought to determine the age range of parental divorce was (a). 1=1-5-years, (b). 2=6-10-years, (C).3= 11-15-years, (d). 4= 15+-years

Thus, Section 'A' identified measures that distinguished between adolescents either in terms of demographic variables such as age, gender, household type and composition or in terms of maternal job classification, sources of financial help, parental violence and years of parental divorce. Coding for the 18 items in this section was mutually exclusive.

Section 'B' consisted of 22 carefully developed psychosocial measures generated through prior research to tap appropriate conceptual domains for this study.

Investigator with the aid of computer drew 2 boxes, with the headings; '2 Years before Parental Divorce' and, '2 Years after Parental Divorce'. Below the headings were adequately spaced apart code numbers; 1 ... 5, which respondents were instructed to circle the appropriate number that corresponded to their most suitable answer from the rating scale provided. (i.e, 1=Not at all true of me... 5= Extremely true of me.)

Four items in the questionnaire addressed adolescent maternal employment issues (Questions twenty-eight to thirty-one) Using a rating scale; 1=Strongly disagree...5=Strongly agree, adolescent were required to indicate by circling the appropriate code number in the '2 Year before Parental Divorce' box and the '2 Year after Parental Divorce' box that corresponded to the number on the scale that showed the extent to which each maternal employment related statement applied to them. On the effects of parental conflict on

adolescent behaviors, respondents were required to respond to five statements using a rating scale; 1=Always true...5=Not true at all. Respondents were required to indicate by circling the appropriate code number in the '2 Year before Parental Divorce' box and the '2 Year after Parental Divorce' box that corresponded to the number on the scale that showed the extent to which each parental conflict related statement applied to them. Items 32 -36 were reverse coded before computation of data for analysis.

On the effects of social support on adolescent behaviors, respondents were required to respond to five statements using a rating scale; 1=Not at all true of me...5= Extremely true of me. Respondents were required to indicate by circling the appropriate code number in the '2 Year before Parental Divorce' box and the '2 Year after Parental Divorce' box that corresponded to the number on the scale that showed the extent to which each social support related statement applied to them. The rating scales of the closed-ended items of the AAC were exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Additionally, rating scales had standard instruction that requested respondents to select the most suitable answer with the assurance that there was no right or wrong answer in the selection of answers to the items.

Determination of Internal Consistency Reliability for AAC sub-scales

In this section, the most commonly used type of internal consistency reliability; the Cronbach's Coefficient alpha, was computed. This measure indicated the consistency of AAC with its 40 items. Alpha was used because AAC had forty Likert-type items that were summed up to make a composite score for the three sub-scales. Alpha computation was based on the mean correlation of each item in the AAC scales with every item.

According to Nunnally (1994), Cronbach's coefficient alpha determines reliability based on internal consistency and provides a good estimate of scale reliability. Measures of this study were judged to be reliable if Cronbach's alpha was 0.70 or greater (Nunnally, 1994). Scale scores were calculated for the three sub-scales; all the three AAC sub-scales demonstrated an acceptable level of internal consistency across samples with values within acceptable alpha coefficient range (Nunnally, 1994). Scale reliability of the three AAC sub-scales are presented below in Table 3.9

Table 3.9

Scale Reliabilities

<u>Sub-Scales</u>	<u>Alpha</u>
AACEXT	.67
AACINT	.69
AACSAD	.69

Cronbach's α is a useful estimate of reliability when item-specific variance in a unidimensional test is of interest. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) note that α is a helpful index in scale construction for scales designed to measure a single trait dimension to begin

with. Ray (1988) claimed that broad validity of a scale is facilitated by the use of sub-scales and that each sub-scale actually measures a discrete factor analytic dimension. Bertrand (2000) has indicated that a minimum level of 0.60 reliability coefficient for a scale is good and acceptable for quantitative study and as such the AAC sub-scales (AACEXT, AACINT, AACSD) have acceptable coefficient alpha values which were analyzed for this study (p169).

Measurement of Content and Construct Validity

The content validity of a measurement scale depends on the extent to which an empirical measurement reflects a specific domain of content (Carmines and Zeller, 1983). To address content validity in this study, a thorough review of the available literature and several relevant scales used in previous studies were considered and were thoroughly reviewed by two academicians.

Additionally, selection was guided by formulated research questions and the derived hypotheses with a thorough examination of relevant theories to the research questions with reference to appropriate statistical models that would measure the concepts or variables in the research instrument. Since items on the research instrument were generally based on theory, previous research and modified constructs from existing scales that measure psychosocial behaviors of adolescents who have experienced parental divorce, this AAC scale has face and logical content validity. Content validation provides evidence about the construct validity of an assessment instrument (Anastasi, 1988). To determine if AAC has construct validity,

factor analysis of items was computed to determine convergence validity and discriminant validity (Sandberg, 1977, p.45).

Thus, constructs in this study had theoretical basis which translated through clear operational definitions involving the research items.

Methods of Data Analysis

This section describes data processing procedures employed in the data analysis. It begins with an examination of data and measurement scale screening, followed by a description of statistical procedures used for data analyses and hypotheses testing.

Data Processing:

Quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS. The investigator engaged in a coding process after data collection. Coding was done on the questionnaire. Data entry was done on an Excel Spreadsheet and later imported into an SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions (1968), version 16 for Windows data matrix so that Microsoft Windows XP computer could be used to manipulate and analyze the data.

Data and Measurement Scale Screening

All data and measurement scales were screened for accuracy prior to hypothesis testing. Data was examined for conformance to parametric requirements and there were no missing responses. The completed survey was examined to ensure that the major socio-demographic

constituents (i.e. gender, age range, religion, ethnic groupings, family background etc.) were represented in the study.

Further, other checks were undertaken to ensure the accuracy of the data entry process. Analysis of scale ranges indicated that all composite scales were within their theoretical ranges of possibilities. A total of 18 data entry errors were detected. They were due to one digit deviation from the actual scale value resulting from a mis-key or failure to reverse code on item. Reverse coded items were items 19 – 22, 28 – 31, and 37 – 40. Thus, the data entered was cleaned to eliminate possible errors due to incorrect coding. With discovered errors on the SPSS data matrix, appropriate source questionnaires were located to check and correct errors before proceeding to data analysis.

Statistical Procedures for the Analysis of Data and Hypotheses Testing

This section discusses the statistical procedures used for data analysis and hypothesis testing. Preliminary data analysis included obtaining frequency distribution and descriptive statistics for all variables. The study used inferential statistics to help answer the stated research question and to test research hypotheses. Based on the appropriateness, the study used an independent sample t-test, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedures to determine the possible relationship between socio-demographic and family background variables and adolescent psychosocial adjustment outcomes.

In the hypothesis testing situation involving two independent groups of subjects, this study used statistical procedures of t-test for independent samples when two samples were independent of one another as each of them comprised different participants. In conducting

the t-test for two independent samples, the two sample means (represented by the notation \bar{M}) were employed to estimate the value of the means of the populations from which the samples were drawn. If the result of the t-test for independent samples was significant, it indicated that there was a high likelihood that the samples represented groups with different mean scores. Thus, the t-test for two independent samples was the appropriate test to employ for contrasting the means of two independent groups when the values of the population were unknown.

The t-test for independent samples was employed with interval/ratio data. Independent variables include gender role expectation, religion and ethnicity.

Finally, if the independent variables have more than two categories and one dependent continuous variable as was the case with adolescent ethnic groups and religious groups, the study used the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test for significant difference in means. These variables and their research designs are as follows: gender and ethnic groups (2 x 7 between groups factorial design), and gender and religious group (2 x 4 between groups factorial design). With the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), a significant omnibus F value indicated that at least there was a one significant difference among all possible comparisons that could be counted. Theoretically, it is possible that more of the simple/pairwise comparisons were significant, and that the significant difference or differences involved one or more complex comparisons. When the results indicated that the group means were significantly different, a post-hoc test was conducted using Tukey's Honestly Significance Difference test (Tukey's HSD) (Howell, 1997, p.369; Pallant, 2007, pp. 215-220.) to determine exactly where the differences among the groups occur.

The alpha values for the independent t-test, the one-way ANOVA, and the Tukey HSD post-hoc test were all set at the .05 level.

Hypotheses testing

Based on empirical research and theoretical perspectives, research hypotheses were planned before data collection to prevent a posteriori hypotheses testing that milk out significant findings that commit Type 1 error.

Hypotheses one to three were relative expressions of bivariate relationship between psychosocial adjustment and gender.

According to Tuckman (1988), interval data indicates that there is an interval or distance between scores. AAC utilizes Likert type of scale that is convertible into interval data that provides individual scores with explicit distance between the scores of each respondent, therefore, t-test procedures for testing the hypotheses was appropriate (Tuckman, 1988) for this study.

The first a priori hypothesis predicting externalizing type of behaviors to be significantly greater for boys than girls was tested by using t-test.

The second a priori hypothesis predicting internalizing type of behaviors to be significantly greater for girls than boys was tested by using t-test.

The third a priori hypothesis predicting social adaptability type of behavior to be significantly higher for girls than for boys was tested by using t-test.

The fourth a priori hypothesis predicting lower scores of internalizing types of behaviors for adolescent girls who utilized religious counseling and guidance than adolescent boys who utilized religious guidance and counseling was tested by using t-test.

The fifth a priori hypothesis predicting different social adaptability scores for girls of different religious background was tested by using one way ANOVA.

The sixth a priori hypothesis predicting lower scores of externalizing types of behaviors for adolescent girls who participate in religious activities than adolescent boys who participate in religious activities was tested by using t-test.

The seventh a priori hypothesis predicting higher scores of internalizing type of behaviors for adolescent girls of different ethnic group than boys from different ethnic groups was tested by one way ANOVA.

The eighth a priori hypothesis predicting different externalizing types of behaviors for adolescent boys of different ethnic groups than adolescent girls of different ethnic groups was tested by using one-way ANOVA.

Chapter Four

RESULTS

The research reported here was designed to identify factors affecting adolescent perception of psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce.

This section starts with descriptive information of the adolescent's socio-demographic and primary variables.

Descriptive Statistics of Adolescents of Divorced Families as Measured by Adolescent Adjustment Checklist (AAC) (N=564).

Descriptive statistics was primarily used to provide data information on the distribution of research variables. In Section "A" of the AAC, frequencies were determined on the following categorical variables; gender, ethnicity, religious identity, engagement in religious counseling and guidance, maternal job classification, living with relatives, and observance of parental violence. For the interval variables in Section "A" of the AAC; adolescent age range, age of adolescent at time of parental divorce, and years of parental divorce at time of survey, measures of central tendency (mean) and measures of variability (standard deviation) were determined.

In Section "B" of the AAC, the broad categories of descriptive measures (sample size (N), mean (M) and standard deviation (SD)) for the dependent variables layered by gender

were determined for the 3 sub-scales; AACEXT, AACINT, AACSD of the entire data set (N=564).

Descriptive Statistics of Categorical variables of AAC Section “A”

Table 4.1a

Frequency Table for Adolescents’ Gender (N=564).

Characteristics	N	Percent
Male	252	44.7
Girls	312	55.3
Total	564	100

The frequency Table 4.1a for gender above indicates the number of participants for each category of gender. The frequency table for gender reports 252 boys constituting 44.7 % and 312 girls constituting 55.3% of the data set (N=564)

Table 4.1b**Frequency Table for Adolescents' Ethnicity (N=564)**

Characteristics	N	Percent
Akan	205	36.3
Ga	100	17.7
Ewe	64	11.3
Frafra	52	9.2
Nzema	51	9.0
Bono	48	8.5
Dagomba	44	7.8
Total	564	100

The frequency Table 4.1b for Ethnicity indicates the number of participants for 7 categories of ethnicity, with Akan reporting the highest number of participants (N=205, 36.3%) followed by Ga (N=100, 17.7%) and Ewe (N=64, 11.3%). The least number of

participants were reported for Frafra (N=52, 9.2%) followed by Nzema (51, 9.0%), Bono (N=48, 8.5%) and Dagomba (N=44, 7.8%) of the data set (N=564).

Table 4.1c

Frequency Table for Adolescents' Religious Identity (N=564).

Characteristics	N	Percent
Christian/Protestant	296	52.5
Muslim	149	26.4
African Traditional Religion	72	12.8
Free Thinker	47	8.3
Total	564	100

The frequency Table 4.1c for religious identity indicates the number of participants for 4 categories of religious identity. Christian/Protestants reported the highest number of participants (N=296 with 52.5%), followed by Muslim (N=149 with 26.4%). The least number of participants were reported for Free Thinkers (N=47 with 8.3%) followed by African Traditional Religion (N=72 with 12.8%) of the data set (N=564)

Table 4.1d

Frequency Table for Adolescents' Religious Participation (N=564).

Characteristics	N	Percent
Adolescent who participated in religious activities	386	68.4
Adolescent who did not participate in religious activities	178	31.6
Total	564	100

The frequency Table 4.1d for adolescents' participation in religion indicates the number of participants of each category of adolescents who participated in religious activities. The number of participants reported to have participated in religious activities was 386, constituting 68.4% whilst the number of participants reported to have not- participated in religious activities was 178 and constituted 31.6% of the entire data set (N=564).

Table 4.1e

**Frequency Table for Adolescents' Engagement in Religious
Counseling and Guidance (N=564).**

Characteristics	N	Percent
Adolescent who engaged in religious counseling and guidance	415	73.6
Adolescent who did not engage in religious counseling and guidance	149	26.4
Total	564	100

The frequency Table 4.1e for adolescents' engagement in religious counseling and guidance indicate the number of participants for each category of adolescents who engaged in religious counseling and guidance. The number of participants reported to have engaged in religious counseling and guidance was 415 and constituted 73.6% whilst the number of participants reported to have not-engaged in religious counseling and guidance was 149, and constituted 26.4% of the data set (N=564).

Table 4.1f

Frequency Table for Adolescents' Maternal Job Classification(N=564)

Characteristics	N	Percent
Trader	266	47.2
Professional	119	21.1
Civil Servant	81	14.4%
Farmer	52	9.2
Business Executive	46	8.2
Total	564	100

The frequency Table 4.1f for adolescents' maternal job classification indicate the number of participants for 5 categories of maternal job classification with Trader reporting the highest number of participants, 266 with 47.2%, followed by Professional, 119 with 21.1%. The least number of participants were reported for Business Executive, 46 with 8.2% followed by Farmer, 52 with 9.2 of the data set (N=564).

Table 4.1g**Frequency Table for Adolescents who live with Relatives (N=564).**

Characteristics	N	Percent
Adolescent who lived with relatives	292	52.5
Adolescent who did not live with relatives	272	47.5
Total	564	100

The frequency Table 4.1g for adolescents living with relatives indicates the number of participants for each category of adolescent living with relatives. The number of participants reported to have lived with relatives was 292, and constituted 52.5% whilst the number of participants reported to have not-lived with relatives was 272 and constituted 47% of the entire data set (N=564).

Table 4.1h

Frequency Table for Adolescents' Observance of Parental Violence (N=564).

Characteristics	N	Percent
Adolescent who observed parental violence	486	86.2
Adolescent who did not observe parental violence	78	13.8
Total	564	100

The frequency Table 4.1h for adolescents' observance of parental violence indicates the number of participants for each category of adolescent observance of parental violence. The number of participants reported to have observed parental violence was 486, and constituted 86.2% whilst the number of participants reported to have not-lived with relatives was 78 and constituted 13.8% of the entire data set (N=564)

Frequency Table of Interval variables of AAC

Table 4.1i

Frequency Table for Age-related Variables in Section “A” of Adolescent Adjustment Checklist (AAC) (N=564).

Variable	Characteristics	N	%
Adolescent Age Range	14-15 years	295	52.3
	16-17 years	127	22.5
	18-19 years	81	14.4
	19+ years	61	10.8
Age of Adolescent at Time of Parents' divorce	1-5 years	60	10.6
	6-10 years	45	8.0
	11-15 years	288	51.1
	15+ years	171	30.3
Years of Parent's Divorce at Time of survey	1-5 years	467	82.8
	6-10 years	31	5.5
	11-15 years	25	4.4
	15+ years	41	7.3

Table 4.1i above displays the frequency table for three age related interval variables. These are adolescent age range at time of survey, age of adolescent at the time of parent's divorce, and years of parents divorce at the time of survey.

In table 4.1i, about 75% of adolescents sampled for the study were within the ages 14-17 years. Majority of adolescents sampled for the study (N=459) consisting of 81.4% of the total sample (N=564) reported that they were in their adolescent years at the time their parents divorced. Only 105 adolescents sampled (28.6%) reported that they were in both pre-school (N=60, 10.6%) and school going years (6-10years, 8%) at the time of parents divorce.

Most of the adolescents sampled for this study (N=467, 83%) reported that their parents had divorced barely within 1-to-5-years at the time of the study. 31 adolescents who consisted 5.5% of the total sample reported that their parents had divorced within 6-10-years at the time of the study.

Table 4.2a.

Descriptive Statistics of Adolescent of Divorce as Measured by Adolescent Adjustment Checklist for Externalizing Behaviors sub-scale (AACEXT) (N=564)

Characteristics		<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Adolescent's Drinking Activities	Boys	252	3.51	1.49
	Girls	312	3.13	1.55
Adolescent's Religious Compliance	Boys	252	3.64	1.55
	Girls	312	3.33	1.64
Adolescent's Sexual Involvement	Boys	252	2.02	1.20
	Girls	312	2.10	1.32
Adolescent's school Truancy	Boys	252	3.37	1.44
	Girls	312	3.35	1.52
Adolescent Delinquent Activities	Boys	215	3.42	1.38
	Girls	312	2.96	1.44
Adolescent Aggressive Activities	Boys	252	2.87	1.40
	Girls	312	3.15	1.47
Adolescent's Anger	Boys	252	3.49	1.50
	Girls	312	3.30	1.56

From section "B" of AAC, the descriptive statistics Table 4.2a for adolescent externalizing types of behaviors displays the sample size (N), the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) on 7 dependent variables; adolescent drinking, religious compliance,

sexual involvement, truancy, delinquent activities, and anger layered by gender. The sample size for Boys (N=252) and Girls (N=312) remains the same for all the dependent variables.

Table 4.2b

Descriptive Statistics of Adolescent of Divorce as Measured by Adolescent Adjustment Checklist for Internalizing Behaviors sub-scale (AACINT) (N=564)

Characteristics		<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Adolescent's Feeling of loneliness	Boys	252	2.08	1.06
	Girls	312	1.86	.95
Adolescent's low Self esteem	Boys	252	2.12	1.17
	Girls	312	2.13	1.22
Adolescent's Feeling of Unhappiness	Boys	252	3.52	1.56
	Girls	312	3.20	1.62
Adolescent's Feeling of Anxiety	Boys	252	3.60	1.55
	Girls	312	3.41	1.68
Adolescent's Feeling of Shamefulness	Boys	252	2.53	1.29
	Girls	312	2.65	1.28
Adolescent's Feeling of Confusion	Boys	252	2.61	1.34
	Girls	312	2.79	1.4
Adolescent's Feeling of Hurt	Boy	252	3.55	1.34
	Girls	312	3.18	1.43
Adolescent Feeling of lack of Confidence	Boys	252	2.59	1.44
	Girls	312	2.95	1.37

From section "B" of AAC, the descriptive statistics Table 4.2b for adolescent externalizing types of behaviors displays the sample size (N), the mean (M) and standard

deviation (SD) on 8 dependent variables; adolescent's loneliness, low self esteem, feeling of unhappiness, anxiety, shamefulness, fright and feeling of lack of confidence layered by gender. The sample size for Boys (N=252) and Girls (N=312) remains the same for all the dependent variables.

Table 4.2c

Descriptive Statistics of Adolescent of Divorce as Measured by Adolescent Adjustment Checklist for Social Adaptability Behaviors sub-scale (AACSBAD) (N=564)

Characteristics		<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Social regards	Boys	252	3.58	1.52
	Girls	312	3.14	1.58
Passivity	Boys	252	3.53	1.46
	Girls	312	3.20	1.61
Social Caring	Boys	252	2.90	1.37
	Girls	312	3.13	1.36
Social Withdrawal	Boys	252	3.40	1.52
	Girls	312	3.12	1.53
Social Irritability	Boys	252	2.77	1.31
	Girls	312	3.00	1.40
Social misunderstanding	Boys	252	3.58	1.47
	Girls	312	3.41	1.52
Social support	Boys	252	2.92	1.39
	Girls	312	3.15	1.45

From section “B” of AAC, the descriptive statistics Table 4.2c for adolescent social adaptability types of behaviors displays the sample size (N), the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) on 7 dependent variables; social regards, passivity, social caring, social withdrawal, social irritability, social misunderstanding and social support layered by gender. The sample size for Boys (N=252) and Girls (N=312) remains the same for all the dependent variables.

Analysis of Data to Test Hypotheses

The following section reports the use of independent-sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the research hypotheses to determine relationships between predictor variables and measures of psychosocial adjustment using scores on ACEXT, AACINT and AACSD sub-scales.

Hypothesis 1:

There will be significantly more externalizing types of behaviors for adolescent boys than for adolescent girls following parental divorce.

In order to determine if the results of the analysis support the first a priori hypothesis, an independent-sample t-test was conducted to evaluate the significant mean difference between externalizing types of behaviors of adolescent boys and adolescent girls.

The result of the analysis from Table 4.3a indicates a significant mean difference in scores of externalizing types of behavior of boys ($M=22.33$, $SD=5.63$) and girls ($M=21.31$, $SD=6.27$), $t(562)=2.01$, $p=0.02$. Therefore, based on the results of the analysis conducted, the first a priori hypothesis is supported.

Table 4.3a

Result of t-Test analysis of Group Difference for Externalizing types of Behaviors(N=564)

Scale: 1 = Always True		5 = Not True at all	
Group	Number of Cases	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Boys	252	22.33	5.63
Girls	312	21.31	6.27
t – value = 2.01		dif = 562	P = 0. 02 (Sig.)

Hypothesis 2:

There will be significantly more internalizing types of behaviors among adolescent girls who experience parental divorce than adolescent boys who experience parental divorce. In order to determine if the results of the analysis support the second a priori hypothesis, an independent-sample t-test was conducted to evaluate the significant mean difference between internalizing types of behaviors of adolescent girls and adolescent boys.

The result of the analysis from Table 4.4a indicates a non significant mean difference in scores of externalizing types of behavior of girls (M=22.73, SD=6.69) and boys (M=23.68, SD=5.91) beyond the .05 level, $t(562)=1.77, p=0.39$. Therefore, based on the results of the analysis conducted, the second a priori hypothesis was not supported.

Table 4.4a

Results of t-Test analysis of Group Difference for Internalizing types of Behaviors

(N=564)

Scale: 1 = Always True

5 = Not True at all

Group	Number of Cases	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Girls	312	22.73	6.69
Boys	252	23.67	5.91

t – value = 1.77

dif = 562

$P = 0.39$ (ns.)

Hypothesis 3:

There will be significantly more social adaptability types of behaviors among adolescent girls who experience parental divorce than adolescent boys who experience parental divorce. In order to determine if the results of the analysis support the third a priori hypothesis, an independent-sample t -test was conducted to evaluate the significant mean difference between social adaptability types of behaviors of adolescent girls and adolescent boys. The result of the analysis from Table 4.3a indicates a non-significant mean difference in scores of social adaptability types of behavior of girls (\underline{M} =22.14, \underline{SD} =6.65), and boys (\underline{M} =22.69, \underline{SD} =5.61), $t(562)=1.03$, $p=0.15$. Therefore, based on the results of the analysis conducted, the third a priori hypothesis was not supported.

Table 4.5a

Results of t-Test analysis of Group Difference for Social Adaptability types of Behaviors

Scale: 1 = Always True		5 = Not True at all	
Group	Number of Cases	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Girls	312	22.14	6.65
Boys	252	22.68	5.61
t – value = 1.03		dif = 562	$P = 0.15$ (ns.)

Hypothesis 4:

Adolescent girls who seek religious counseling and guidance have lower internalizing types of behaviors than adolescent boys who seek religious counseling and guidance. In order to determine if the results of the analysis support the fourth a priori hypothesis, an independent-sample t -test was conducted to evaluate the significant mean difference between internalizing types of behaviors of adolescent boys and adolescent girls.

The result of the analysis from Table 4.5a indicates a significant mean difference in scores of internalizing types of behavior of Boys ($M=22.35$, $SD=5.67$) and Girls ($M=21.10$, $SD=6.43$), $t(413)=2.06$, $p=0.15$. Therefore, based on the results of the analysis conducted, the sixth a priori hypothesis is supported.

Table 4.6a

Results of t-Test Analysis of Group Difference for Internalizing types of Behaviors due to Engagement in Religious Counseling and Guidance (N=415).

Scale : 1 = Extremely True 5 = Not True at all

Group	Number of Cases	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Boys	185	22.35	5.67
Girls	230	21.10	6.43

t – value = 2.06 dif = 413 P = .02 (sig)

A subsequent analysis was run on adolescent boys and girls who did not engage in religious counseling and guidance in order to compare the internalizing behavior outcomes with the group that engaged in religious counseling and guidance. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 4.6a.

Table 4.6b

Results of t-Test Analysis of Group Difference for Internalizing types of Behaviors due to Engagement in Religious Counseling and Guidance (N=149)

Scale: 1 = Always True		5 = Not True at all	
Group	Number of Cases	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Boys	67	22.30	5.57
Girls	82	21.90	5.81

t -value = 0.42

dif = 147

$P=0.34$ (n.s)

In order to determine if the results of the analysis supported the hypothesis that girls who did not engage in religious counseling and guidance have lower scores of internalizing types of behaviors than boys who did not engage in religious counseling and guidance, an independent-sample t -test was conducted to evaluate the significant mean difference between internalizing types of behaviors of adolescent boys and adolescent girls.

Table 4.6b above indicates a non-significant mean difference in scores of internalizing types of behavior of Boys ($M=22.30$, $SD=5.57$) and Girls ($M=21.90$, $SD=5.81$), $t(147)=0.42$, $p=0.34$.

Therefore, based on the results of the analyses conducted, engagement in religious counseling and guidance predicted lower internalizing types of behaviors for the adolescent boys and adolescent girls who utilized religious counseling and guidance.

Hypothesis 5:

Adolescent girls of different religious background have different mean scores of social adaptability types of behaviors outcomes on the AACCSAD sub-scale. In order to determine if the results of the analysis support the fifth a priori hypothesis, a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare the mean scores of social adaptability types of behaviors for girls of different religious groups at the .05 level. The independent variable; religious background as depicted in Table 4.7a includes 4 levels. The dependent variable was the social adaptability types of behaviors measured by AACCSAD sub-scale.

Table 4.7a

Comparison between Religious Groups and Girls (N=312)

Groups	Number of Cases	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Muslim	88	22.80	.70
Christian/Protestant	154	20.97	6.76
Free Thinker	30	23.63	4.90
African Traditional Religion	40	24.05	6.80
F Ratio = 3.57		<i>p</i> =0.02 (Sig)	

Table 4.7b

Results of One-way Analysis of Variance on Comparison of Religious Groups and
Adolescent Girls Social Adaptability Types of Behaviors

Scale: 1 = Extremely True		5 = Not True at all		
Source	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	3	461.32	153.77	3.57*
Within groups	308	13278.48	43.11	
Total	311	13739.80		
F Ratio = 3.57		$p=0.02$ (Sig)		

From Table 4.7b, there was statistically significant different social adaptability behavior outcomes $F(3,308)=3.57$, $P=0.02$ from the 4 religious groups with a small effect size of .33. Post hoc comparison using Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean scores for the religious background of African Traditional Religion ($\underline{M}=24.05$, $\underline{SD}=6.80$) and Christian/Protestant ($\underline{M}=20.97$, $\underline{SD}=6.26$) differed significantly from each other. Religious backgrounds from Muslims ($\underline{M}=22.81$, $\underline{SD}=6.60$) and Free Thinker ($\underline{M}=23.63$, $\underline{SD}=4.90$) did not differ significantly from either of the other groups. This analysis shows that girls with African Traditional Religion reported the highest social adaptability whereas Christian Protestants showed the lowest social adaptability. A priori hypothesis 5 was thus supported because

there was sufficient evidence in support of difference amongst the means, therefore hypothesis 5 is accepted.

Hypothesis 6:

Adolescent girls who participate in religious activities have lower scores of externalizing types of behaviors than adolescent boys who participate in religious activities. In order to determine if the results of the analysis support the sixth a priori hypothesis, an independent-sample t -test was conducted to evaluate the significant mean difference between externalizing types of behaviors of adolescent girls and adolescent boys.

The result of the analysis from Table 4.8a indicates a non significant mean difference in scores of externalizing types of behavior of Boys ($M=22.33$, $SD=5.68$) and Girls ($M=21.29$, $SD=6.49$), $t(384)=1.65$, $p=0.10$. Therefore, based on the results of the analysis conducted, the sixth a priori hypothesis is not supported.

Table 4.8a

Results of t-Test Analysis of Group Difference for Externalizing types of Behaviors due to Participation in Religious Activities (N=386).

Scale: 1 = Extremely True		5 = Not True at all	
Group	Number of Cases	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Boys	170	22.33	5.68
Girls	216	21.29	6.49
t - value = 1.65		dif = 384	P = .10 (ns)

A subsequent analysis was run on adolescent boys and girls who did not participate in religious counseling and guidance in order to compare the externalizing behavior outcomes with the group that engaged in religious counseling and guidance. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 4.8b.

In order to determine if the results of the analysis supported the hypothesis that girls who did not participate in religious activities have lower scores of externalizing types of behaviors than boys who did not participate in religious activities, an independent-sample *t*-test was conducted to evaluate the significant mean difference between externalizing types of behaviors of adolescent girls and adolescent boys.

Table 4.8b

Results of t-Test Analysis of Group Difference for Externalizing types of Behaviors due to non-Participation in Religious Activities (N=178).

Scale: 1 = Always True		5 = Not True at all	
Group	Number of Cases	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Boys	82	22.34	5.58
Girls	96	21.38	5.77
<i>t</i> - value = 1.13		dif = 176	<i>P</i> =0.13 (n.s)

Table 4.8b above indicates a non-significant mean difference in scores of externalizing types of behavior of Girls (M=21.38, SD=5.57) and Boys (M=22.34, SD=5.58),

$t(176)=1.13, p=0.13$. Therefore, based on the results of the analyses conducted, the hypothesis of adolescent boys and girls who did not participate in religious activities was not supported for predicting lower externalizing types of behaviors. Thus, participation in religious activities and non participation in religious activities did not predict low externalizing types of behaviors for adolescent boys and girls.

Hypothesis 7:

Adolescent girls of different ethnic groups have different mean scores of internalizing types of behaviors on the AACINT sub-scale. In order to test if the results of the analysis support the seventh a priori hypothesis, a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare the mean scores of internalizing types of behaviors for girls' of different ethnic groups at the .05 level. The independent variable; ethnic groups included 7 levels as depicted by Table 4.9a. The dependent variable was the internalizing types of behaviors measured by AACINT.

Table 4.9a

Display of Means

Groups	Number of Cases	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Ga	62	23.54	6.10
Dagomba	18	25.06	4.89
Ewe	35	23.63	6.01
Frafra	40	22.05	7.70
Akan	98	21.54	6.69
Nzema	31	21.26	7.96
Bono	28	25.04	5.82
F Ratio = 2.05		$p=0.06$ (ns)	

Hypothesis 8:

Adolescent boys of different ethnic groups have different mean scores of externalizing types of behaviors on the AACEXT sub scale.

In order to determine if the results of the analysis support the eighth hypothesis, a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare the mean scores of externalizing types of behaviors for adolescent boys of different ethnic groups at the .05 level. The independent variable; ethnic groups as depicted in Table 4.10a include 7 levels. The dependent variable was the Externalizing types of behaviors measured by AACEXT sub-scale.

Table 4.10a

Display of Means			
Groups	Number of Cases	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Ga	38	23.95	3.53
Dagomba	26	24.38	4.98
Ewe	29	20.66	6.42
Frafra	12	20.33	7.38
Akan	107	22.25	5.66
Nzema	20	21.25	5.75
Bono	20	21.75	6.24
F Ratio = 1.98		$p= 0.07$ (ns)	

Table 4.10b

Results of One-way Analysis of Variance for effects of Ethnic Groups on Adolescent
Boys Externalizing Types of Behaviors (N=564).

Scale: 1 = Always True 5 = Not True at all

Source	<u>df</u>	<u>SS</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between groups	6	369.05	61.51	1.99
Within groups	245	7598.95	31.02	
Total	251	7968.00		

F Ratio = 1.98 $p=0.07$ (ns)

From Table 4.10b, a single-factor between-subjects ANOVA shows that there is no significant difference found among the means of ethnic groups: $F(6,254)=1.99$, $P=0.07$. Based on the results of this analysis, hypothesis 10 is not supported. The apparent mean score differences were not sufficiently large and consistent to stand out from the differences in externalizing behaviors of boys from different ethnic groups.

Table 4.11

Summary Table of Result of Analyses of Statistical Significance of Study Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Statistical Test Performed		Results of
	<u>t</u> -test	ANOVA	Test Performed
1. There will be a significantly more externalizing types of behaviors for adolescent boys than adolescent girls.	$\underline{t} = 2.01$ $p = 0.02$		Sig.
2. There will be a significantly more internalizing types of behaviors for adolescent girls than adolescent boys	$\underline{t} = 1.77$ $p = 0.39$		Non Sig
3. There will be significantly more social adaptability types of behaviors for adolescent girls than adolescent boys.	$\underline{t} = 1.03$ $p = 0.15$		Non Sig
4a. Adolescent girls who seek religious counseling and guidance have lower internalizing types of behaviors than adolescent boys.	$\underline{t} = 2.06$ $p = .02$		Sig.

Summary Table of Result of Analyses of Statistical Significance of Study Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Statistical Test Performed		Results of
	t-test	ANOVA	Test Performed
4b. Adolescent girls who did not seek religious counseling and guidance have lower internalizing types of behaviors than adolescent boys.	$\underline{t} = 0.42$ $p = 0.34$		Non Sig
5. Adolescent girls of different religious background have different social adaptability types of behaviors.		$F = 3.57$ $P = 0.02$	Sig.
6a. Adolescent girls who participates in religious activities have lower scores of externalizing types of behaviors than adolescents boys.	$\underline{t} = 1.65$ $P = 0.10$		Non Sig
6b. Adolescent girls who did not participate in religious activities have lower scores of externalizing types of behaviors than adolescents boys.	$\underline{t} = 1.13$ $P = 0.13$		Non Sig

Summary Table of Result of Analyses of Statistical Significance of Study Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Statistical Test Performed		Results of
	t-test	ANOVA	Test Performed
7. Adolescent girls from different ethnic groups have different externalizing types of behaviors.		F = 2.05 p = .06	Non Sig
8. Adolescent girls from different ethnic groups have different externalizing types of behaviors		F = 1.98 p = .07	Non Sig

Summary

Confirming main stream research findings, adolescent boys who experienced parental divorce showed more externalizing types of behaviors than girls regardless of context in this study. However, the study did not confirm more internalizing types of behaviors for adolescent girls than boys. Following a similar trend, girls and boys in this study exhibited no significant difference in their social adaptability types of behaviors. Therefore, for the gender hypotheses, (hypotheses 1, 2, 3) adolescents' sex becomes a significant criterion

variable in the prediction of externalizing types of behavior; and not in the prediction of internalizing and social adaptability types of behavior in this study.

Girls who participated in religious counseling and guidance made significant lower internalizing behavior outcomes than boys. This was clearly indicated when a comparison group of girls and boys who did not participate in religious counseling and guidance was made. Non participation in religious counseling and guidance for boys and girls did not significantly predict lower internalizing types of behavior outcomes.

Girls' participation in religious activities did not predict lower externalizing behavior outcomes for girls than for boys. More so, non participation in religious activities failed to predict lower externalizing behavior outcomes for girls than boys.

On the contrary, girls of different religious background significantly predicted different social adaptability behavior outcomes as is normally indicated in the literature.

The overall impact of religion on adolescent girls' psychosocial behavior adjustment was markedly significant in predicting lower internalizing behavior and different social adaptability behavior outcomes. Contrarily, religious participation failed to predict lower externalizing types of behavior adjustment for girls and boys.

Ethnic group difference and different tribal cultures for girls and boys did not predict significant externalizing and internalizing types of behaviors for both girls and boys in the study. This means that ethnic differences / tribal cultural difference have no significant effect on psychosocial behavior adjustment of adolescent boys and girls in this study.

Over all, the inconsistent patterns in the analyses of the results of the study tend to reflect the conflicting findings (Amato, 2001; Sun & Li, 2002; Vandervalk et al., 2004; Clarke-

Steward & Brentano, 2006) of adolescent psychosocial behavior adjustment following parental divorce from the extant literature.

The next chapter will discuss findings of the result analyses. It will elaborate on the significance of the research findings in relation to the study's objectives and address the study's implication for theory, direction for future research, policy and practice.

Chapter Five

DISCUSSION

The study reported here was designed to identify factors affecting adolescent perception of psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce. The final chapter of this research focuses on presenting a review of the research objectives and conclusions drawn from the results of the data collected for the study. Further discussions will relate statistical findings to research hypotheses and previous empirical studies with their theoretical expectations. The closing part of the chapter will discuss the limitations of the study in addition to identifying the study's implications for policy, practice and for future research.

Review of Research Objectives

The purpose of this research was to examine the factors that moderate adolescent's perception of their psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce. There is a great variability in the psychosocial adjustment of adolescent who experience parental divorce such that it is extremely difficult to predict beforehand the expected adjustment outcomes of any sample of adolescents of divorce families based on specific predictor variables.

A number of factors relating to the differences in adjustment outcomes of adolescents who experience parental divorce include the gender of adolescents, their ethnicity and religion.

These factors have been repeatedly cited as variables that predict adolescent psychosocial adjustment (Hetherington and Kelly, 2002; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980b; Sun and Li, 2002; Furrow and Wagner et al., 2003; Peace et al., 2003; Galambos et al., 1990; Zaslow, 1988).

Evidently, adolescent gender as a variable has been extensively studied in different researches that have used different methodologies, instruments, sample groups and sample sizes such that their findings though interrelated, are more difficult to distinguish empirically.

This means that it becomes more difficult to compare such findings and equally difficult to generalize about specific variables that predict specific adolescent psychosocial adjustment outcomes following parental divorce. Other moderating variables like adolescent ethnicity and adolescent religion appear to have been less researched, yet, the few studies that are reported appear to adapt different methodologies, apply different instruments, use different sample groups and different sample sizes which make their findings difficult to compare or generalize about what mediating variables are most significantly associated with adolescent adjustment following parental divorce.

Apparently, no single variable sufficiently explains adolescent psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce; many factors and multiple reasons operate together to predict adolescent adjustment outcomes after parental divorce. Appreciating the operation of multiple factors in one study was considered both useful and a methodological strength which would allow for greater comparability and generalizability.

The current study examined the variables to determine the significance of their relation to adolescent psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce. Three variables were examined in this study to determine the significance of their relationship to adolescent

adjustment post parental divorce. These variables are adolescent gender, ethnicity, and religion.

The unique contributions of these variables to the prediction of adolescent's adjustment to parental divorce was the major reason of the study to assess which variable predicted adolescent externalizing, internalizing or social adaptability types of behaviors.

In recognition of the fact that adolescents who experience parental divorce are not a homogenous group, and that they do not adjust to parental divorce in the same manner, this study prioritized gender analysis in order to examine the differences in the psychosocial adjustment of adolescent males and adolescent females, especially when previous studies have reported inconsistent and conflicting findings.

In addition, considering the substantial role of religion across ethnic cultures in Africa and Ghana in particular, and the strong relationship of religious practice to adolescent psychosocial development (Kendler et al., 2003), adolescent religious identity and participation in religious activities as well as utilization of religious counseling and guidance was of keen interest in the study. Other areas of interest included adolescent ethnic identity and how it related to the psychosocial adjustment of different ethnic groups following parental divorce. All the variables were singled out to determine the meaningfulness of their relationship to how adolescents perceived parental divorce.

Based on the review of the literature, a set of predictor variables of post divorce psychosocial adjustment were selected. There was sufficient evidence in the literature to generate directional hypotheses regarding the relationships between each of these predictors and the three measures of adjustment taken from the Adolescent Adjustment Checklist (AAC): internalizing sub-scale (AACEXT), internalizing sub-scale (AACINT), and social

adaptability sub-scale (AACSD). The results of the study are discussed in relation to the literature and are organized under headings that correspond to the research hypotheses.

The demographic variables about which hypothesis were generated were gender, ethnicity and religion.

1. Religion and adolescent psychosocial adjustment.

Religion is a significant criterion variable predicting adolescent internalizing and social adaptability behaviors, but did not predict externalizing behaviors in the study.

The following general discussion explains the significant findings on religion as variable predicting adolescent psychosocial adjustment types of behaviors.

Religious response analyses in this study consistently confirm the notion that religion moderates psychosocial behaviors of Ghanaian adolescents of divorced families.

Several research have established the significance of religious belief and practice as a coping mechanism for negotiating the effects of parental divorce and other life stresses for adolescents (Furrow and Wagner et al., 2003; Mahoney et al., 2006; Donahue and Benson, 1995; Pearce et al., 2003; Ellison and Levin, 1998; Idler and George, 1998).

Research has also shown that people tend to utilize religious coping to deal with situations where they have little control, compared to situations over which they have high control (Pargament, 1997). Religion serves a particular function in that it can help people create meaning out of their experience while coping with uncontrollable situations such as parental loss (Mahoney et al., 2006; Pearce et al., 2003). Various studies have demonstrated the importance of paying attention to the diverse cultural, ethnic and religious dimension of

religious coping (Ai. et al., 2003; Frable, 1997). Ghanaian adolescents in this study used their religion as a means to engage in reactive coping.

Reactive coping (Spencer et al, 2006; Ker & Bowen, 1981) entails an effort the adolescent expends to deal with the cumulative stress of parental divorce with a view to compensate for the harm and loss. This type of reactive coping is problem focused, emotion focus and social-relation focused (Spencer et al., 2006; Ker & Bowen, 1988).

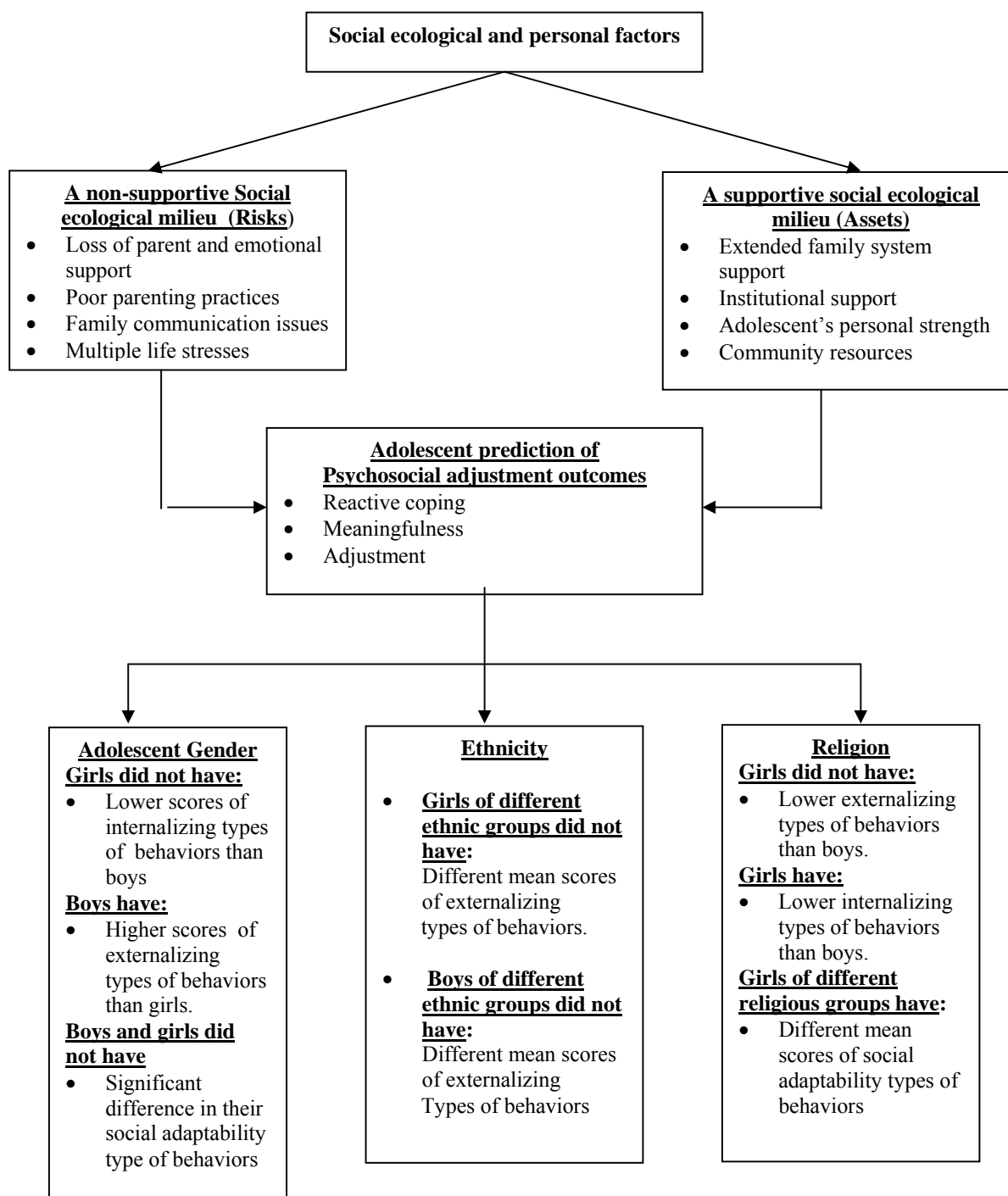
Further, adolescent's religious practice increased their coping process by helping them to make 'meaning' out of their situations. Authors (Folkman and Moskowitz, 2000; Lazarus, 2000) vary in the roles they ascribe to the search for meaning in the stress-coping process (Lazarus, 2000).

Meaning (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Wong & Fry, 1998) has been conceptualized as different from coping or intertwined with coping, or being a factor that informs and shapes coping in the process. Research concerned with the issue of finding meaning in adversity conceptualize it as a powerful human strength commonly associated with the minimization of harm to an individual's physical and psychosocial adjustment (Wong & Fry, 1998; Lazarus, 2000; Frankl, 1963)

The conceptual interactive model of the study provides a theoretical frame for adolescents' psychosocial adjustment using religion and religious coping as an ecological and personal resource to examine, explain and write meaning to the divorce experience.

Table 5.1

Predictors of adolescent psychosocial adjustment to parental divorce:



A supportive ecological milieu with special adolescent personality characteristics increases their protective factors to offset the multiple social ecological stresses. This promotes reordering of life with positive psychosocial adjustment. Predictors of psychosocial adjustment are adolescent sex and religion. Adolescent ethnic background did not predict psychosocial adjustment outcomes.

There are two types of interactive processes (Parker, 1992) within the conceptual mode of this study. The first process is the structural or mechanistic interactive process. The mechanistic interactive process involves the interaction of personal and ecological resources and demand, which give meaning and determine the mode of response to the divorce experience of the adolescent. The Model assumes that there is a linear and additive relationship (interaction) between personal and situational factors that determine religious coping and positive psychosocial adjustment.

The second process is the dynamic interaction which involves the reciprocal interaction between adolescent behavior and both situation and person factors which becomes ongoing following the divorce experience.

Another theoretical explanation that may account for the positive effect of religion on adolescents' internalizing and social adaptability behavior outcomes is the family ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1998). This model accounts for the interaction between family members on the one hand and their religion and religious practice/involvement on the other hand. Within this theoretical perspective, the single parent family with its positive interpersonal dynamics and supportive environment within the extended family system (Sudarkasa, 2004 Takyi & Oheneba –Sakyi, 1994) is able to integrate religious beliefs and norms to define family norms and communication patterns which enhance conflict management and fosters positive psychosocial adjustment.

The Risk and Resilience perspective (Rutter. 1994, Margolin et al., 2001; Walsh, 1998) also offers explanation to the religious effect of positive psychosocial adjustment of adolescents experiencing parental divorce.

Ghanaian adolescents are confronted with devastating challenges including low household income (GSS, 1995b; 2005) which often leads to low custodial parent's psychological wellbeing, with escalating family stress and problematic parent-adolescent relations (Anarfi & Antwi, 1995, McLanahan, 2002). Decreased household incomes (GSS, 1995b; 2005) also cause single parent families to live in low social capital areas with lower opportunity for economic mobility and raises the likelihood of adolescent girls dropping out of school (Dolphine, 1997; Boakye, 1997) and becoming teen parents (Anarfi, 2004; Anarfi & Antwi, 1995) or arranged for early marriage (Abukari-Mohammed, 1996; GPDAR, Vol.1, 2005). These conditions constitute poor protective factors to the Ghanaian adolescent and increases their risk mechanism and susceptibility to negative psychosocial adjustment.

However, without the presence of supportive familial and community factors, the adolescents' special personality endowment including their positive self concepts (self esteem, self image, self confidence) high intelligence, problem solving competence, easy temperament and the ability to tap and utilize social support from peers and the community on one hand, and their strong inclination to religious belief and prescriptions on the other hand, enables the adolescents to rise above the challenging circumstances and experience of parental divorce.

It may also be the case that those other adolescents who were religious and used their religious involvement to negotiate psychosocial behaviors had a conducive and supportive family environment coupled with strong personality attributes which reduced the risk factors, and promoting the protective factors, enhanced their coping abilities and positive adjustment.

The final theoretical perspective to account for the moderating effect of religion and religious participation on adolescent psychosocial behaviors is the Extrinsic-Intrinsic religiousness perspective⁹ (Allport, 1950, Allport & Ross, 1967). This perspective explains the different impact of religion on adherents who affiliate with religion on one hand and those who affiliate and internalize religious prescriptives and use them as basis of living on the other hand. Ghanaian adolescents who internalize religious attitudes and use them as guide for daily living are the group with the intrinsic religiousness sentiment. They are able to negotiate internalizing and social adaptability behaviors successfully whereas adolescents who only identify with religion (the extrinsic group) are not able to utilize religious affiliation to negotiate psychosocial adjustment. Consistent with Allport's (1950) view of religious development, extrinsic but not intrinsic religiosity typically correlated with more dysfunctional psychosocial outcomes.

Specifically, the sixth hypothesis on religious participation was not supported and the following extrapolated accounts may well explain the reason. It is obvious that adolescents who do not internalize religious instructions and prescriptives are devoid of reference points with which to handle life challenges, hence, their dysfunctional psychosocial behaviors compared to those who internalize religious instructions and prescriptives.

Furthermore, it is conjectured that the non-effect of religious participation on adolescent externalizing behaviors could be explained theoretically by the family ecology perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1998). The family ecology perspective explains how interfamilial dynamics is impacted by religion and religious activities (Demo et al., 2005)

9. In his review of the literature on Intrinsic and Extrinsic religiousness, Hunt & King (1971) reported that Allport (1950) distinguished between two types of religious sentiments: Intrinsic religiousness and extrinsic religiousness. Intrinsic religiousness is religion as a meaning-endowing framework in terms of which all life is understood (Rychlak, 1979). In contrast, Extrinsic religiousness is the religion of comfort and social convention, a self-serving instrumental approach shaped to suit oneself (Hunt & King, 1971).

and accounts for the resultant psychosocial behavior outcomes for adolescents. When single parents families come under intense socio-economic pressure (GSS, 2005; 1995b; Anarf & Antwi, 1995), the cumulative stress (Koerner et al., 2002; Silitsky, 1996) weakens custodial mother's emotional functioning and the emotional bonding of the family. In addition, this condition affects the interpersonal communication within the family and fosters hostile behaviors which induces adolescent's home desertion (Bowen, 1987). The negative inter familial dynamics is not supportive and responsible enough to engage and integrate religion and its practice to negotiate and define adolescent's externalizing behavior adjustment. Thus, the negative inter family dynamics neutralizes the positive effects of religious functioning in the determination of adolescent's psychosocial adjustment. The prevalence of poor interpersonal communication, hostile behaviors, and desertion of families (Bowen, 1987) implies that adolescents join peers and come under the influence of peer culture (Naylor, 2002; GSS, 2005; Weinberg, 1964) with negative externalizing behavior outcomes.

It is interesting to note that this finding of the study contrasts main stream research (Garbarino, 1995; Taylor et al., 2004; Pergament, 1997) reports on adolescent religious participation which asserts that religious participation provide adolescents with a supportive familial environment that fosters enduring values, meaning, identity with positive adjustment and a sense of belonging and connectedness beyond themselves (Mahoney et al., 1999). This type of findings on American adolescents is contrasted with the findings on Ghanaian adolescence in this study and may be due to differences in the cultural and socio-economic contexts.

Another possible theoretical explanation (Risk and Resilience Perspective) for the non effect of religious participation on adolescents externalizing behavior is the probability

that adolescent had insufficient protective factors (Masten, 2001; Garmezi & Rutter, 1983) and that their personal characteristics could not adapt to the challenges of parental divorce. Resilience is not strictly an individual trait (Clarke-Steward & Brentano, 2006); it is also a function of the environment (p.25).

It is conjectured that adolescents who reported high externalizing behavior outcomes despite participation in religious activities lacked both the personal traits and the special ability to harness family support and community resources. Religious participation in this study therefore did not moderate the potentially harmful effects of parental divorce, hence, the inability of adolescent girls in the study to negotiate externalizing behavior outcomes than boys.

For conceptual purposes, this study made distinctions between religious affiliation, participation and engagement in religious counseling and guidance. However, in the general sense of religious practice in Ghana, this type of conceptualized distinction is suspect.

Ghanaians including the youth are generally religion-affiliated (Ghana Census, 1984; Population and Housing Census of Ghana, 2000) and in addition participate in religious rites and pay heed to religious instructions. Religion is a fundamental aspect of the Ghanaian life and a cultural characteristics of the Ghanaian society.(Opoku, 1978; Atiemo, 1993); all religious adherents participate and involve in religion in one way or the other. The distinguishing features of the different religions (Shenk, 1995) in the way they influence psychosocial adjustment (Regnerus, 2003) is the core factor that affected adolescent adjustment in the study.

It is surmised that the difference in teachings and belief systems (Heath et al., 1999), the difference in the preparedness of the adolescent to internalize and integrate religious

practice and directives (Sorenson et al., 1995), the differences in the teachings of religious problem solving and religious coping (Koenig et al., 2003; Krause et al., 2000b), the differences in the 'value' adherents pay to their religion (Sorenson et al., 1995), the difference in the literacy levels of adherents and their desire to study the fundamentals of their religions, the difference in the extent to which adherents connect popular culture with their religious culture (Shenk, 1995; Naylor, 2000), are the dimensional characteristics (GSS, 2000; Shenk, 1995;) of the different religions that could account for the moderating effect of religion on adolescent psychosocial adjustment.

Religion thus, provides a framework that facilitates positive psychosocial adjustment to adolescents who are exposed to multiple familial risks including the crises of parental divorce. Various forms of Ghanaian religions provide formal guidance and moral teaching that address the emotional and behavioral concerns by fostering enduring virtues of hope, optimism, empowerment, inner peace, restraints against impulsivity, prudence and patience. These orientations promote positive family characteristics such as resilience and hardiness that impact on adolescents' psychosocial functioning following parental divorce.

Finally, religious belief and practice consolidate adolescent's moral foundations that promote self regulation and conformity to the standards of religion which enable them to adjust positively.

2. Gender relationship to adolescent psychosocial behaviors:

Three gender related hypotheses were tested and analyzed. Boys are confirmed to have higher scores of externalizing behaviors than girls, whilst girls did not report lower scores of

internalizing behaviors than boys. Both boys and girls in the study did not report significant difference in their social adaptability behaviors.

This finding that adolescent boys have higher externalizing behaviors than girls is consistent with studies suggesting parental divorce has greater externalizing effect on boys than girls (Kirby, 2002; Simon et al., 1996; Amato and Keith, 1991; Sun and Li, 2002; Allison and Furstenburg, 1989; Hetherington, Cox and Cox, 1978; Wallerstein and Kelly, 1980; Lewis and Wallerstein, 1987).

Particular attention is paid to the role of three variables that could mediate the relationship between gender and the effect of parental divorce on adolescent adjustment.

These variables include the age of the adolescent at the time of parental divorce and age at the time that psychosocial adjustment was measured, and the length of time between parental divorce and the assessment.

Several studies (Allison and Furstenberg, 1989; Zill et al., 1993; Kalter & Rembar, 1981; Twaite & Silitsky, 1996) report a relationship between the age of the adolescent at the time of parent's divorce and a within-gender-psychosocial adjustment outcome. Adolescents whose parents divorced when they were in pre-school years are reported to have the worst devastating effects of parental divorce (Gardner, 1977). Other studies (Allison and Furstenberg, 1989; Zill et al., 1993) have suggested otherwise; and have reported that older children understand their parents divorce better and are able to react and cope more effectively to negotiate behavior adjustments. Some classic investigations (Kalter & Rembar, 1981; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974; Hodges & Bloom, 1984) have reported no different outcome due to the child's age at the time of parent's divorce.

Since ninety percent of adolescents from this study reported to have experienced parental divorce in latency and adolescent developmental periods, no analysis was run on the ten percent of the sample that experienced divorce in pre-school periods to determine the extent age at time of parental divorce moderates their psychosocial adjustment. Moreover, there was no hypothesis set to test the moderating effect of age at time of parental divorce on adolescents.

In addition, participants in this research are all adolescents with a median age of 17-years; therefore, the issue of age variation of adolescents at the time of conducting the survey is of less significance. Although, the sample analysis of this study indicate that majority of adolescents report their parents have divorced within five years, leaving only seven percent of the data set that report their parents divorced fifteen-years and beyond. For this fractional group, both the critical stage theory (Neubauer, 1960) and the cumulative effect hypothesis (Koerner et al., 2002; Lamb et al., 1999, Gardner, 1977) predict that parental divorce will be more devastating (Twaite & Silitsky, 1996; Zill et al., 1993).

Externalizing behavior may be explained by the Freudian (1946) notion of displacement of aggression. Adolescents develop strong reactions when their parents divorce (Wallerstein, 1983, Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Sun & Li, 2002) and feel abandoned and frustrated. As a result they become anxious and angry (Kirby, 2002; Sun & Li, 2002) with themselves because of the constraints their parents divorce have had on them. They choose to be preoccupied with their own interests but do not come up with a clear path to a mature identity (Clarke-Stewart & Brentano, 2006, p. 117). Like most adolescents (Kirby, 2002; Sun & Li, 2002), Ghanaian adolescent boys and girls express frustration and anger

due to the socio-economic effects of parental divorce (Sudarkasa, 2004) with the associated peer rejection in the new communities and school they relocate and enroll into respectively (Anarfi & Antwi, 1995). As their frustration compounds over time, Ghanaian adolescents then decide to migrate (Naylor, 2000) to bigger cities where they identify with similar adolescent groups and conform to peer culture. They vent their anger and frustration with impulsive (Lerner & Steinberg, 2004) responses to their parents divorce threats and provocative condition (Ankomah, 2002; Naylor, 2000).

In addition, as many youngsters need to vent their hostility, but are unable to express their rage directly towards their parents, they choose to direct the expressions of their anger and conflicts in aggressive behaviors towards others in their environment (Simon et al., 1999) by way of engaging in thefts, misdemeanors, gang fights and several acts of delinquencies. Most Ghanaian adolescents in peer groups tend to act on impulse and their impulsiveness (Dickman, 1990; Schachar et al., 1993) is the most crucial personality dimension that predicts externalizing behaviors. Adolescent impulsiveness¹⁰ (Dickman, 1990; Schachar et al., 1993; Lerner & Steinberg, 2004) refers to their poor ability to control behavior and the symptoms may include poor problem solving ability, risky attitudes and quick temperament.

Another explanation of adolescent externalizing behaviors may be explained by Bowen's (1978) emotional distancing principle. The divorced literature documents explicitly that divorced families are different from traditional families, but divorced families have unique

¹⁰ Adolescent impulsivity consists of adolescent behavior that is acted out without adequate forethought than do most adolescents of equal ability and knowledge. It usually is also a rapid unplanned reaction to self or to others with no regard and moral constraint to the negative consequences of the reaction. It is simply a lack of impulse control and constitutes part of the personality trait. Adolescent impulsiveness is part of their normal behavior as it contributes to their adaptive functioning (Dickman, 1990; Schachar et al., 1993)

strengths and vulnerabilities in dealing with emotionally distressing issues and other socio-cultural factors that confront them. The Bowen family theory describes the central role of the family as an emotional system in which the functions of each member of the family is interconnected with the processes and interactions within the family (McKnight, 1989, p. 263).

Adolescents from divorced families may experience relationship tension with the divorced mothers and more so with their unconcerned non custodial fathers and other extended family members who do not lend support to the divorced families. As a result of relationship tension (Ker & Bowen, 1988), the adolescent may distance themselves from the single parent family and relocate to big cities like Accra, Kumasi and Tema where they join peer groups. At this point they may be initiated into a new social culture where aggressiveness and social misconduct is the norm and rewarded (Weinberg, 1964, Arthur, 1996; Anarfi & Antwi, 1995; Drapeau & Bonchard, 1993)

Emotional distancing then is one way most Ghanaian adolescents of divorced families (Naylor, 2000, Anarfi & Antwi, 1995) choose to handle attachment and dependency on their parents and immediate family members when there is an emotional “allergy”(Bowen, 1978) to closeness. This act of physical separation exposes the adolescents to other communities of people and a new emotional relationship is formed that may pressure them into acts of social misconduct and delinquencies (Weinberg, 1964, Arthur, 1996; Anarfi & Antwi, 1995; Drapeau & Bonchard, 1993)

Other reasons explaining more Ghanaian adolescent boys’ externalization than girls include the fact that adolescent boys usually have more social problems with their divorced mothers than adolescent girls because of their physiological build which cause their mothers

to assign more masculine duties to their adolescent boys with stricter supervision than they would with girls' assignment and supervision. Granting the fact that adolescent boys have lost their male role model, they get less emotional support with their overstretched duties and may begin to look elsewhere for emotional support and replacement of male role models. Ghanaian adolescent boys begin to show externalizing behaviors because they easily identify with media models and model their behaviors on media male images.

A more meaningful explanation of gender difference in adolescent externalizing behaviors may be due to contemporary cultural ties. The influx of contemporary culture suggests that boys tend to model their behavior on abstract media propagated male images in addition to the availability of influential local mentors and role models who often demonstrate normative cultural dimensions of the Ghanaian life. According to information processing models, schemas are cognitive structures that serve as theories to guide information processing. Schema models make the basic assumption that the adolescent as an information processor actively categorizes information that determines his psychosocial outcomes. Most of the social learning (Bandura, 1996) in the media depict high level aggressive behavior which the Ghanaian adolescent not only fantasize as appropriate male behavior but incorporate them into their schemas and practice the aggressive behavior with peer affirmation and encouragement. These psychologically rewarding externalizing behaviors then become appropriate male behaviors to the adolescent boys in the peer group.

Lerner and Steinberg's (2004) rendition of the Trauma, Life cycle and Selection theories appear to summarize almost all the various theoretical explanations on gender effect on adolescent psychosocial adjustment. Trauma theories (Carter & McGoldrick, 2005; DeLongis & Holtzman, 2005) suggest that the loss of a parent has a damaging effect on the

adolescent boys more than girls because of the common effects of their attachment to the non-custodial male parents. Life cycle theories (Farrington, 2005; Tennen & Affleck, 1996) on the other hand, focus on painful divorce as causes of multiple stress experiences that moderate the adolescent's psychosocial adjustment. For the adolescent boy, multiple stress experience apart from the loss of the non custodial parent includes the effects of low household incomes and the hostility he bears with the custodial mother (Wallerstein, 1983, Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992). Selection theories (Mansell, 2003; Lazarus, 2000) focus on anti-social parental practices due to the overwhelming parenting responsibilities of large family sizes in addition to negative parenting styles that predict adolescent delinquent behavior.

In conclusion, with reference to the conceptual model of the study (Table 5a above), the non-supportive social ecological environment (comprising the trauma, life cycle, parenting, family and the demands of contemporary cultural ties) are skillfully appraised through the problem solving and coping process. Ghanaian adolescents of divorced families use reactive coping to deal with the multiple stressors they have experienced as a result of their parents divorce and related familial problems. Since these divorce related distress have already occurred, adolescents coping efforts are specifically directed to reduce the emotional and psychological harm or to compensate for them. Through appraisal they derive meaning to their experiences and use the meaning as basis for adjustment. Given the supportive ecological milieu, Ghanaian adolescent boys are able to use reactive coping¹¹ as an effort to deal with the multitude stressors they have experienced as a result of their parents divorce and related familial problems. Since these divorce related distress have already occurred,

¹¹ Reactive coping is a process in which the adolescent uses specific strategies in response to specific problems or challenges due to the experience of parental divorce (Ker & Bowen, 1988; Spencer et al., 2006)

adolescents coping efforts are directed to reduce the emotional and psychological harm or to compensate for them. This coping strategy enables them to weather through the multiple divorce-related challenges and to reorder life with positive psychological adjustment.

Gender relationship to adolescent internalizing behaviors:

Although, the findings of the second hypothesis failed to support the hypothesis of girls having lower scores of internalizing behaviors than the boys for this study, this finding is still consistent with a few recent studies suggesting that parental divorce has greater internalizing effects on boys than on girls (Vandervalk et al., 2004; Cherlin et al., 1991). However, the more consistent picture from the bulk of adolescent gender studies is that girls experience more internalizing behavior than boys (Kirby, 2002; Sun and Li, 2002; Hetherington and Clingempeel, 1992, 1992; Paterson and Zill, 1986; Forehand et al., 1991; Vandervalk et al., 2004; Amato, 2001).

A possible theoretical explanation for this finding is Bowen's Family System Theory (Bowen, 1978; Ker and Bowen, 1988) where the family is viewed as an emotional unit and uses Systems thinking to describe the complex interactions in the unit. In family systems perspective, interdependence, the interconnectedness of parents and children, and the mutual influence within the family is considered a fundamental concept. The concept of mutual influence that is, the idea that behaviors of one component of the family reverberate across the whole system explains how divorced mother's depression and emotional distress negatively affects the mother-daughter relation which leads to mal-adaptive adjustment outcomes for the daughter.

Within Ghanaian cultural practice (Naylor, 2000;), divorced mothers are expected to determine between appropriate and inappropriate communication and what information could be disclosed or kept secret with herself, the ex-spouse and the adolescent children, who oft-times is the daughter.

Research indicate that healthy post divorce parents are able to reframe their relationship and are able to construct and communicate clear role expectations and boundaries for one another and their children (Medden-Perdich and Arditti, 1999). Divorced mother's need of continued and redefined attachment with their former spouses does not translates into a negotiation of privacy boundaries; neither does she redefine relations for themselves and their adolescent children, as has been reported by western investigations (Medden-Perdich & Arditti, 1999).

Contrarily to the individualistic lifestyle of westerners that promote emotional over reliance (and boundary saturation) with their adolescent daughters, the prevailing cultural concept of community living (Naylor, 2000; Takyi & Oheneba-Sakyi, 1994)) permits involvement and interdependence, participation and interconnectedness with social engagement (Daniels, 1987) of siblings, relatives, friends or mentors in the general matters of the divorced family. There is a sufficient family ecological safeguard for the interests of adolescent daughter who is expected to tap the available social support from peers, neighbors or adult members of the community to increase adaptive coping skills and problem solving competence. Ultimately, the available community living and extended family system enhance girls' adaptive skills and lower internalizing as Ghanaian adolescent girls are able to tap and connect to the family and social ecological milieu.

Rutter (1987) has pointed out that mediation from social support does not necessarily lie in the variable itself, but in the process which is more complicating. For example, Ghanaian adolescent girls are less likely to solicit support directly by disclosing problems that they think can damage their reputation or standing with peer. Moreover, because it is harder for adolescent girls to activate support by disclosing their difficulties and emotions, their help seeking behaviors are likely to be more indirect or disguised, and therefore less effective in mobilizing support for a better adjustment (Lussier et al., 2000), hence, their inability to lower internalizing behaviors in this study. In addition, the extent and timing of the support adolescents harness depend on the interaction between their skill in soliciting it, and the overt expression of distress.

Social support appears to be used selectively by both adolescent boys and girls. There is a complex interplay between the personal, situational and mediating factors that determine not only the strategy used, but also the outcome for the adolescent. In this study, the limited use of social support by adolescent girls may be associated with denial as a coping device along with a general avoidance of dealing with issues of divorce and their severity (Drapeau and Bouchard, 1993; Cauce et al., 1992).

It appears that both adolescent boys and girls experiencing parental divorce are able to tap and use social support, although quiet and lonely girls are not able to utilize it as effectively as the more socially outgoing types. The quiet adolescent girls are usually socially withdrawn and their isolation and loneliness relates to the difficulty in achieving positive psychosocial adjustment (Garmezy and Rutter, 1983) The solitary adolescent girls may feel sad, turned inward, experience greater stress with social anxiety which are characteristic of social withdrawal and shyness. The main reason for not using social support of peers, family

members and neighbors in the community may be due to adolescent girls' sense of lack of trust based most likely on past hurt experiences in confiding in similar social networks (Drapeau and Bouchard, 1993; Cauce et al., 1992; Isaac and Leon, 1986) which resulted in poor internalizing adjustments.

Girls did not score more social adaptability types of behaviors than boys for the final gender-related hypothesis.

This finding is again relevant to the general Ghanaian situation due to the existence of the extended family system and it is equally consistent with several research conducted on social support availability to adolescents who face distressing family conditions (Drapeau and Bouchard, 1993; Cauce et al., 1992; Isaac and Leon, 1986). Although, the family may be "broken", the extended family serves as a source of emotional, psychological, and spiritual support to anchor the offsprings of the divorced family based on lineal descent and cultural ties (Sudarkasa, 2004). It basically exists to ensure continuity of the family by extending diverse supports to foster wellbeing and positive social adaptability to members who experience family crises.

Ghanaian adolescents, regardless of gender, when experiencing parental divorce know by cultural intuition and traditional upbringing that there are several others in the community that value and care for their wellbeing by way of offering advice and counseling, monetary and emotional support as well as behavioral guide at the onset of family crises. Ghanaian adolescents when experiencing parental divorce are therefore able to construct a supportive peer network as well as utilize mentors and other people in the extended family such as uncles, aunts, grandparents, community and institutional programs that enable them to increase their adaptive social adjustment.

Two theoretical perspectives of social-ecology (Bronfenbrenner, 1997) and resilience (Masten, 2001) are used to explain the relationship of gender and adolescent's social adaptability following the experience of parental divorce.

Ghanaian adolescent boys and girls are able to tap and utilize socio-ecological resources such as support from schools, peer groups, family, relatives, community, religious organizations and policy arrangements of government to increase protective factors. Protective factors promote adolescent social competence and social problem solving abilities that protect them from the risk of developing psychosocial behavior problems. The development of social competence promotes positive adaptation. Adolescent social competence entails developed social cognitive capabilities and emotional regulation skills that allow them to select and engage in appropriate psychosocial behaviors.

A family resilience approach emphasizes identification and enhancement of the coping resources (including the social, economic, emotional, religious, psychological and physical assets) that increase adolescents' protective factors to enable them and families to overcome disruptive challenges (Walsh, 1998). Familial factors such as low interpersonal conflict, effective parenting, low parental distress, parental responsiveness, and disciplinary efficacy enhance adolescent protective factors for positive adaptation. In addition, the availability of community factors, such as membership of religious communities and receiving social support from them enhance family resilience which enable the adolescent to adjust well psychosocially.

The cultural tradition within which most Ghanaians youths operate are that of optimism against social odds and this facilitates the development of habits of self efficacy, and emotional regulation to create a sense of belonging and to tap social support. The extended

family system and the social ecological milieu become the protective resources that adolescence utilized to rise above social adaptability challenges. The cultural and ecological systems that mediate the adolescents' experience, regardless of gender, and which provide resources for coping and meaning-making are inherently learned from the Ghanaian culture. It follows that in considering cultural and ecological factors (protective assets) and adolescents' social adaptability, both community resources (for resilience) and personal resources (for coping) were appropriate explanation for girls and boys low social adaptability behavior outcomes reported in the study.

3. Ethnic group relationship to adolescent externalizing behavior outcomes:

The seventh and eighth hypotheses discussed the importance of ethnic background and adolescent externalizing behaviors.

The ethnic group effect on both boys and girls who experienced parental divorce does not explain nor establish a causal role for adolescent internalizing and externalizing types of behaviors in this study and the social capital theory (Sam & Berry, 2006) is used to explain this finding. Social capital is conceptualized as the product of social relationships that include adolescent trust, loyalty, security, self confidence, optimism, self efficacy and hope that they have within such groups as the family, school, community organization, tribal group fraternities, sporting associations, residential associations, youth political group engagements, and religious organizations that facilitate adolescent psychosocial wellbeing.

In contrast to this finding in the study, other research (Amato, 2000; 1994; William et al., 2003; Berry et al., 2006; Ryder et al., 2000) have reported a relationship between ethnicity

and adolescent psychosocial adjustment. Social capital theory¹² (Sam & Berry, 2006) entails both community and family relations. Community social capital consists of interrelations or the ties between family and individuals within a community. Some key dimensions of community –based social capital include the closure of social networks, community supervision, and the connectedness of individuals in the community. An instance of closure of networks is the case when the adolescent’s divorced mother connects with the divorced mother of her son or daughter’s friend with the intention to share task of supervision and parenting that helps the adolescent to well adjust.

The collective impact of neighborhood socioeconomic condition and family processes such as communication and problem solving, parenting skills in discipline and supervision of adolescents and community organizations promote economic advantages, social network support and positive parenting performance. These social attributes enhance adolescent protective factors which positively influence psychosocial outcomes.

In the family context, social capital consists of interrelationship between individuals within a family. It also involves intergenerational closure which includes the relationship between parents and children within a family.

Of major significance is that marital divorce in Ghana varies according to ethnic or tribal characteristics (Takyi & Oheneba-Sakyi, 1994). Ethnic arrangements (Takyi & Oheneba-Sakyi, 1994) in the post divorce family phase may constitute a social capital in varying

¹² Social capital may be defined as those resources inherent in social relations which facilitate collective action. Social capital resources include trust, norms and networks of associations which meet frequently for a social good. A norm of a culture high in social capital is reciprocity and compromise. (Sam & Berry, 2006)

degrees according to respective customary practices (Daniels, 1987). Different ethnic groups have different ways of supporting youths of divorced families and therefore social capital is not evenly distributed (Sudarkasa, 2004; Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1995). There are marked differences in parental supervision, child rearing practices including discipline and therefore adolescent functioning post-divorce is predictably affected. The patriliney / matriliney system (Naylor, 2000) constitute a central key in the determination of post-divorce family functioning and may foster different psychosocial adjustment patterns for adolescents who experience parental divorce.

Thus, social capital is a community level constructs which vary along tribal and ethnic lines and promote context for both parenting and adolescent psychosocial development and well being. One would have expected that the variation in social capital distribution would result in differences in the psychosocial wellbeing of adolescents of divorced families in Ghana.

A major reason why there is no differences in the psychosocial adjustment despite differences in ethnic origin of adolescent may be that the collective capacity of communities (rural and urban) including youths and their families, relatives and extended families, school, social groups and religious organizations increased adolescents protective factors that enabled them to adapt positively regardless of ethnic origin and the adverse impact of parental divorce.

This may be the reason why no differences in psychosocial adjustment exist among the different ethnic groups in the study.

Summary of Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this research indicate that religion and sex predict adolescent psychosocial adjustment. Adolescent ethnic identity and background did not predict adjustment.

Consistent with existing research findings, adolescent boys displayed more externalizing type of behaviors than adolescent girls. Adolescent girls did not display more internalizing types of behaviors than adolescent boys which is inconsistent with findings from the literature. Interestingly, both girls and boys did not report a significant difference on social adaptability types of behavior outcomes.

The positive effects of religiousness were prominently marked in the study. Consistent with the buffering effect of religiousness on adolescent adjustment, girls who seek religious counseling and guidance report lower scores of internalization than boys who seek religious counseling and guidance. Equally, girls of different religious affiliations and background report corresponding different social adaptability types of behaviors. However, girls who participate in religious activities have lower scores of externalizing behavior outcomes than adolescent boys. The behavior implication of this finding significantly throws light on adolescent religiousness; clearly distinguishing between conventional and instrumental religiousness and intrinsic and integrated religiousness.

Ethnic group differences fail to account for difference in adolescent psychosocial adjustment because of the proliferation and fair distribution of social capital infrastructure in Ghana

Limitations of the Study

As with all social science research, this study has limitations and it is important to highlight its major limitations (Babbie, 1996; Fowler, 1995).

A primary limitation of this study concerns excluding adolescents from single parent father headed families as well as adolescents from single parent widow headed families. This is a major issue considering the fact that adolescents from patrilineal communities as well as those from Muslim Communities in Ghana practice father custody after parental divorce. The implication is that this exclusion may restrict generalizability only to adolescents living in mother headed divorced families.

In appraising the extent and trend of divorce in Ghana, a caution of inaccurate presentation of figures, incorrect and misleading estimates make interpretation difficult because of a lack of norm in collecting judicial statistical data and calculating divorce rate within the Ghana Statistical Division of the Judicial Service. However, this study utilized primary data and therefore integrity of findings from the analysis is not compromised. Therefore, interpretation and discussion of findings was done with statistical data purity and consistent with empirical integrity.

The contextual nature of this study required the use of a more practical and objective scale which necessitated the creation of measures of the selected contextual variables. The

issue of validity of the measures may remain a limitation in spite of efforts to validate the research instrument.

Another limitation of the study is that other environmental factors could have confounded adolescent psychosocial adjustment, but were excluded for investigations. For example, the study is unable to control for past or present events in the life of the participants at the time of investigation which were different from the effects of parental divorce.

Although, the study sample exhibited rich diversity and much strength due to the sample size (N=564), a major concern was the 10% passive consent rate. Passive consent is a research procedure that required parents or guardians to return a refusal form as in a situation where they decide to disapprove their child or ward participation in the study. A major concern raised by passive consent is the difficulty of ascertaining whether the students did as a matter of fact submit the consent forms to their guardians and parents and whether the purported parental refusal was indeed their father's decision.

Further, the research design used a convenient sampling which could not compensate for sample randomization. Sample groups were not homogenous in their variance and therefore, sample normalization was compromised. However, statistical procedures selected are robust and therefore empirical integrity of data analysis, statistical findings, and interpretation are not compromised.

Admittedly, some participants may have wanted to cover up and deceive on items they considered sensitive with possible outcomes of embarrassment and shame. They therefore deny the actual response options knowingly and select a more acceptable response option. The issue is that of response management. However, items on research instrument were reversed as a methodological design to confound response management.

The design and scope of the present study was restricted in certain respects. The main area of the study was the focus on a specific stage of psychosexual development, which was late adolescence and hence a relatively limited range of ages were considered.

Sample distribution was not normal as there were disproportionate socio-demographic factors. For instance, there was a disproportionate ethnic group distribution, with Akans representing over thirty-six percent (36%) of the entire data set. There was also a disproportionate religious groups' distribution with Christian /Protestant group representing over fifty-two percent (52%) of the entire data set. Different results may have been observed if Akans and the Christian/protestant groups were proportional in the sample distribution.

Another area of concern was the site of the survey. The site of the survey are all located within close distance in the Cape Coast educational district and they are closely related in terms of students socio-demographic data, their families socio-economic status, students' residential state similarities, homogeneity of social capital distribution and effects of acculturation. These similarities do not subtend to the rich array of different demography, culture and social-economic conditions that would have been characteristics of a national representative sample. For example if the study were to have been sited in two different geographical regions instead of within-the-same educational district of Cape Coast, a more interesting finding reflective of adolescent national sample would have increased the generalizability of the study findings.

Qualitative source of data could be of further value in future investigations. These would allow for more in depth interpretation and understanding of findings obtained with the types of structural quantitative measures used in this study and most previous research. Deductive qualitative analysis may be useful for the testing and reformulation of theoretical

models that underpin adolescent psychosocial adjustment and parental divorce studies (Gilgun, 2001, 2006).

Future Research

To address the limitations of this study, future studies could be comparative investigations of youths of varying developmental stages, with proportional sample representations of socio-demographic variables like religious groups, ethnic groups, types of community settlement (such as rural and urban settlements). In addition, different sites of the study could be selected from geographically diversified regions in order to increase the representativeness of the sample and to increase generalizability of the research findings.

1. Future research on religiousness:

In the Ghanaian context, rarely has research on adolescents' adjustment following parental divorce been done with adolescents from single parent mother-headed families. Therefore a big gap in the literature appears to be identified. In this sense, this seminal research and subsequent studies may provide the critical missing link in the adolescent of divorce literature in Ghana. The current findings on religious relationships to adolescent psychosocial adjustment have theoretical implication that could be further explored in future research.

Theoretically, this present findings provide evidence that adolescent religiousness can be considered as a relevant protective factor (resilience) for adolescents who experience parental divorce. Adolescents who rely on religious practices increase their protective factors and coping skills as a result of which they can buffer the adverse effects of parental divorce.

Religious coping skills promote positive psychosocial adjustment and limit adolescent maladjustment. More future resilience studies could be designed using various religious variables to determine their relationship to adolescent adjustment following parental divorce.

Future studies on adolescent adjustment may include religiousness measures to further explain the contributions the variables (protective factor) make to our understanding of adolescent delinquencies, social misconduct and depression.

Further, longitudinal studies of the effects of religiousness over time span that covers different developmental phases will increase our understanding and knowledge of the religiousness-delinquency literature. Proportionate sampling of religious groups from distant geographic regions may provide a better explanation of the relationship of religiousness and psychosocial behavior.

Recommendation for Practice in the Ghana Context:

Family social workers may have to develop resources for adolescent out of school settings, such as exploring church activities, recreational program, community education program, youth organization, voluntary programs or library reading or planned reading engagement. A thorough program development and implementation of model programs well funded with youth participation and community collaboration could promote positive emotional well-being and reduce delinquencies and social misconduct.

The risk of adolescent poor psychosocial adjustment as a result of experiencing parental divorce involves the relationship between a number and type of risk factors (negative psychosocial behavior outcomes) and protective factors (personal traits, familial resources

and ecological support). While risk and protective factors affect people of all types, these factors can have a different effect depending on a person's age, gender, ethnicity, religion and the social milieu.

A Ghanaian Youth Skill Building and Preventive Program is proposed as an antidote service provider to youth psychosocial problems due to parental divorce and towards skill building programs for effective problem solving and communication practice among adolescent-mother –sibling-relations (Collins, 2002))

Components of this Program is proposed to include; social skills development, effective self management skills in dealing with issues of family dynamics

(Lockman, 2000), effective communication skills and emotional regulation competence.

Whilst targeting adolescents of divorced families short and long term needs, the Program should provide developmentally appropriate material and activities including content and language (Northeast Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies, 1998). Further, the Program should be ethnic-group-related and culturally-relevant.

It is recommended that the Program curricula would entail a focus on developing positive family dynamics (Schinke et al., 2002), promote peer relationships by building skills to enable adolescents to connect to peers and mentors in the environment.

In addition the program may promote adolescent self efficacy and assertiveness (Williams, 2003) training, strengthen commitment against deviance, and encourage religiousness and participation in religious activities. This program may also train eclectic counselors who may use religious counseling to help adolescents and guide in problem solving and stress management.

Program staff training may include school teachers, religious institutional staff who work with adolescents, social workers and counselors, community staff and other youth program workers. Evaluation of program efficacy and periodic staff development will suffice to make this a functioning youth program for Ghanaian adolescents who experience parental divorce (Flay & Collins, 2006) Local governments and Youth sector ministry may allocate funds for the running of this program.

Moreover, family-based religious coping programs may be established based on the centrality of the family to adolescent functioning. A family based religious coping program may tap directly into the religiously based perception of family relations or interactions between family members. Family members may have the opportunity to engage in multiple religious activities together as a system unit to learn to cope with family distress conditions. Activities drawn for family involvement may include intentional corporate prayer with other family members, and the opportunity to attend religious meetings and perform prescribed ritual as family units with the possibility of lending inter family support in the ritual performance.

In addition, religious counseling may include members of a family unit or several families that may be grouped together to learn to identify different family stress and how to apply religion based principles as a basis of coping strategies. Families may be introduced to family based religious coping constructs including theistic mediation, theistic triangulation and positive conjoint religious coping strategies (Mahoney, Pendleton & Ihrke, 2006)

Policy recommendation for Ghana

Considering the need for quality after-school programs for adolescents, government through the sector ministry for youth and community development in Ghana may develop and fund a nationwide after-school program that will engage adolescents in varied activities including peer support programs, sports, entertainment, voluntary works where participation will be monitored and good conduct rewarded with prizes.

Local government and district councils could encourage social enterprise corporations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to establish community centers with library facilities to engage youth in literacy and guide them in the proper use of their time so as to curtail negative peer culture and gang activities. When more vocational and technical schools are established both in the urban and rural communities, more adolescents of divorced families may engage in the programs these schools offer and train for better careers than straying on the streets in the cities (Naylor, 2000) without responsible jobs (Anarfi & Antwi, 1995). School social workers of these schools may use findings of this research to inform guidance and counseling in addition to the interactive programs the school facilities may offer to students coming from single parent families.

Realizing the possibility that girls of divorced families (Dolphine, 1997; Boakye, 1997) who live in rural areas (Atakpa, 1996; Anyagri, 1993) drop out of school early and marry (Abukari-Mohammed, 1996), district and community social work programs may vigorously promote girls education program and retention in schools. School social workers on the other hand may utilize this study's findings to draw appropriate educational programs that may be disseminated through the parent-teacher-association meetings to educate parents (especially divorced mothers with adolescent daughters) of the benefits of education to their daughters rather than the bride price they collect from men who marry their daughters.

The findings of this study add weight to social work advocacy for national, regional and local governments to identify and affirm the role and significance of religious entities in Ghana. Institutional collaborations with religious programs designed specifically for youths may be facilitated by government sector ministries for youth development and family social welfare programs. The Ghanaian government may encourage religious groups to harmonize the scope of activities to include the provision of youth and family development programs with religious counseling and participation in religious activities to engage adherents and community members. To this end, the government may set up a committee to promote and oversee religious programs that are modeled to increase youth protective factors that effectively negotiate youth psychosocial problems and promote healthy family relations.

In conclusion, the social work profession recognizes the centrality of the family unit. The profession works towards the preservation and strengthening of the single parent mother headed family in this context. “To embrace a philosophy of empowerment, social work family practitioner recognizes family competency and capacity for change. However, divorced families cannot provide for their members without access to resources. Empowerment-based social work redresses social issues affecting families, low household incomes, maternal parenting challenges, maternal employment and adolescent psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce” (Dubois and Miley, 2002, p.404).

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Appendix A. Research Instrument
Cross-cultural Adolescent Adjustment Checklist (CCAAC)
SECTION A:

Please answer the following questions by indicating your answer with the letter “x”

Today’s date is _____

1. Gender: Male Female
2. My age range is (a) 16 – 17 years (b) 17 – 18 years
(c) 18 – 19 years (d) 19 + years
3. I am a single child of my mother: Yes No
4. My ethnicity is (a) Ga (b) Dagomba (c) Ewe
(d) Frafra (e) Akan (f) Nzema
(e) Bono
5. My religion is (a) Muslim (b) Christian (c) Free Thinker
(d) Traditional African Religion (e) Catholic
6. I participate in religious activities (a) Yes (b) No
7. Do you seek religious counseling and guidance? (a) Yes (b) No
8. My mother is a home-maker (a) Yes (b) No
9. Has your mother ever worked during her marriage? (a) Yes (b) No
10. What type of work is your mother involved in? (a) Trader
(b) Civil Servant (c) Professional (d) Farmer (e) Business Executive

11. Do you live with other relatives? (a) Yes (b) No

12. If yes, state who they are? (a) Grand mother (b) Aunt
 (c) Grand father (d) Uncle
 (e) Cousin

13. Do you get financial support from other sources other than your parents?
 Check all that apply.

(a) Relatives (b) Religious Institution
 (c) Non government Organization (d) Friends
 (e) Community Program

14. Have you observed your parents fight? (a) Yes (b) No

15. Have you observed your parents engage in violent confrontation with each other?

(a) Yes (b) No

16. Are you currently living in a single parent home with your biological mother?

(a) Yes (b) No

Please note the following instruction

If you answered “yes” to question 16, continue with only SECTION B on page 246 and skip SECTION C.

If you answered “no” to question 16, skip SECTION B and go to SECTION C

SECTION B:

17. At what age-range did your parent’s divorce? Mark your answer with an “x”

A. 1-5 years B. 6-10 years C. 11-15 D. 15 + years

18. How many years have your parents divorced? Mark your answer with an “x”

A. 1-5 years. B. 6-10 years. C. 11-15. D. 15+ years

Instruction:

Please, read every statement carefully and circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

Use the following Rating Scale. There is no right or wrong answer.

Rating Scale

- 1 = Not at all true of me**
2 = slightly true of me
3 = True of me
4 = Very true of me
5 = Extremely true of me

Continue this statement with your answer: “Being religious

<u>Religion and Religious involvement</u>	2 Years Before Parental Divorce	2 Years After Parental Divorce
19. I regarded my mother (Social acceptance)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
20. I partook of alcoholic drinks with peers. (Drinking)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
21. I could not be bothered with my parents marital problem. (Passivity)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
22. I submitted to my parents regulation. (Compliance).	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Gender**Instruction:**

Please read each statement below carefully and indicate how true it is about you. Use the following rating scale and circle the number that corresponds to your choice of answer. There is no right or wrong answer. Please answer all questions.

Continue this statement with your answer: “Being a girl /boy

Rating Scale:

- 1 = Always true**
2 = True most of the time
3 = Sometimes true
4 = Hardly ever true
5 = Not true at all

	2 Years Before Parental Divorce	2 Years After Parental Divorce
23. I needed to talk to someone about my fears. (Fear)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5
24. I got involved in sex. (Precocious Sexual acts).	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5
25. I felt ashamed about myself (Self esteem)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5
26. I took care of my siblings at home (Social Caring)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5
27. I lost interest in going to school (Truancy)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5

Maternal Employment

Instructions

Continue this statement with your answer. “When mother goes to work

Use the following scale.

Rating Scale:**1 = Strongly disagree****2 = Disagree****3 = Don't know****4 = Agree****5 = Strongly agree**

	2 Years Before Parental Divorce	2 Years After Parental Divorce
28. I was sad at home (Unhappiness)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
29. I refused to do my home chores (Rebellion)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
30. I stayed away from friends (social withdrawal)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
31. I became worried because of the reduced household income (Anxiety)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Parental Violence**Instruction:**

Please indicate the extent to which you know each statement below applied to you.

Record your answer by drawing a circle around the number that corresponds to your experience for each item below. Use the following scale:

Rating Scale

1. = Always true
 2. = True most of the time
 3. = Sometimes true
 4. = Hardly ever true
 5. = Not true at all

Continue this statement with your answers: “Due to my parents fighting

	2 Years Before Parental Divorce	2 Years After Parental Divorce
32. I fought in the neighborhood. (Aggressiveness)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
33. I felt ashamed at home. (Shamefulness)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
34. I was socially disturbed when my parents became angry at each other. (Social Irritability)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
35. I felt scarred at home when my Parents argued over everything at home (Confusion)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
36. I have no understanding of my parents' constant fighting at home. (Social misunderstanding)	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

Social support (Social Interaction)**Instruction:**

The following questions are asked to determine your social adjustment. There is no right or wrong answer. Please, read every statement carefully and rate it on the degree to which you agree and circle the number that corresponds to your answer. Use the following rating scale.

Rating Scale

1. = Not at all true of me
 2. = Slightly true of me
 3. = True of me
 4. = Very true of me
 5. = Extremely true of me

37. I felt very upset when relatives visited. (Anger)

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

38. I harbored a lot of hurting feelings in my family. (Hurting feelings)

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

39. People from my religion listened to my personal concerns and offered social support. (Social support)

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

40. My social contacts with friends gave me confidence in the community (Confidence)

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

SECTION C:**Instruction:**

Please, read every statement carefully and circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

Use the following Rating Scale. There is no right or wrong answer.

Rating Scale

- 1 = Not at all true of me
 2 = slightly true of me
 3 = True of me
 4 = Very true of me
 5 = Extremely true of me

Continue this statement with your answer: "Being religious....."

Religion and Religious involvement

19. I regarded my mother
 (Social acceptance)

20. I partook of alcoholic drinks with my peers
 (Drinking)

21. I could not be bothered with my parents'
 marital problem
 (Passivity)

22. I submitted to my parents regulations.
 (Compliance)

Adolescent Perceived Behavior				
1	2.	3.	4.	5
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

Gender**Instruction:**

Please read each statement below carefully and indicate how true it is about you. Use the following rating scale and circle the number that corresponds to your choice of answer. There is no right or wrong answer. Please answer all questions.

Rating Scale:

- 1 = Always true**
2 = True most of the time
3 = Sometimes true
4 = Hardly ever true
5 = Not true at all

Continue this statement with your answer: "Being a girl / boy"

	Adolescent Perceived Behavior				
23. I needed to talk to someone about my fears (Fears)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
24. I got involved in sex. (Precocious Sexual acts)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
25. I felt ashamed about myself (Self esteem)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
26. I took care of my siblings at home (Social caring)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
27. I lost interest in going to school (Truancy)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

Maternal Employment

Instructions

Please read the statement below very carefully and circle the number that corresponds to your answer. Use the following scale.

Rating Scale:

- 1. = Strongly disagree
- 2. = Disagree
- 3. = Don't know
- 4. = Agree
- 5. = Strongly agree

Continue this statement with your answer: "When my mother goes to work"

	Adolescent Perceived Behavior				
28. I was sad at home (Unhappiness)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5
29. I refused to do my home chores (Conduct disorder)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5
30. I stayed away from friends (social withdrawal)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5
31. I became worried because of the reduced household income (Anxiety)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5

Parental Violence

Instruction:

Please indicate the extent to which you know each statement below applied to you.
Record your answer by drawing a circle around the number that corresponds to your experience for each item below. Use the following scale:

Rate Scale

- 1. = **Always true**
- 2. = **True most of the time**
- 3. = **Sometimes true**
- 4. = **Hardly ever true**
- 5. = **Not true at all**

Continue this statement with your answer: "Due to my parents fighting."

	Adolescent Perceived Behavior				
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
32. I fight in the neighborhood. (Aggressiveness)					
33. I felt ashamed at home. (Shamefulness)					
34. I was socially disturbed when my parents Became angry at each other (Social Irritability)					
35. I felt scarred at home when my parents argued over everything at home . (Confusion)					
36. I have no understanding of my parents' constant fighting at home. (Social misunderstanding)					

Social support (Social Interaction)**Instruction:**

The following questions are asked to determine your social adjustment. There is no right or wrong answer. Please, read every statement carefully and rate it on the degree to which you agree and circle the number that corresponds to your answer. Use the following rating scale.

Rating Scale

1. = Not at all true of me
 2. = Slightly true of me
 3. = True of me
 4. = Very true of me
 5. = Extremely true of me

	Adolescent Perceived Behavior				
37. I felt upset when relatives visited. (Anger)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
38. I harbored a lot of hurting feelings in my family. (hurting feelings)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
39. People from my religion listened to my personal concerns and offered Social support (Social support)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
40. My social contacts with friends gave me confidence in the Community. (Confidence)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

END OF EXERCISE

Please submit your response sheet to the Research Assistant. Thank you

Appendix B

A letter to Regional Education Office soliciting approval to conduct study in Public co-educational senior secondary schools in Cape Coast District.

Regional Division Office
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Cape Coast, Central Region
Ghana.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I write to request permission to conduct a survey in the Public co-educational institutions in the Cape Coast Educational District.

I am a doctoral degree student at the National University of Singapore, Singapore.

I have been approved to conduct a research on “Factors affecting adolescent perceptions of psychosocial adjustment following parents divorce in Ghana” by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Work in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore, Singapore.

I am seeking permission to administer a survey questionnaire to 15-to-19-years-old senior secondary school students in Forms 1-to-3 from the Departments of Arts, Science, Business, and Home Economics. All students in selected schools will have equal chance of selection and participation in the study regardless of family background.

upon approval, I will meet respective Heads of selected Institutions to brief them on the objective of the study and seek their permission and support to meet with selected school teachers who will assist me with procedures for the study.

In the selected schools, I will meet students, brief them on the objectives of the study and distribute parents and students consent forms. After 3 weeks, I will meet students to collect parents and students consent forms after which I will administer the questionnaire to students whose parents have consented to their wards participation and students who have consented to participate in the study.

The administration of the questionnaire will require a maximum of 45 minutes and I will be present at the survey sites to oversee the entire exercise and address arising issues.

Thank you for your consideration and co-operation.

Yours truly,

George Oheneba Mainoo

Enclosures:

1. A copy of Approval Letter to conduct field research from Ethics Committee of Department of Social Work, The National University of Singapore, Singapore
2. A copy of Parents Consent Form
3. A copy of Student Consent Form.

Appendix C

**A letter to School Headmaster/Headmistress soliciting approval to conduct study
in their respective schools.**

Dear Headmaster/Headmistress,

As a follow up on the approval of the Regional Education Office to conduct a doctoral research in Public co-educational senior secondary school in the Cape Coast district, I write to request permission to conduct a doctoral research with students in your school. I have been approved to conduct a research on “Factors affecting adolescent perceptions of psychosocial adjustment following parents divorce in Ghana” by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Work in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore, Singapore.

I will need the assistance of some teachers in your school to assist in the distribution and collection of parents and students consent forms, and the administration of the questionnaires. I will be present to supervise the exercise and attend to issues that may rise up in the course of the survey exercise.

Ethical considerations of anonymity, voluntary participation and withdrawal will be keenly observed during the period of the survey exercise. The time for answering the questionnaire will hopefully not go beyond 45 minutes. Please, I have attached a consent form for you to complete, sign and return to me. Thank you for cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

George Oheneba Mainoo

Enc: Headmaster/Headmistress Consent Form

Headmaster/Headmistress Consent Form

1. I agree do not agree to allow Researcher (Mr. George Oheneba Mainoo) to conduct doctoral research on “Factors affecting adolescent perceptions of psychosocial adjustment following parental divorce in Ghana” in my school.

2. I agree do not agree to the use of teachers in my school to assist in this research.

Signature _____ Date _____

School _____

Appendix D

National University of Singapore
Department of Social Work
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Singapore
October 17th 2006

Re: PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM.

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

I am a doctoral research student at the National University of Singapore. As a requirement towards completion of my doctoral program, I am requested to conduct a research on factors affecting adolescent perception of psychosocial adjustment in Ghana.

This research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Social Work at the National University of Singapore, Singapore.

I write to seek your consent to permit your child/ward to participate in the study.

The purpose of the study is to understand factors that influence adolescent's psychosocial behavior at home, school and in the community.

Every student has equal chance of participation in the study and student's participation will be strictly confidential and anonymous. Also, a student may decide to withdraw from participation at will and with no consequence.

Please, complete the attached form and sign to indicate consent for your child/ward to participate in the study. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

George Oheneba Mainoo

Parents Consent form

I agree / do not agree to allow my child/ward to participate in the study at

his/her school.

Name _____ Relationship with Student _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix E

National University of Singapore
Department of Social Work
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Singapore
October 17th 2006

Letter to students and Student Assent Form

Dear Student,

I am conducting a study on adolescent psychosocial adjustment as part of my doctoral studies at the National University of Singapore (NUS), Singapore.

I am requesting you and several other students to take part in this study which will be conducted in classrooms in your school. You may use less than 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire for the study inclusive of instruction time.

You are not required to write your name on the survey response forms and you may decide to stop participation in the exercise at will without any penalty or query from the school teacher or the researcher. Be assured that all responses will kept very confidential.

Please complete the attached form below if you decide to participate in the study.

You may contact me at **212-24-574-6401** for any explanation you may need.

Thank you,

George O. Mainoo

Student Assent Form

I _____ agree to take part in the proposed study to be conducted by George O. Mainoo. I am aware that my responses will be anonymous and confidential and that I can choose to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty from my school teacher or the researcher.

I agree to seek the final approval of my parent/guardian before actual participation in the study.

Sign _____

Date _____

Appendix F**Standard Code of Instructions**

You are about to answer some very simple questions in this questionnaire.

The Questionnaire is divided into two sections.

Section A consists of 16 Biographic and General Family Background questions.

If you answer “**YES**” to **question # 16**, you will have to skip **Section B**, and go on to answer **Section C** only.

Read each statement carefully and indicate how true it is about you.

Use the provided rating scales and circle the number that corresponds to your choice of answer.

There are no right or wrong answers. You are required to answer all questions.

If you need any clarification in the course of answering the questions in the questionnaire, please draw your supervisor’s attention, and you will be assisted.

Thank you for cooperation and participation.

You may start to answer the question in the questionnaire now.

