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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEGATIVE GENDER STEREOTYPES & WOMEN'S
PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS: A CASE OF TAMALE METROPOLIS IN THE
NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA.**

BY

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM IN
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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that, aside the references to other people's works which have been duly recognized and acknowledged, this dissertation is entirely my original work under the supervision of Dr. Kofi Amponsah-Bediako, Apr.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between negative gender stereotypes and women's political participation, the case of women politicians within the Tamale Metropolis, located in the Northern region of Ghana. After successfully interviewing five (5) women politicians within Tamale Metropolis in order to explore the experiences of female politicians within the Tamale Metropolis in terms of gender stereotypes and to examine the effects of gender stereotypes on the participation of female politicians within the Tamale Metropolis, the study concluded that negative gender stereotypes is manifest within the politics of Tamale. The topmost stereotype and prejudice included the marital status of women politicians which were largely spearheaded by supporters of male contenders. Also, the study found out that financial capability was a very influential factor on the success of women candidates.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved brother and role model Mr. Mawuli Seme Addom for his unflinching love and support towards everything that concerns me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to sincerely thank the leadership of the National Democratic Congress and the entire membership of NDC in the North Dayi Constituency for believing in me and giving me the opportunity to represent them in parliament.

I would want to thank my supervisor, Dr. Kofi Amponsah-Bediako, Apr for his guidance and support; and my family and friends for always being there.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

2.0 Background of the Study

Ghana's political environment has seen a rapid rise in the number of political scientists who question certain actions and inactions that affect the way electorates decide on who to vote for and who not to vote for during an election. Voter behavior at the polls can be as a result of several factors, and among them are ethnicity, race, geography, social background, and gender of the individual to serve and/or lead them. The country's engagement in democratic politics in recent years has been that which is followed by several states who look up to Ghanaian democracy as one which may be a point of reference. On December 7, 2020, Ghanaians went to the polls for the seventh time – in the country's current democratic dispensation. Even though all these elections were peaceful (Faanu & Graham 2017; Alidu 2014; Aryee & Debrah, 1997, Aryee et al. 2002; Gyimah Boadi 2001, 2009, 2015; Gyimah Boadi and Prempeh 2012). However, the depending variables of voter behavior especially with regards to gender, leaves many questions unanswered.

Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) data for 2013, reveals that the female gender represents a slightly higher population, 51.2% as compared to the male gender which is 48.8%. Out of the total population, 10.8% of the latter have made it to tertiary level whereas only 7.5% of the former are at the same level of education. In terms of literacy, the male gender is leading convincingly with 80%, and 68.5% being females. Literacy has been one of the determinant variables to political and

leadership positions in the country. This means, Ghanaian women still have a long way to catch up with their male counterparts in the political environment.

The way the female gender is perceived by many, is that which is fragile and peripheral when it comes to taking on active roles of multitasking and leading others. There are those who are against the increased involvement of women in all spheres of economic and political activities and have concluded that the biology of sex determines that women are limited to their gender roles which is children and the home and should embrace it as such (Amu, 2005). Certainly, not-so-important roles have been assigned to women by the society they belong to. Their views are rarely sought for when it comes to matters which require critical thinking and problem solving. A child seeks his mother's help in wiping a stain off their mouth; goes to the father for assistance in their school's project work. Most of these perceptions that are experienced in the society are rooted in family history, tradition, religion, and culture.

Gender stereotyping is the practice of ascribing to a person, woman or man specific attributes, characteristics or roles and responsibilities by reason solely of his/her membership in the social group of women or men (Cusack, 2013). Most of the attributes assigned to women are biased social constructions that undermine their gender and thus their position in the society, hence can be referred to as negative gender stereotyping. Many nuclear family systems represent the girl child as one who is nurtured to take her place in the kitchen – depriving her equal access to opportunities given to the other gender. Even in the 21st century, women are challenging the male dominated status quo in a gendered system where they are expected to constantly prove themselves everyday

fearing they may not be taken seriously by their male counterparts. They are underrepresented, undervalued, and underappreciated for the role they play, both in the family and outside the home. Since they are underestimated, they are underutilized in the political environment. At the local government level, there are several dynamics that inhibit a woman's chances of having a say in the decision making process. They include; economy, education, history, religion, tradition, and culture.

According to a report captured in "gender equality in politics", 23% of the world's politicians are women and the overwhelming remaining are men who do not have to do much to prove they deserve to lead. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, 2021), the rate of female representation in Africa stands about 16%, which they believe is as a result of variables like economic and social regimes as well as already existing structures in politics. Universal Declaration of Human right, among their statements also declared that "everyone has the right to take part in the government of his or her country (UN, 1945) which we may say is not in consonance to what we experience in reality. A political figure in Ghana, former Hon. Minister for Trade and Industry, Hannah Tetteh, in an interview with CCTV news, made a revelation that during her early years in politics, opponents didn't take her seriously because of her gender.

The purpose of this systematic process of knowledge inquiry was to assess the relationship between negative gender stereotypes and women's participation in politics, focusing on Tamale Metropolis as a case study. The study explored the research unit to obtain authentic facts and data from relevant stakeholders concerning the subject matter. The variables that influence women's inability to

compete with men for equal opportunities in the political environment were investigated. This study suggested ways of enhancing Ghanaian women's involvement in politics without they feeling discriminated upon.

Tamale (Dagbani: Tamali) Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) was the focal point for the study. Purposeful sampling was used to select the geographical area due to the strong impact of religion, history, tradition, and culture on the political environment. According to the 2010 Public Housing Census (PHC), Tamale had a total population size of 223,252 with 111, 1109 being males and 112,143 being females. The dominant religion in the study area is Islam with a percentage of 60, followed by Christianity, and other religions. The study, before collating data believed that gender stereotyping had a significant impact on women's low representation in politics and leadership positions.

1.1 Problem Statement

Ghanaian women's representation in politics over the years has been relatively low, both at the local and the national levels. This image is representative of the bigger global picture of their peripheral involvement in managing political affairs and occupying leadership positions. They are perceived as those who take care of behaviors, rather than those who can take charge of behaviors, hence they are incredibly underrepresented in politics. Due to this questionable social construction, they mostly occupy positions in education and health, rather than being part of the 'movers and shakers' of the political environment. That said, Tamale Metropolis, a peri-urban district was the

area of study. In the northern region of Ghana where religion, tradition, and culture are held in high esteem.

Certain deconstructions like that of women's active participation in leadership roles are not entertained by many – thus requires a lot of work to change people's behavioral patterns. Women who have broken the glass ceiling in front of them did so having to constantly give their 100% performance and commitments they are involved in. Women remain disadvantaged compared to men (Global Gender Gap; Hausmann et al. 2010; USAID, UNDP 2010; Gender Inequality Index) across a range of measures concerning employment, education, health, and political participation. The Gender Inequality Index (GII) and other indices have agreed that women contribute significantly in economic spheres, but are still lagging behind when it comes to health, education, and political voice.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to assess the relationship between gender stereotypes and Ghanaian women's participation in politics, using Tamale Metropolis as a case study. The specific objectives include;

- To explore the experiences of female politicians within the Tamale Metropolis in terms of gender stereotypes.
- To examine the effects of gender stereotypes on the participation of female politicians within the Tamale Metropolis.

1.3 Research Questions

- What are the experiences of women victims of negative gender stereotypes and prejudices in the politics of Tamale Metropolis?
- What are the effects of negative gender stereotypes on the participation of women politicians in the Tamale Metropolis?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study informed the reader(s) on ways that the research contributed to the wellbeing of people and/or group or society in general (Prieto, Naval, and Carey, 2017). This section focused on the benefits and importance of the study to academia, groups, and organizations among others. The study will help influence policy directions relating to gender parity and its impact on national development. It emphasized on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and the need for it to be achieved.

1.5 Definition of Terms

The study made use of the following terms: 1gender, sex, gender stereotyping, gender discrimination, gender roles, gender bias.

Gender: A term used to refer to social and cultural distinctions associated with being male or female (Diamond, 2002). Most societies use this binary to refer to a man and a woman; they do not look beyond to include others

Sex: Unlike gender, sex is the biological characteristics that distinguishes a man from a woman.

Gender Stereotyping: This refers to the process of ascribing specific attributes, characteristics, or roles to individuals by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men (Cusack, 2013).

Negative Gender Stereotyping: This refers to ascribing unfavorable attributes to individuals by reason of his/her membership in a social group.

1.6 Study Area (Tamale)

Tamale (Dagbani: Tamali) Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) was the focal point for the study. Purposeful sampling was used to select the geographical area due to the strong impact of religion, history, tradition, and culture on the political environment. According to the 2010 Public Housing Census (PHC), Tamale had a total population size of 223,252 with 111,1109 being males and 112,143 being females. The dominant religion in the study area is Islam with a percentage of 60, followed by Christianity, and other religions. The study area is located within the Guinea Savannah belt. Women form a higher proportion of the population and are mostly employed in trading and other economic activities. Agriculture that is trade amongst women and farming amongst men can be said to be the foremost economic activity within the metropolis.

Women participation in politics is relatively low within the metropolis. For instance, since Ghana gained independence in 1957, Tamale metropolis has never elected a female representative into the legislative arm of Ghana. Tamale consists of three (3) constituencies namely; Tamale, South, Tamale Central and Tamale North constituencies. Until 2012, none of Ghana's two leading

political parties in the Metropolis, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) have presented female candidates for the position of Member of Parliament even though women play significant roles in party politics.

In addition to the total absence of Tamale women from Ghana's Parliament, there is an appalling ratio of women at the local government level. According to Alhassan (2014), there has never been more than two (2) elected assembly women at a time in the Tamale metropolis from the period of 1992 to 2014. Shiraz (2015) indicated that, during the 2015 district assembly elections, no woman was elected as an assembly woman and that women participation in politics was simply through political appointments with only four (4) women appointed as assembly women. Moreover, the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly has never been headed by a woman. Successive governments have since the 1990s appointed men as District, Municipal and Metropolitan Chief Executives. The low level of political participation in terms of both elected officials and political appointees is undoubtedly pervasive.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted in Tamale metropolis, the capital of the Northern region of Ghana. The study covered a large area which could not be exhausted due to limited time and resources. A reasonable sample was taken from the population size which was reflective of the entire population.

The weaknesses associated with this study's methodology was that, despite Tamale Metropolis being the largest Metropolis amongst the Metropolises within the Northern regions that is, Upper East, Upper West, Savannah and North East regions, the findings cannot entirely represent the perception of gender stereotypes, particularly negative stereotypes against all women in Ghana's politics. At best, it depicted negative stereotypes against women within the political arena of Tamale Metropolis. Also, the main use of qualitative data collection and analysis in this study, although important, when compared to quantitative data, it cannot best quantify the use of negative stereotypes against women who participate in politics of Tamale Metropolis. At best, it described the opinions and views on negative stereotypes against women in the politics of Tamale Metropolis.

1.8 Outline of the Study

This section classified and explained the structure of the study in five (5) chapters as indicated below.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

This chapter consisted of a brief background to the study, with a focus on the imbalance that exists between men and women in Ghana's politics, specifically the Northern regional capital, Tamale. It further stated the goals and targets of the study with its rationale, research questions as well as the definition of terms associated with the study. This chapter concluded with a summary of the study area, limitations of the study and the outline of the study.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, previous scholarly works such as articles, seminars, conference papers, books, among others, that are relevant and related to this study were acknowledged and critically examined in various themes such as women and politics and gender stereotypes. This chapter concluded with an elaboration and justification for the use of select theoretical underpinnings like the Gender Socialization Theory.

CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduced the study to the field work as it outlines the ways in which data was collected and analyzed for the purpose of this study. As indicated early on, this study was premised on the qualitative research methodology, that is the use of qualitative methods in data collection and analysis which included in-depth interviews and semiotic analyses.

CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

After data was gathered for the study, this chapter used theories and ideologies to critically examine the data collected from the field. Within this chapter, sub chapters discussed comprised of two main thematic areas namely; prejudices and negative stereotypes faced by female politicians and ‘women are each other’s enemies’.

CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Also referred to as the concluding chapter, it provided a finality to the study by providing a summary of the entire thesis with suggestions on the way(s) to go forward in terms of literature and policy making.

1.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, gender has a tremendous impact on people's behavior and how they view the world. Women's underrepresentation in the political environment was further evidence that social institutions and gender socialization is what determines who and what career path one takes. There are other variables like media commercials that portray women to be peripheral and inferior to men. Messages are framed in a way that stereotypes the female gender.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter dived into previous scholarly work that were relevant to the topic. In so doing, the research identified the various research gaps that needed to be explored and/or investigated further. The areas of review included the following: Concept of gender stereotyping; Gender in Politics; variables which influence women's involvement in politics; women's influence and how they are influenced by government policies; analysis of sustainable development goal 5 in championing gender equality; various prejudices and unconscious biases faced by women in the political space; and the chances of women in politics against that of men. The review was arranged in chronological and thematic order so as to be able to appreciate the works of these authors over the years and the transitioning of the topic. This chapter established the need for this research through the topics, and served as an underpinning for the research methodology used.

2.1 Gender Stereotyping

According to Andrew Cornwall, cited in Pereira (2014) “the stories we tell and those that are told about sexuality shapes our experiences of the world in powerful ways and yet sexuality – and especially its positive, pleasurable dimensions – is all but absent from discussion of women's empowerment in development.” The narrative of women's sexuality and body mostly does not depict power or agency but that which represents comfort, pleasure, and tenderness. Women's role in society has been undermined for long by members of their household and community; in most

traditional African homes, a girl-child is groomed to make a man happy and satisfied by bearing children for him and warming his bed at night. This and many other ways of perceiving the female gender is stereotypical and biased to women and their quest to change the narrative.

2.2 Gender and Politics

Beginning in the early 1980s, 80 percent of young women in the United States were expected to work when they were thirty-five years of age. Women were getting more education, getting married later, getting divorced more often, and spending less of their lives in married status. They expressed an interest in employment as part of a long term career which had equal importance to that of their husbands. (Goldin 2006, 10-12; Bayes, 2012). Modernization and globalization played a key role in women's involvement in activities in the corporate world that were dominated by men. Even though social institutions like religion, family among others may have hindered their transitioning from working at home to that of the corporate world – women defied all odds to take on positions they wouldn't have taken some years back. According to Bayes (2012), women's involvement in "malestream" work caused them their marriages – they were only able to choose between staying married and working at home or working in a male dominated society and risk losing their marital status. In the works of Ampofo, Beoku-Betts, and Osirim (2008), African women's lives just like that of men change over time, the former is also influenced by race, class, globalization, location, kinship, marriage, and a host of other factors. This study explored the potential impact the society had through socialization on women who strived to take on male dominated (malestream) roles in politics. African women are becoming more conscious of their society and feel the agency to transform their society, states, and economy on the continent and in the Diaspora.

Until recently, political science has been a male dominated discipline even in Western industrialized nations. Establishing the field of “women and politics,” which has subsequently become “gender and politics,” as a “field” in the discipline has been a struggle supported by and dependent upon women’s movements outside the academy primarily in the last part of the 20th century. The women’s movements, in turn, have in part been responses to major changes in capitalism in the last part of the twentieth century as increasing numbers of the world’s women have had an opportunity to be educated and/or have moved from unpaid work to positions in the waged economy. (Goldin 2006, 10-12; Bayes, 2012).

2.3 Variables that influence women participation in politics

Age is one of the key determinants of women’s involvement in political affairs – In Stephen F. Miescher's 2007 work, he argued that in the Akan-Twi language the term “opanyin” is used to indicate a broad semantic field. The leading dictionary states the dichotomy between two groups of meaning: age *opanyin* signifies an adult as opposed to a child. The person may be part of the decision making body of a community; a Chief or someone who advises a Chief. Cited in Miescher (2007), Rev. E.K.O Asante, born in 1911, emphasized that the word stems from the expression “*Wanyin*,” which means maturity and honor. From his submission, one can establish the fact that a level playing field is given to men and women with regards to them attaining a matured age. From my hypothesis I do not think this is true; I think these claims are simplistic and do not influence women’s ability to take on leadership positions. Gender has much more influence on their political voice as compared to their level of maturity and honor. Nowhere in the world do women share equal access to economic and social rights with men or the same access to productive resources. (True, 2012).

2.4 Women's influence and how they are influenced by government policies

Feminist researchers, such as Pereira (2003) and Steady (2006) note that while poor and low-income African women have faced the most deleterious effects of globalization in the form of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP's), these women continue to resist such policies in organizing against multinational corporations and the state. Scholars of North Africa based in the region and in the global north, pay more attention to issues of religion and culture. (Ampofo, BeokuBetts, and Osisim, 2008). Social institutions and constructs do play a significant role in the way we view the world around us. Also, certain policies that are implemented seem to favor the male gender as compared to women. Policies should be gender neutral and provide a level playing field for both women and men depending on their needs. International bodies and bilateral agencies have proclaimed policies integrated to stimulate women's interest into socioeconomic processes.

An unexpected and paradoxical consequence of framing policy as wicked is that those responsible for policy formulation may decide to do nothing and just accept their fate by leaving with the problem. (Barnick & Trommel, 2019). This statement from Barnick and Trommel seem to be the reason why not so enough policies are geared towards ensuring that more women can come out of their comfort zone to aspire for more opportunities to serve. Sometimes there is the feeling that the issue about women empowerment is overwhelming and may discourage duty bearers to actually do something about fixing it. The study examined the impact of policies framed on women's chances of taking on leadership positions and how they as well challenge the narrative.

The then Ministry of Education of Ghana with UNICEF support developed Girl child education strategies which sought to give the female gender opportunities to develop. Ghana's National

Education Strategy Plan 2003-2015 comprehensively evaluated education for all, with the then Millennium Development Goals and Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) which put great emphasis on increasing girl's access to quality basic education to ensure gender parity through scholarship, food ration, bicycles and textbooks. Scholarship interventions by Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) provides holistic approach to tackling obstacles to girl's enrolment, progression and achievement (Ghana Education Service, 2016). The late Kofi Annan, in 2000, he referred to educating girls as a social development policy that works. One cannot dispute the fact that certain interventions are put in place to empower women in taking more responsibilities; the study examined whether it was enough to bring about social change.

2.5 Analysis of SDG 5 in championing gender equality

The 2030 agenda is a goal oriented general pledge organized by the United Nations in 2015, to help achieve universal benefits in terms of economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (UN, 2015b; Eden & Wagstaff, 2021). This agenda established 17 goals with several targets and indicators to be monitored (Eden & Wagstaff, 2021). Several factors, among them is the current global sanitary situation which has negatively affected achieving the goals by 2030. This study was much focused on the SDG 5 which seeks to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” (UN, 2015b: 14). Women's ability to have the same opportunity as men in politics is dependent on the outcome of the aforementioned.

The global goal for SDG 5 is to achieve gender equality, and to empower women and girls by eliminating gender disparities, discrimination, and violence against women (UN, 2015b). Many scholarly work are of the view that women have been disproportionately impacted by the

COVID19 pandemic hence the overall outcome of the achievement of SDG 5 (Alon, Doepke, Olmsted Ramsey, & Tertilt, 2020; UNCTAD, 2020).

2.6 Various prejudices and unconscious biases faced by women in the political space

Sexism and prejudice are increasingly done in subtle and covert ways (NW Benokraitis & JR Feagin, 1986; Swim, Aikin, Hall & Hunter, 1995). Unlike in the past when women were treated unfairly in their homes, church, workplace among others – they now have improved access to compete with men for positions – however, there are still glass ceilings which are preventing them from occupying certain positions.

2.7 The chances of women in politics against that of men

Previous research documents showed that voters see women and men as possessing different character traits and different abilities to handle policy issues. These findings, combined with anecdotal evidence of sexist attitudes toward women candidates, raises concerns that women candidates are hampered by their sex and gender considerations (Dolan, K. 2014). Employing data from an original survey of 3,150 US adults conducted in 2010, this book confronts scholarly concerns that gender stereotypes work to undermine women's chances of success (Dolan, K. 2014). Challenging the conventional wisdom, these data demonstrate that voters do not rely heavily on gender stereotypes when evaluating and voting for women candidates (Dolan, K., 2014). Voters do hold gendered attitudes, both positive and negative, about women candidates, but these attitudes are not related to the political decisions voters make (ibid). Instead, in deciding for whom to vote, people are influenced by traditional political forces, like political party and incumbency, regardless of the sex of the candidates. This study does not establish the fact that

gender can influence the outcome of election or women's involvement in politics and leadership positions. According to Dolan (2014), voter behavior is much more directed towards popular political parties; In Ghana, both the National Democratic Congress, and New Patriotic Party command more votes during elections. Irrespective of the gender leading either party it does not necessarily determine its outcome. This statement by Dolan can only be accepted when similar observations or data are collected from the target area for the study.

2.8 Research Gap

The research gap involved the various missing pieces in the research literature. It has to do with areas that are under-explored or yet to be explored by researchers. Many research works have been done on gender and politics in the developed countries. However, the impact of gender in developing countries requires more exploration. During the 2020 Ghanaian election, the flag bearer for the National Democratic Congress (NDC), John Dramani Mahama, decided to select a female running mate, Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang. They lost the election by a close margin. However, there is a need for research into the impact of her inclusion on voter behavior.

2.9 Conclusion

After data collection and analysis, the study established whether there were research gaps in gender stereotyping and Ghanaian women's participation in political affairs and leadership positions. However, from the literature on the research topic, it can be inferred that not enough research has been conducted in my country to warrant the availability of accurate data on how gender stereotyping influences women's involvement in politics. Tamale Metropolis, the area of study, has been under-explored with respect to how various social institutions like culture, religion, family

and a host of others impacts women with political ambitions as well as voter behavior. The study suggested ways of enhancing women's participation in politics.

2.10 Theoretical Framework

Gender Socialization Theory

This theory posits that certain social institutions like family, school, among others are responsible for shaping a child's masculinity or femininity (John et al. 2017). If a child is a male – he is socialized to be masculine by his parents through the types of colors and materials he is exposed to. A female child is socialized to be empathic, tender, and also accept her role of taking care, not taking charge. Both genders are socialized into gender stereotypes which defines who they become in future and what responsibilities they are expected by the society to take.

It can be inferred from this theory that the low representation of women in political activities and leadership positions is as a result of gender socialization and the social constructs we are all exposed to. Unlike sex, gender is not biological, it is something we are compelled to take on by the society. The latter has created barriers to why women are deprived of equal access to opportunities as their male counterparts.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study describes the details of the methodology employed by the study. Basically, it consists of the ways in which data was collected from respondents/participants and analyzed as well as the justifications for the use of the identified data collection and analytical methods. Details of the methodology include but not limited to the research design, population and sampling procedure, sources of data, methods of data collection, data handling and the ethical considerations associated with the study.

3.2 Research Design (Qualitative)

This study predominantly relied on qualitative data collection tools and analysis such as in-depth interviews and content analysis, thus qualifies as a qualitative case study research design. In getting convincing answers to complex and real life questions, Tetnowski (2015) is of the view that, qualitative case study research can be the most valuable research design to be used. Moreover, Gerring (2006) mentioned the political science field as a prominent field for the use of case study research tools. Undoubtedly, getting answers to establish the relationship between negative gender stereotypes and women participation in politics within Tamale Metropolis is not just about political science but is also ‘a complex and real life’ question. For this reason, this study embarked on a case study research design.

3.3 Population and Sampling Procedure

According to Taherdoost (2020), identifying and defining the target population is the foremost stage in the sampling process. The population for this study is women who participate in politics

within the Tamale Metropolis. There cannot be an exact figure to the number of women who participate in political activities because the definition of political participation is subjective. To many, political participation can mean getting a political appointment or contesting for a political office. Conversely, to others, political participation can mean taking part in elections, campaigns and rallies. In order to arrive at a target population, this study identified and defined its target population.

For the purpose of this study, this study defined the political participation it explored. This helped in specifically arriving at the target population for the study. To this study, women political participation was limited to women who contested for any form of political office, ranging from party executive elections, district assembly elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections within the jurisdiction of Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) from the period of 2018 to 2020. The period of 2018 to 2020 because it is the most recent political electioneering period as it witnessed the latest district assembly elections, party executive elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections. This study again intended to associate itself with current political happenings hence the reason for the choice in the aforementioned period.

The sample frame for this study included the names and contacts of all women who took part in party executive elections, district assembly elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections within the jurisdiction of Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) from the period of 2018 to 2020. In order to get this, I relied on already existing data, that is, secondary data from the office of the Electoral Commission located in the Tamale Metropolis.

The aforementioned definition of the target population automatically forms the basis for the use of non-probability sampling techniques, precisely purposive sampling in determining a sample size for the study. As indicated earlier, the study looked out for women who contested in party executive elections, district assembly elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections within the jurisdiction of Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) from the period of 2018 to 2020. All participants were selected because they are women who took part in party executive elections, district assembly elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections within the jurisdiction of Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) from the period of 2018 to 2020. In all, the study arrived at a sample size of five (5).

Five (5) participants were women who contested for party executive elections, district assembly elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections within the jurisdiction of Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) from the period of 2018 to 2020

3.4 Sources of Data

This study relied on two main sources of data namely; primary and secondary sources of data. Already collected and existing data, technically referred to as secondary data was taken from both the website of the Electoral Commission of Ghana <https://ec.gov.gh> and its physical office located in the Tamale Metropolis. According to the Electoral Commission Act (Act 451) of 1993, ‘the Electoral Commission of Ghana was set up to purposely manage the conduct of all public elections and referenda’. Therefore, in order to be provided with all election related data, specifically names and contacts of women who took part in party executive elections, district assembly elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections within the jurisdiction of Tamale Metropolitan

Assembly (TaMA) from the period of 2018 to 2020, this study relied on data from the Electoral Commission of Ghana. Population characteristics such as geography, demography, economic activities, governance, and literacy, among others were derived from the website of the Statistical Service of Ghana <https://statsghana.gov.gh>. The 2010 Population and Housing Census document for the Northern region was carefully perused. Political parties were visited for a list of women they presented for the aforementioned elections just to ensure congruity in the list provided by the Electoral Commission. Political manifestos of various political parties were also examined. Primary data was gathered from five (5) women participants who contested for party executive elections, district assembly elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections within the jurisdiction of Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) from the period of 2018 to 2020.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

In-depth interviews are vital when a study intends to derive a thorough information about an individual's thought or behavior (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Relying on qualitative methodology in data collection, this research conducted in-depth interviews with five (5) women participants who contested for party executive elections, district assembly elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections within the jurisdiction of Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) from the period of 2018 to 2020. These interviews elicited opinions, thoughts, experiences and expressions from women politicians on negative gender stereotypes relative to contesting for political office in the Tamale Metropolis. These interviews were later on transcribed for the purposes of data analysis. Although in-depth interviews provide detailed expressions, Boyce & Neale (2006) stated that in-depth interviews might be prone to bias. For instance, if female politicians want to decry the negative stereotypes against their respective candidacies, there is the tendency for them to be bias in their opinions by 'exaggerating' the linkage between negative

gender stereotypes and their quest to win elections. Conducting in-depth interviews are again time consuming as it will be transcribed, in most cases verbatim, afterwards.

The researcher is a female politician who has contested for various political offices in times past and has a fair experience and understanding of negative gender stereotyping against women in politics. Although not from the study area, I am well informed of the relatively low success of women in elections in the Tamale Metropolis as I have constantly monitored the appalling rate of success of women who assume political positions through elections.

3.6 Data Handling

Ensuring that data is not lost when handling interview responses is often a relatively difficult task for researchers (Nwosu, 2016). Data handling in this study was underpinned on the Qualitative Data Research Handling Method -Frederick Nwosu Method. The method includes; writing down answers, coding themes, compiling responses into groups among others. All interviews were recorded and saved according to the name of respondent, time and date. This ensured ease in retrieval for data analysis. With the in-depth interviews, full disclosure was given to all five (5) participants prior to the interview sessions. Before commencing each interview, permission was sought from the participants to record the session for data analysis. All five (5) participants permitted the researcher to record the interview sessions. In no case, was a respondent/participant compelled to take part in the in-depth interview and questionnaire. Neither the questionnaire nor interview guide contain a question deriving the name respondents/participants. This was to preserve anonymity of participants/respondents. The health of both the researcher and respondents/participants were seriously considered as Ghana is currently fighting against the

COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing, use of alcohol based hand sanitizers, wearing of nose masks were all respected throughout the data collection period.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In gathering data for this study, the researcher minimized ethical breaches at all times, by upholding in high esteem, the principles of transparency, honesty and respect for participants. The purpose for the data collection was `vividly explained to all participants/respondents.

3.8 Conclusions

In summary, this research leveraged on the qualitative methodological approach to data collection and analysis, specifically the use of in-depth interviews. This helped the research in providing a comprehensive understanding of negative gender stereotypes and its linkage to the participation of women in the politics of Tamale Metropolis. All interviews were recorded and saved according to the name of respondent, time and date.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This study sought to understand the nexus between negative gender stereotypes and the participation of women in politics, particularly women within the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region of Ghana. This chapter presents a detailed analyses of the results from the data gathered for the study. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and saved according to the name of respondent, time and date. The information gathered from all interviews have been analyzed using semiotic analysis. The study grouped the analysis from the face to face in-depth interviews into two main thematic areas namely; prejudices and negative stereotypes faced by female politicians and ‘women are each other’s enemies’.

4.2 Prejudices and negative stereotypes faced by female politicians

Negative gender stereotypes and prejudices against the candidacy of women was topical amongst all narratives from women who contested for political offices ranging from party executive elections, district assembly elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections within the jurisdiction of Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) from the period of 2018 to 2020. All participants confirmed the existence of negative gender stereotypes and prejudices during their campaign periods. These negative gender stereotypes were largely via verbal interactions during physical meetings such as television and radio programs as well as social media. It was revealed that these negative gender stereotypes and prejudices are not launched or initiated towards their candidacy until they indicate their desire for elected political office. When asked if one was a

victim of negative gender stereotypes and prejudices. A woman who currently occupies a party executive position indicated,

‘hmmmm, which woman is let to go free, once you show your head and they realize you have an earring, or ‘**sariga**’ the ‘**yelgoga**’ starts all over’, what have they not said about us and our families, particularly parents, kids and husbands. As for we those with the ‘**sariga**’, I won’t talk’.

This narrative means that upon the emergence of a political poster or flyer, the presence of an earring or ‘*sariga*’ in the poster or flyer is what depicts the gender of the individual vying for an elected political office. ‘*sariga*’ which means veil in Dagbanli is a costume that signifies that a lady is married. This signifies that the respondent is married and her status as a married women even worsens her experience of participating in politics within the Tamale Metropolis. In addition to the negative stereotypes, her family members aren’t also left out of the prejudices. This means that women who contest for elected are not only the victim of these prejudices and negative stereotypes but their relations as well. This was again confirmed by another female politician who stated

‘i have been asked this question several times, is your husband aware that you are in politics and you know anytime they ask such a question, they give some looks that is disrespectful. A male politician friend once told me that he can’t be under the same roof with a wife who is into NDC/NPP’.

This narrative suggests that a section of the society in Tamale hold the view that for a woman to be into active politics such as contesting for an elected position, she might have deviated or

departed from a supposed societal norm. Once marital status, in most cases, fuel these negative gender stereotypes and prejudices. Married women are considered as being the dominant spouse, hence they do not listen to their husbands whereas unmarried women are considered to have departed from the way in which they were brought up by their parents and other family members. The findings also gathered that these aforementioned negative stereotypes are sponsored by their male counterparts in the various political parties. In few instances, supporters of the male candidates question the status of married women candidates during their campaigns. The marriage status of women candidates appeared to be the topmost negative gender stereotypical campaign message used during election campaigns.

Most respondents indicated how these prejudices fueled the tarnishing of their image in their neighborhoods. Majority of respondents talked on how such political attacks sparked rumors about their marriages which led to their family members pleading with them to step down from the elections in order to protect and preserve the image of their family. However, the study could not exactly establish typical cases in which these negative gender stereotypes and prejudices were directly initiated by their male contenders. At best, this study found out that such negative gender stereotypes and prejudices were from the followers of the male contenders. A married women who contested a party executive position but lost had this to say about the commentary from society during an election campaign in 2019;

‘it got to a time where people even said my husband has divorced me and people were asking me whether it is true or not’. According to another respondent, ‘the supporters of my male contender were even saying things that were surprising to me because they had no campaign message. My contender himself never questioned why a woman would contest him ooh, it was his followers’.

The study realized that these negative gender stereotypes and prejudices had little impact on the candidacy of female politicians because such comments could not stand the test of time. According to the narratives from the interviewees, the electorates and the Tamale society have gone beyond the prehistoric days wherein negative comments against women politicians were considered a topical and influential issues that could contribute to their choice of candidate for elected political positions. According to a current political party executive;

‘Not at all, our people don’t listen to such negative gender stereotypes not to even talk of it influencing their vote because they are tired of hearing such comments. In fact they are now used to it because it’s a usual noise you hear about women in politics’

Most of the respondents indicated that the most influential factor on their candidacy had to do with funds which was as a result of women having inadequate financiers and sponsors when compared to their male counterparts. ‘My contender had money’ was pervasive throughout all interviews. This simply suggests that politics can sometimes be about the pocket of a candidate. In conclusion, the use of money as inducements to electorates was seen not to be a feature of the political campaigns of most female politicians who contested for for political offices ranging from party executive elections, district assembly elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections within the jurisdiction of Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) from the period of 2018 to 2020.

4.3 Women are each other's enemies'

The phenomenon 'women are each other's enemies' was nonexistent in the context of female political participation in Tamale. The phenomenon has been used by some female politicians who do not emerge successful in political elections. In Ghanaian politics, it is not uncommon for a woman to lose an election and indicate that her fellow women did not support her throughout the elections thus they are her 'enemies'. Unfortunately, in most cases, this 'women are each other's enemies' is also used by male counterparts in election campaigns, purposely to dwindle the existence and contribution of women in the politics of Ghana. Women politicians and the community of women in general view politics as a tool for development since politics serves as an opportunity for individuals to make decisions that will inure to the benefits of society. For them, these opportunities to make decisions have been male dominated and relatively ineffective towards the community of children and women. For this reason, women within the Tamale Metropolis rally unconditional support for female political elections with the hope of bridging the gender disparity in the politics of Ghana and for the betterment of their society. In essence, for them to have a seat at the decision making table, they should encourage and support women who run for political positions. Admittedly, this support appeared to be from women within all political parties.

This study revealed that all respondents were supported in diverse ways by their colleague women. One woman indicated,

'oh not at all, you know we are one so if I say I did not get support like money and t-shirts then it's not right. My sisters supported me a lot as for that one maybe in another place but not Tamale'.

Another woman had this to say

‘you know we are not many in politics so we always support each other to get positions, my colleagues were always behind me and when even when I did not win, I can’t blame women, why they are not God’. The study established that women do not call out fellow women when they do not succeed in elections but rather they believe it’s not will of God.

This narrative completely debunks the political assertion that women do not support each other. It also emerged that both men and women financed the campaigns of female politicians who contested offices ranging from party executive elections, district assembly elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections within the jurisdiction of Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) from the period of 2018 to 2020.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented a comprehensive analysis of the interviews conducted with women politicians who contested offices ranging from party executive elections, district assembly elections, constituency primaries and parliamentary elections within the jurisdiction of Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TaMA) from the period of 2018 to 2020. The analysis were presented using semiotic analysis.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter included the conclusion of the entirety of the study and gave brief recommendations based on the findings highlighted in the chapter 4 of this study. The researcher hopes that the recommendations presented in this chapter will contribute to the respect and dignity of women politicians within the Tamale Metropolis and Ghana at large and enhance more women political participation to bridge gender disparity in decision making.

5.2 Conclusion

From the highlights above, it has been established that the participation of women in the politics of the Tamale Metropolis is not just an agenda by women politicians only but for the entire community of women. Women who run for elected political offices such as Member of Parliament, Organizer, Assembly Women, Treasurer, Parliamentary candidate just to mention a few, do not just rely solely on their individual contributions and trackrecords, but rely on that of the community of women in general. Women politicians have received enormous support from the women society as a result of their common interests which includes effective gender representation and development. However, the negative gender stereotypes and prejudices towards the candidacy of women, particularly during election campaigns still persists within the Tamale Metropolis but has a relatively low impact on the chances of women during elections.

This means that there is a considerable presence of prejudices and negative gender stereotypes on various channels of communication including social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, radio, television as well as interpersonal interactions. That notwithstanding, the appreciation, recognition and contributions of women in politics by the society is significant and encouraging. Women get emotional and financial support regardless of the attack on marital status and family, hence stand a better chance on winning in elections.

In conclusion, although the participation and success of women in elected political positions is unarguably low, the relentless efforts of women in attaining a fair representation at the decision making table is an incontrovertible possibility.

5.3. Recommendations

Per the findings of this study, the researcher suggests possible ways to mitigate the cases of negative gender stereotypes and prejudices against female candidates during election campaigns, specifically within the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region of Ghana in order to achieve gender parity in politics. These recommendations are targeted at the state authorities, political parties, media, civil society organizations, international community, non-governmental organizations, opinion leaders, traditional leaders, clergy, not forgetting the academic society.

To begin with, the said issue in question is a misappropriation of communication because these prejudices and negative gender stereotypes are messages used in political campaigns of politicians and their followers and can be solved through communication. These messages are made by

known individuals and get to the society through known various channels such as radio and television. This begs these questions indicated below;

- Are these prejudices and negative gender stereotypes messages filtered by the media before they get to the audiences? For instance if an individual attacks the marital status of a female candidate, say on a discussion on Radio Tamale, what does the host of Radio Tamale do?
- What happens to the senders of these prejudices and negative gender stereotypes messages?
- Do victims of prejudices and negative gender stereotypes report or take on these individuals and media houses to serve as a deterrent to others?
- What do political parties do when prejudices and negative gender stereotypes are reported?

As indicated early on, these recommendations are comprehensive and all inclusive. Tackling negative gender stereotypes and prejudices should be considered a moral responsibility owed to the society including women by duty bearers such as Chiefs, religious leaders, institutions like the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and non-governmental organizations that represent women in society. The media should also uphold and enhance the principles of good journalism in their daily activities. Victims of prejudices and negative gender stereotypes ought to also protect their fundamental human rights and dignity available to them by the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana by taking perpetrators of such prejudices and negative gender stereotypes on and seeking remedy to protect their image in society.

Moreover, there should be strategic media campaigns by organizations and political parties that seek to address issues of prejudices and negative gender stereotypes against women in politics. Tamale is again known for their respect for Traditional and Religious authorities, particularly the Islamic clerics. Therefore, Chiefs and Imams should consider this as a moral obligation and ensure that such prejudices and negative gender stereotypes against women come to an end. Political parties can also set up disciplinary measures to punish perpetrators of prejudices and negative gender stereotypes against women in politics.

In conclusion, communication is a vital tool for progressive development at all levels and appears to be the most appropriate way coupled with policies from state authorities to ensuring that the rights and dignity of women in politics are respected at all times.

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APPENDIX:

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEGATIVE GENDER STEREOTYPES & GHANAIAN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS: A CASE OF TAMALE METROPOLIS. INTERVIEW GUIDE.

1. What is your perception of negative gender stereotypes against women politicians within the Tamale Metropolis?
2. Are you a victim of negative gender stereotypes? If yes, kindly describe your experience.
3. At what point do you experience such stereotypes. Before, during or after elections?
4. Does negative gender stereotypes influence your political career in any way?
5. How do you overcome or get demotivated when you hear such negative gender stereotypes?
6. What is the worse negative gender stereotype you have ever experienced?
7. What are the contributing factors to negative gender stereotypes?
8. 'Women are each other's enemies'. How well do you agree or disagree to this statement?
9. 'Religion and ethnicity contribute to the low participation of women in politics'. What is your take on this?
10. What other issues would you like to address that may be relevant to this study?

