

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL, MORAL AND RELIGIOUS
ISSUES: A SURVEY OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE BRONG AHAFO
REGION, GHANA

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BY

ERIC MENSAH

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DECLARATION

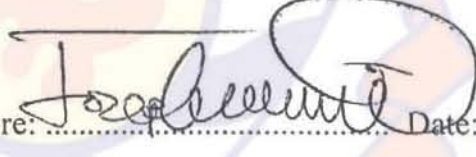
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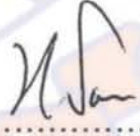
I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:  Date: 4/5/16
Name: Eric Mensah

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature:  Date: 4/5/16
Name: Professor Joseph K. Mintah

Co-Supervisor's Signature:  Date: 4/5/16
Name: Rev. Professor Seth Asare-Danso

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the attitudes of senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region towards social, moral and religious issues. It was also hypothesised that gender, subjects studied, type of school, environment, age, ethnicity and religious affiliation of students have an effect and predict their attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues.

The study adopted the descriptive cross-sectional survey as a design. Participants for the study were 900 students from 20 senior high schools in the region. They were selected using the cluster and simple random sampling techniques. A questionnaire (*Mensah's attitude scale for measuring social, moral and religious issues*) with a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.893 was used for data collection. Data collected were analysed with the help of SPSS version 20. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools like frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation, Factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multiple regression were used for data analysis.

It was found that students in senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo region had positive attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. Also, it was found that students' demographic characteristics have significant influence and predict their attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. Based on these findings, it was recommended that Brong Ahafo branch of Ghana Education Service endeavour to intensify education on social, moral and religious issues through subjects like citizenship education and religious and moral education.

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DEDICATION

To my mothers, Christiana Donkor and Mary Nkrumah



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

In the science of human behaviour, the issue of attitude is probably, “the most distinctive and indispensable concept of contemporary world social psychology” (Allport, & Ross, 1968, p. 59), and it has been characterised by an embarrassing degree of ambiguity and confusion. This may be partly attributed to the use of an explanatory concept in diverse areas of investigation. Under the general rubric of attitude research, attempts to explain discriminatory behaviours have typically made reference to attitudes, stereotypes, prejudice and ethnocentrism (Fazio, & Olson, 2003). Similarly, research on performance, absenteeism and turnover in industry and education has frequently invoked concepts like attitude, job satisfaction and morale. Attitudes, opinions and voting intentions have appeared as central concepts in studies in education, voting and even political parties (Brandt, & Wetherell, 2012). Attempts to explain various aspects of consumer behaviour and behaviour in general have focused on attitudes towards products, brand loyalty, education, subjects and attributes. These concepts, attitude, attraction and perception, have accounted for a wide variety of interpersonal behaviours (Carlson, 2010).

The concepts mentioned above, as well as many others, have been subsumed under the general label “attitude”. This leads to some confusion and ambiguity surrounding the attitude concept, and it is hardly surprising that few researchers agree on an explicit definition of attitude (Gentry, 1987; Brown, & Amoroso, 1975). The world has major tenets and factors influencing almost everything people do. The things that people say, how people act as well as how they behave have major underlying factors (Brewer, 2003). There is persistent quest to find out which tenets or factors determine what behaviour and attitude. To this end, scientists (Silva, & Schensul, 2003; Kelley, 2001; Kelley, & Evans, 1995; DeRose, 1984) have conducted lots of studies to find out the factors that determine how people behave in terms of their attitudes toward identifiable issues, policies, entities and elements.

As the search for people’s attitude and what influences people’s attitudes go on, the human society is very much interested in people’s attitudes that affect harmonious and peaceful existence and what influences these attitudes. Peoples’ attitudes towards moral issues (e.g. abortion, euthanasia, drug abuse, murder, instant justice, corruption, etc) social issues (e.g. marriage, divorce, homosexual, education, etc) and religious issues (e.g. existence of the Ultimate Reality, the purpose of creation, faith, life, the importance of order in the world, etc) have become major determinants to having a peaceful and harmonious world. There is no doubt that every society expects a day when there would be absolute calm, peace and harmony, where people would make decisions on sound moral, social and religious grounds (Mensah, 2009). Therefore, factors that influence peoples’

attitudes towards these issues are very essential for researchers, especially those in Religious and Moral Education.

Education is a key to the formation of attitude for learners (Oztas, 2003). This is because it is a tool for behavioural change and modification. The idea of having a society with people who have good attitude towards major issues as moral, social and religious pushes education to the fore. This is because learners in the schools are members of the society and are seen as the future of society. To this end, educational systems the world over have developed subjects directed at helping learners to acquire skills and competences to help them develop positive attitudes towards moral, social and religious issues (Oztas, 2003). These subjects (Ethics, Religious Studies, Social Studies, etc.) through their content, aim at exposing learners to varied issues in life and making learners aware of the need to make decisions based on sound moral, social and religious judgement. The subjects also look at helping learners see the need to live a morally upright life. Tritter (1992) asserts that good behaviour can be instilled in learners when they are taught religious and moral lessons in the school and home.

Students' attitudes towards moral, social and religious issues have been the focus by many researchers (Awopetu, & Fasanmi, 2011; Kasomo, 2011; Mukama, 2010; Yenilmez, Ayranci, Ay, Erkaya, Ozdemir, & Kaptanoglu, 2006; Arndt, & Bruin, 2006; Smith, 2003). Students' attitudes towards issues of morality and religiosity is determined by their religion. The religion of people and for that matter students are likely to affect how they behave towards issues of morality and religion (Smith, 2003). Thus, the religious beliefs or doctrines of

individuals affect how they see marriage, divorce, sex, drug abuse and homosexuality (Fagan, 2006).

School type and subjects studied have major influence on attitudes that students exhibit when it comes to moral, social and religious issues (Kasomo, 2011; Comegys, 2010). Schools affiliated to religious institutions have the doctrines of the religion as part of the lessons. Learners in these schools embrace the doctrines which in turn influence their behaviour and how they see things in life and produce stronger, more uniform attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues than did state schools. Subjects in ethics, morality and religion studied in these schools influence students' attitudes (Tritter, 1992).

The gender of students influences their attitude. For example, Arndt and de Bruin (2006) and Lehman and Thornwall (2011) have indicated that the gender of students' affect how they look at issues pertaining to morality and religiosity. Other factors that have been found by researchers to influence students' attitude towards moral, social and religious issues include the environment in which the students find themselves, the age of the students as well as their tribe (Jekayinfa, 2004; Awopetu, & Fasanmi, 2011). Jekayinfa (2004) again, is of the view that the school environment as well as the learners' home environment go a long way to determine their attitude towards moral issues. Thus, no matter what the school does, the environment is crucial. Awopetu and Fasanmi (2011) have indicated that, the age of students facilitates their attitude towards crucial matters in life. They also mention that students' attitudes towards abortion mostly in Africa are influenced by their ethnicity and tribe.

In Africa, students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues are mixed, negative and positive. Factors such as peer group influence and poverty level affect the attitudes of students towards many issues in life (Mukama, 2010). Thus, no matter what the society does, these factors are crucial in shaping attitudes of students. Related to this point is that, factors that influence attitudes of learners in schools towards issues of morality and religiosity should not be overlooked. Since it will defeat the aim of moral and religious education.

Historically, the traditional Ghanaian culture had a way of inculcating religiosity and morality into the child until the coming of European colonisation. The educational principles of Guggisberg, after formal education was introduced, reinforced the need for religious education in the country (Abosi, & Amissah, 1992). Religious education, and for that matter, moral education was given a boost when section 25 of the 1944 Education Act of Britain stated that the school day in county school should begin with collective worship on the part of all pupils in attendance of the school and that religious instruction should be given in every county school (McWilliams, 1959). The system of education in Ghana as at the time was a carbon copy of the British system, which invariably led to the introduction of religious education in the Ghanaian system: Christian religious studies, African traditional religion and Islamic religious studies as a way of trying to instil good social, moral and religious values into the learners (Mensah, 2009).

Due to this aim and curriculum movements and reforms in Ghana, Religious and moral education was formally introduced in 1998 by the Ghana

Education Service to get students equipped with skills and ability to deal with moral, religious and social problems that confront them (Mensah, 2009). The rationale of this subject was to importantly reinforce the informal moral (social and religious) training that learners go through at home. The subject is aimed at helping learners to:

1. Develop an understanding and tolerance of other people's faith;
2. Understand the difference between good and bad behaviour so that they can make the right decisions in many situations that will confront them;
3. Develop an awareness of their Creator and the purpose of their very existence;
4. Become good and useful citizens of this country, capable of maintaining peace, understanding and order in their lives and in the lives of their families (RME syllabus for Senior High School, 2009).

Religious and moral education is now a core subject at the basic school level and a core for all first year students of Senior High Schools that teach the subject (some schools do not teach) (Mensah, 2009). It becomes optional for senior high school students when they graduate from form one to the next class. It is important to note here that the subject is not examined externally (West African Secondary School Certificate Examinations) and this has caused many schools not to teach it, especially at the Senior High School level (Mensah, 2009). In 2007, there were calls from many quarters in Ghana that, the subject was not attaining its set aims as people felt that the moral fibre of the country was getting weaker

and weaker. This led to the withdrawal and subsequent re-introduction of the subject at the basic level in Ghana in 2008. This issue prompted evaluations of the subject by many researchers including one at the Senior High School level with emphasis on the Brong Ahafo Region (Mensah, 2009). The study revealed that the aims of the subject were being attained, notwithstanding the fact that there are still moral issues in the Ghanaian society with questions being asked again, whether the subject is still doing what it is supposed to do.

The above concerns have prompted moral educators to research into the attitude of learners towards the subject to ascertain whether these attitudes could be a factor to the attainment of the aims. In one of such studies, Asare-Danso (2011) found that learners have very positive attitudes towards the subject. The findings of this study was paramount in making an argument for the importance of the subject because other studies (Silva, & Schensul, 2003; Ajzen, 1988; Oskamp, 1977) have indicated that the attitudes that learners have towards a particular subject can affect their performance and then automatically the attainment of the aims.

At the senior high school level in Ghana, very little research has been done on the attitude of students towards social, moral and religious issues as well as the factors that influence these attitudes. The lack of research in this regard leaves educators and stakeholders in education with no clue as to what is happening with regards to the attitude of learners towards these vital issues. This has raised questions like, what are the attitudes of senior high school students towards social,

moral and religious issues and what factors influence and predict these attitudes? The need to find answers to these questions has prompted this study.

Statement of the Problem

The attitude of students towards issues of life go a long way to affect the things they do. In the school situation, attitudes are not only feelings that help prevent access, but also place a limit on student learning. If a person does not like technology, he or she may feel anxious when expected to utilise this. Such a person is unlikely to want to learn and obtain skills or participate in assignments that require the use of technology. On the contrary, students who exhibit a positive attitude toward a subject are more likely to actively engage in learning during and after instruction (Popham, 1994). In this same vein, the attitude of students towards religious and moral education which deals with social, moral and religious issues, goes a long way to affect their performance and the utilisation of what is taught.

The attitudes of students towards issues are influenced by many factors. The identification of these factors by human scientists is paramount to the success or otherwise of teaching and learning. Thus a lot of research has been conducted to uncover some of these factors. In moral and religious education, researchers outside Ghana have identified factors like religious affiliation, school type (mission or non-mission), environment (rural or urban), gender, age, subject of study and ethnicity as influencing students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. But in Ghana, little is known about the attitudes of students towards these issues. Again, nothing is known about the demographic

characteristics that influence and predict their attitudes towards these vital life issues. The need to fill these gaps in the literature necessitated the exploration of the attitudes of senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana towards social, moral and religious issues.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the attitudes of senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana towards social, moral and religious issues as well as the factors that predict the attitudes. It was also hypothesised that gender, subjects studied, type of school, environment, age, ethnicity and religious affiliation have an effect on students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues.

Research Questions

Research generally is intended to help understand or find answers to problems that a researcher may be interested in. In the quest for solutions, the researcher's task is to ask pertinent questions which aim at addressing whatever issues could be bothering him/her (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). For the purposes of the present study, the following questions were asked:

1. What attitudes do senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region exhibit towards social issues?
2. What attitudes do senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region exhibit towards moral issues?
3. What attitudes do senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region exhibit towards religious issues?

4. What differences exist in the attitude of senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region towards social, moral and religious issues based on gender, subject studied, type of school, environment, age, ethnicity and religious affiliation?
5. What demographic characteristics predict the attitudes of senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region towards social, moral and religious issues?

Significance of the Study

There is every reason to believe that a society that contains people who have very positive attitudes towards issues of morality, religion and the social setting would enjoy peace and harmony. Yet, it is possible these days to have a society with highly religious and moral people but not peaceful. Therefore a study that seeks to find out factors that influences students' attitude towards social, moral and religious issues cannot be overemphasised.

Findings from this study will bring to the fore very vital issues relating to how students see social, moral and religious issues irrespective of what people think. The study would help in bringing out the major tenets that influence these attitudes that students in the senior high schools in Brong Ahafo have formed. In this regard, stakeholders in education, including the Ghana Education Service and the Curriculum Research and Development Division would have first-hand information on ways to instil the right social, moral and religious values in learners in the various schools in Brong Ahafo Region and Ghana as a whole.

There is a dearth of materials and research findings in the area of students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. Therefore findings from this study and the facts to be uncovered in the field would go a long way to contribute to knowledge in the area.

Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on the attitude of senior high school students towards social, moral and religious issues from the perspectives of students. Again, the study concentrated only on seven variables, namely: gender, subjects, school type, environment, age, ethnicity and religious affiliation as factors that influence students' attitudes.

A study of this nature should have covered the entire country, Ghana. However, it focused on 62 senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana and selected 20 for data collection.

Limitations of the Study

The study focused on senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo region. However, not all senior high schools in the region were selected for the collection of data. As a result, the information attained may not actually reflect the views and perspectives of all senior high school students in the region. Hence, the findings that would come out of this study cannot be generalised to apply to all senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana.

Definition of Terms

Subject studied: Subjects studied is used to find out and demarcate students who studied religion and morality related subjects from those who do not. These subjects include Christian religious studies, Religious and moral education, African traditional religion and Islamic religious studies.

Type of school: This term is used in this report to delineate schools that are operated by missions (churches) and those that are not operated by missions.

Environment: Environment is used in this research to represent the settlement and community the school is located. It is to delineate schools in rural areas from those in urban areas.

Organisation of the Rest of the Study

Chapter Two of this study concentrates on the review of literature related to the issues undergirding the research. It is divided into two main sections; conceptual and empirical reviews. The conceptual review focused on the concepts of attitude, attitude formation and attitude change as well as the adjustment function. A conceptual framework of how the study was conceptualized was also looked at. The Empirical review focused on issues related to the research questions.

Chapter Three focused on the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrument, validity and reliability of the instrument to be used to collect data as well as the data collection procedure. It also looked at the analysis of the data collected from the respondents.

Chapter Four examined the results and discussion. This chapter is divided into two main sections; characteristics of respondents and main results and discussion. The summary of the research, findings, conclusions and recommendations for further studies are provided in Chapter Five.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter of the research report focused on the review of related literature. It sought to critically look at the main areas and themes from literature and materials available in order to get support for the study. These areas and themes were looked at in very much details. The chapter is in two main sections: conceptual review and the empirical review. The conceptual review section focused on the concepts of attitude, attitude formation and attitude change, cardinal factors that influence attitude and the conceptual framework of the study. The empirical section focused on studies conducted by researchers that are related to this study. Specifically, this focused on studies in line with the main research questions and hypothesis underlying this study. The areas included students' attitude towards social issues, students' attitudes towards moral issues, attitudes of students towards religious issues and how gender, age, ethnicity, religion, school environment, subjects studied and type of school influence students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues.

Conceptual Review

Attempting a Definition of Attitude

The issue of attitude is as old as the existence of the first man. This is to say that attitude and 'man' cannot be separated, no matter how hard we try to.

Due to this assertion, scientists who are interested in human beings and their society are also interested in the issue of attitude. In fact, earlier writers on human science (Thomas, & Znaniecki, 1918; Allport, 1954) did indicate that the study of human science and behaviour cannot be separated from their attitude. Allport and Ross (1968) supported this when they asserted that the concept of attitude is “the most distinctive and indispensable concept of contemporary world social psychology” (p. 59).

This goes to say that scientists of human behaviour or better still social psychologist see the concept of attitude as very integral and core to their work. To this end psychology is about human behaviour and attitude to me is part of human behaviour. The study of the human personality, traits, anger and how people react and think are all linked to their attitude. The psychologist, who talks to the client aside everything, tries to link the client’s attitude to progress of the therapy.

It is common knowledge in the field of humanities that concepts that draw the attention and interest of lots of people eventually defy a precise definition. Not farfetched examples include the concepts of curriculum, education, teaching, psychology, religion, morality and many more. In the same way, the concept of attitude has over the years attracted a lot of attention and has struggled to get ‘a properly measured suit’ as its definition (Brewer, 2003, p. 32). Again the definition of the concept has evolved over the decades and different scholars have defined it based on their own orientations, dispositions and psychological perspectives. The initial definitions were broad and encompassed cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioural components whiles the later definitions

saw the concept as merely an evaluative component of human behaviour (Silva, & Schensul, 2003).

The initial definitions of the concept “attitude” were broad and encompassed cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioural components. One of such definitions was given by Allport (1935), who defined attitude as “a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related” (p. 810). His description of attitude as a mental and neural state of readiness hits on the cognitive domain. This means that attitudes emanate from the human mind. However he points out that these are based on the individual's experience with objects and situations that they find themselves in. These experiences, then, are the basis or origins of the individual's responses or reactions. It is important to note that the experience Allport (1935) talks about are diverse and can even involve intuitive knowledge as well as information acquired about an individual, a situation or an object or element. These reactions and responses of individuals to the situations and objects are termed as their attitude.

Allport's (1935) definition of attitude is very important for a critical study. In the classroom situation, this definition says that, the learner's attitude would be based on the encounter or experience that the learner has with a situation or an object. Therefore a student's attitude towards a subject emanates from the experience he/she has had with the teaching and learning of the subject. If the learner's experiences with the subject, the teacher and teaching learning resources

are pleasant we can expect a positive attitude. In the same way, students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues also come from their mental readiness, through experience and the influence it has on their reaction to the issues.

Another definition was by Krech and Crutchfield (1948) whose work on social psychology became very prominent in their time. They saw attitude as “an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the individual's world” (p. 152). To Krech and Crutchfield (1948) motivational processes are concerned with factors in the individual's world that would give him/her the urge to do something or respond to a situation, emotional process focuses on the feelings that the individuals have towards the situation or object and perceptual and cognitive process may be related in a way, such that they are both connected to the mind and thinking of the individual. From their definition, it can be concluded that they used the individual's world to represent the experiences of the individual, as in Allport's (1935) definition.

A critical look at the definition of attitude by Krech and Crutchfield (1948) reveals that the definition lends itself to the same analysis from the first one. To Krech and Crutchfield (1948), an attitude is based on the experience an individual has, which pushes him/her to reaction or response to a situation, object, element, issue or other individuals they encounter. Therefore, it can be said that experience is the main origin of attitude. The experience can be intuition, encounter with individuals or objects as well as receiving information or new knowledge. This informs curriculum developers and teachers in the classroom to

be mindful and particular of the kind of learning experiences they expose learners to. This is because those experiences go a long way to inform their attitudes towards the subject or issues discussed.

Green (1953) stated that, any attitude is a hypothetical or latent variable rather than an immediately observable variable. According to him, attitudes do not refer to any one specific act or response of an individual; it is rather an abstraction from a large number of related acts or responses. Thus, when an individual has a less favourable attitude towards social issues it means that his/her words and actions are consistently less favourable to social issues. It can therefore be concluded that, there is an underlying attitude which mediates between the stimuli (social issues which evoke comment and behaviour) and the response (favourable or unfavourable comments) from the individual (Jones, 2006).

Two very interesting points run through the above initial and broad definitions of attitude. These are the emphasis on the enduring nature of attitudes and their close relationship to individuals' behaviour (Schwarz, & Bohner, 2001). This portrays that when attitudes are formed, they are initially continuing and later become permanent. A critical look at the above definitions indicates that the formation of attitude by the individual is a lengthy process therefore they are not easily changed; although attitudes can be changed. Attitudes are an integral part of human behaviour. This is because they are individuals' response or reaction to issues and situation while behaviour is almost the same or encompasses this.

Relating the points above to the classroom situation and attitudes of learners, it becomes clear that students' attitudes towards subjects, teachers,

school activities and issue are formed through a process. This therefore makes it very difficult for educators to try and change students' attitudes when they are not willing or they have not had an experience. It is therefore appropriate to suggest that, this should make teachers become critical and conscious of the type of experience they expose the students to. Students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues can be said to have an enduring nature, and relates with their behaviour. It can therefore be said that attitudes mean the probability that a person will show a specific behaviour towards a specific issue, object or situation.

Subsequent decades after initial definitions of attitude, the concept of attitude lost much of its wideness and was largely reduced to its evaluative constituent. Schwarz and Bohner (2001) indicated that, during these times, scholars and human scientists who were interested in human behaviour shifted attention from the broad nature of the concept to its evaluative component.

Bem (1970) defined attitudes as "... likes and dislikes" (p. 14). This definition pecks an individual's like or dislike of something to their attitude. It is therefore arguable that attitude is a central part of human identity. Everyday people love, hate, like, dislike, favour, oppose, agree, disagree, argue, persuade etc. All these are evaluative responses to an object (Bohner, & Wänke, 2002). In this present study, the attitudes of senior high school students towards social, moral and religious issues are the focus. Their agreement or disagreement to statements on social, moral and religious issues are used to measure and determine their attitudes. This means that the study seeks to get their evaluative responses to the issues.

Similarly, Eagly and Chaiken (1995) defined attitude as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour” (p. 1). The use of the term psychological tendency shows that attitude is related to the mental and neural processes of the individual. An individual’s expression of favour or disfavour for an entity is seen as attitude. It can be said from this definition that, before an individual decides to disfavour, dislike or disagree with a situation, issue, subject, object etc, a mental and emotional process has already being in place and he/she is only exhibiting them. It therefore fashions out clearly that this definition is parallel with that of Bem (1970) on the latitude of seeing attitude from its evaluative function.

Anderson (1985) looked at attitude as a somewhat intense emotion that prepares or predisposes an individual to respond consistently in a favourable or unfavourable manner when confronted with a particular object. So apart from attitude being mental and neural, it is also emotional or affective. From this definition, it would be deduced that attitude is always the result of an individual’s reaction to a particular situation, issue, object or person. Attitude is therefore a mental state used by individuals to structure the way they perceive their environment and to guide the way in which they respond to a psychological construct comprised of cognitive, affective, and intention components (Kalanda, 2001).

The intimal definitions of attitude were broad and included issues of cognitive, affective and motivational components. So far, the three definitions above that looks at the evaluative nature of attitudes have not deviated from the

initial definitions. This is because the basic nature or structure of the concept attitude is embedded in all of them. The evaluative definitions of the concept however narrow the definition and even focuses more on the purpose of this study. It is important to also note that, these definitions simplify the concept attitude and helps for easy relation to the classroom.

By this, a teacher in the classroom would easily be able to identify students' attitudes towards teaching and learning, subjects and other school activities. A researcher can also use this definition as a springboard to want to find out attitudes of subjects or the sample he/she is interested in, just like in the case of this present study. This study is directed at evaluating students' like or dislike, agreement or disagreement for statement related to social, moral and religious issue.

In more recent times, current social psychologists and scholars in the field of human behaviour have propounded some definitions of the concept of attitude. Lord (1997) was interested in Frankfort-Nachmias' (1992) definition of attitude which was "mental or neural state of readiness represented by cognition, feelings and behaviour; organized through experience, deliberate learning and heredity. This exerts a directive or a dynamic influence upon an individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (p. 241). Based on this, he described attitude as having three main components: the cognitive component; the feeling or affective component and the actions or behavioural component. For him, the three components are interrelated and therefore are always present anytime a person or an individual is said to hold an attitude.

Hogg and Vaughan (2005) also defined attitude as “a relatively enduring organisation of beliefs, feelings and behavioural tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups or symbols” (p. 150). The enduring nature of attitude re-surfaces in this modern day definition too. This is to say that the feelings, beliefs and behavioural tendencies that people exhibit which we term as attitude are mostly permanent and unchanging. This is not to say that attitudes formed cannot change, it can as we would see in forthcoming discussions in this chapter. More significantly, they expand the scope that the reactions are directed to, and include socially significant objects, groups and symbols.

More recently, Maio, Maio, and Haddock (2010), have posited that attitudes are cognitive (beliefs, thoughts, attributes), affective (feelings, emotions) and behavioural information (past events, experiences) that characterises how people react to situations, people, objects etc. This description relates to that of both Lord (1997) and Hogg and Vaughan (2005) in the sense that it also sees attitude as being made up of three major components. For them, the thoughts that people have about objects translates into their feeling and emotions towards them. However, these thoughts are based on past events or experiences that the individual has encountered.

In relating the deduction from the definition of attitudes by Maio, Maio, and Haddock (2010) to the classroom, it can be concluded that the attitudes that learners have towards teachers, subjects and other school activities are based on their experience or information they have gathered. From gathering the

information or the experience, they form beliefs or thoughts which translate into the feeling and emotions informing their response or reaction.

The present study also seeks to find out the attitudes of students in senior high schools in Ghana towards social, moral and religious issues. From the discussions so far it can be deduced that, their attitudes have been formed based on beliefs and thoughts they have about the issues, which have translated into their feelings and emotions. The feelings and emotions about these issues are also based on the behavioural information (past events, experiences) students have about these issues.

Putting together the above definitions of the concept attitude it becomes very clear that few issues are common to all definitions and descriptions of the concept. The first issue is that attitude originates from the mind of the individual. This is however informed by the experiences of the individual which then informs their feeling and reactions towards the objects or situation. It again becomes clear that the formation of attitude is procedural although they do not always follow the same steps or procedures. This ensures the permanency of the attitude until a conscious effort is made to change it.

Putting all these definitions and discussions in perspective, it is appropriate to state that attitude is the end product of feelings and emotions that form ideas and thoughts about an entity based on knowledge or experience acquired. Therefore in relation to this present study, the attitudes of senior high school, students towards social, moral and religious issues refer to their views,

feelings and emotions about these issues based on the ideas, thoughts and knowledge they have acquired on them.

In subsequent paragraphs, there will be an attempt to look at attitude formation from the literature. However, before that, a critical look would be taken on the conceptual distinctions on attitude, belief, intentions and perception that normally bother scholars.

Conceptual Distinctions; Attitude, Belief, Intentions and Perception

The issue of differences among the terms; attitude, belief, intentions, opinions and perceptions have dominated the literature of social psychology. People have used these terms interchangeably in the literature while others have tried to draw attention to the distinctions.

Lowe, Schellenberg, and Shannon (2003) are of the view that, beliefs are contents held in the mind that are true. They are ideas that shape our behaviour, axiomatic and not necessarily logical. There are three kinds of belief: a thought that links an object with a characteristic or quality; a thought that links your performance to some behaviour; and a thought that links you performing some behaviour, with the approval or disapproval of people who are important to you (Moore, 2003). In any of the kinds that he indicates, it is realised that belief has influence on the behaviour that an individual puts up.

Van Ryn, and Burke (2000) have said that we acquire beliefs in three main ways: through direct observation; by acceptance of information from some source; and by inferring new beliefs from what we already know. All beliefs influence behaviour and therefore linked with attitude which is the evaluative

dispositions that makes a person think, feel or behave towards some concept, person, group or social issue.

Intentions are what people want to do. For instance, I intend to become a lawyer means I want to be a lawyer. However, I consider myself a layman here so let us find out what scholars have to say on this. Morrel-Samuels (2002) is of the view that an individual's intention is highly influenced by their belief and leads to how they behave towards elements, people and issues. This is to say that, individuals' intentions are influenced by their beliefs and this in turn, influences their attitude.

There is a lot of literature on perception. Many scholars (Lindsay, & Norman, 1977; Allport, 1993; Morrel-Samuels, 2002; Brewer, 2003; Hogg, & Vaughan, 2005; Maio, Maio, & Haddock, 2010) have looked at the concept from their own perspectives but, at the end of the day have the same views about perception. For example, Lindsay and Norman (1977) said perception is the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world. In other words, a person is confronted with a situation or stimuli, the person interprets the stimuli into something meaningful to him or her based on prior experiences.

Morrel-Samuels (2002) also saw perception as our recognition and interpretation of sensory information and include how we respond to the information. From his definition, we can think of perception as a process where we take in sensory information from our environment and use that information in order to interact with our environment. Perception allows us to take the sensory

information in and make it into something meaningful. Maio, Maio and Haddock (2010) also recently saw perception as where "...people translate sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of the world around them... based on incomplete and unverified information" (p. 12).

A critical look at the definitions above indicates that perception is a result of a process. It basically relates to how people see things from their own perspectives. Perception is something that is always in the mind of the individual. That is to say how or what an individual thinks about an individual, object or element. Perception is able to "... guide human behaviour in general..." (Schwartz, Chambliss, Brownell, Blair, & Billington, 2003, p. 34).

Perception is a cognitive process that makes a person make sense of stimuli from the environment. It affects all the senses: sight, touch, taste, smell, and hearing. Perception also helps a person to adapt to a changing environment. Perception is somehow similar to attitude because they are all formed through a process that involves the mind or neural system of the individual. However, the difference is that attitude is mostly explicit and relates to individual's reactions while perception is mostly implicit and cognitive. Perception although can influence human behaviour, attitude is the real manifestation of the perception.

Belief, intentions and perceptions all relate to attitude. Although they may have some resemblance with attitude, there are a few differences. But they all relate to how the individual thinks and behave. So the individual's access to knowledge and experience leads to his intentions, beliefs and perception (Calder, & Ross, 1973; Wicker, 1969). Meanwhile they also influence attitude which

finally determines the behaviour of the individual (see Figure 1). This is basically the reason why in the literature of social psychology and human behaviour, the four terms are sometimes used interchangeably.

In the context of this study, a careful reflection indicates that the attitudes of students towards social, moral and religious issues are informed by their perceptions, beliefs and intentions. These perceptions, beliefs and intentions are also informed by the information and knowledge they have acquired and their experience in life, school and their environment. The acquisition of information and knowledge in this case, is embedded in the everyday interactions they have in the school, the classroom as well as in their homes.

In the school, subjects like Religious and Moral Education and Christian Religious Studies expose the students to issues that have to deal with how they should relate to each other and socially acceptable behaviours, what actions are morally right and wrong, as well as religion and the Creator. In relation to the environment in which the student finds him/herself, the type of discipline and school as well as the location of the school play an important role. All these influence their perceptions, beliefs and intentions which influence their attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues.

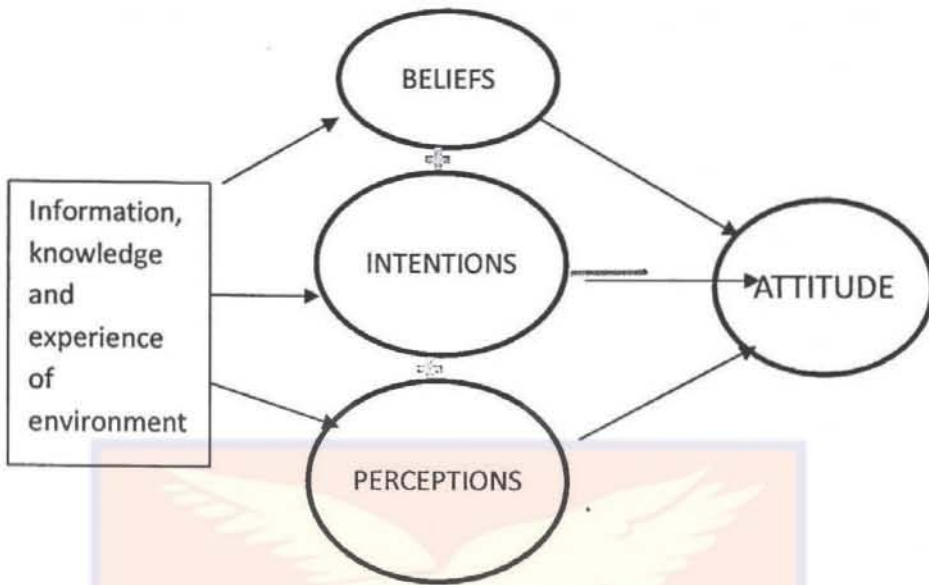


Figure 1: How Beliefs, Intentions and Perceptions relate to Attitude

Attitude Formation and Change

Source: Author's construct (2014)

Having already looked at what attitude is and the distinctions among attitude, beliefs, intentions and perceptions the review will now focus on how attitudes are formed and changed. The issue of how individuals form their attitudes towards themselves, other individuals, objects, elements and situations have dominated the literature for some time now. It is already established in this review that attitudes are formed through a process. The subsequent paragraphs would be dedicated to exploring what scholars have to say about how attitudes are formed.

Attitudes have been looked at as enduring systems of beliefs that can be examined on three different levels namely: cognitive (how we think or reason through an attitude); emotional (how we feel regarding an attitude); and behavioural (how we act on an attitude). Therefore, an individual's attitudes come

from how they evaluate an object or element based on the available information. In other words, it has to do with the knowledge and perceptions that are acquired by a combination of direct experience with the attitude object and related information from various sources. This is relatively dispassionate and very open to discussions (Lord, & Maher, 1991).

The affective factor thrives on the emotions or feelings associated with a particular product or brand. It goes on to mean that an individual's emotions towards an object are the origins of his/her attitude towards the object (Anderson, 1985). The behavioural component looks at the likelihood or tendency that an individual will undertake a specific action or behave in a particular way with regard to the attitude object.

Not ignoring the above assertion on the origins of attitude, scholars in attitude research have indicated that there are several ways in which we acquire or form attitude. Tesser (1993) has argued that hereditary variables affect the attitudes of individuals and therefore a source of attitude formation. He however believes that they may do so indirectly. The work of Williams and Morland (1976) which focuses on the relations between cognitive and experiential factors has been the start of works on attitude development. Jones and Gerard (1967) argument on the development of attitudes is the basis for the above research in attitude development. They have described two imperative aspects of parent-child interaction: information dependence and affect dependence.

Young children are reliant on their parents for information about the world. Since parents are the early suppliers of information, the way in which it is

presented influences the substance of child's thinking, beliefs, and opinions and has important consequences for the course of their mental development. Children also depend on their parents to come across their physical and emotional needs - affect dependence. Thus, the way of categorising persons, objects, and ideas suggested by parental provision of information is a crucial determinant of the child's later thinking patterns (Oppong, 2014).

Most contemporary attitude formation theories have their origins in two main schools of thought that have shaped theory and research in social psychology and science of human behaviour. Whereas the various learning theories of attitude are based on the stimulus-response approach of behaviour theory, most theories of cognitive consistency are influenced by the cognitive approach, which is highly expected. A clear distinction is therefore needed to be made in this review between the behaviour theories of attitude and cognitive consistency theories as made by other scholars (Kiesler, Collins, & Miller, 1969; Fishbein, 1967).

Stimulus-Response (Behaviour) Approach to Attitude Formation and Change

The behaviour theories of attitude formation and development are also known as learning theories. Several researchers (Spence, 1956; Tolman, 1932) in the field of psychology have used principles from the learning theories to study the acquisition of attitudes. The learning theories are concerned with the processes whereby a given response becomes associated with a given stimulus. So for these theories, attitudes are formed as a response to a given stimulus. Generally, two

main basic conditioning paradigms are used to explain attitude formation through learning: classical conditioning and operant or instrumental conditioning.

Classical Conditioning

The theory of classical conditioning is associated with a Russian physiologist, Ivan Pavlov. His research on salivation among dogs led to the discovery of the classical conditioning theory. In his digestive research, Pavlov and his assistants would introduce a variety of edible and non-edible items and measure the saliva production that the items produced. Salivation, he noted, is a reflexive process. It occurs automatically in response to a specific stimulus and is not under conscious control. However, Pavlov noted that the dogs would often begin salivating in the absence of food and smell. He quickly realized that this salivary response was not due to an automatic, physiological process (Hock, 2002).

Based on his observations, Pavlov suggested that the salivation was a learned response. The dogs were responding to the sight of the research assistants' white lab coats, which the animals had come to associate with the presentation of food. Unlike the salivary response to the presentation of food, which is an unconditioned reflex, salivating to the expectation of food is a conditioned reflex.

According to McLeod (2008), the classical conditioning theory can be put into three main stages. In the first stage the unconditioned stimulus (UCS) produces an unconditioned response (UCR) in an organism. This means that a stimulus in the environment has produced a behaviour/response which is unlearned (i.e. unconditioned) and therefore is a natural response which has not

been taught. In this respect no new behaviour has been learned yet. For example, a stomach virus (UCS) would produce a response of nausea (UCR). In another example a perfume (UCS) could create a response of happiness or desire (UCR). This stage also involves another stimulus which has no effect on a person and is called the neutral stimulus (NS). The NS could be a person, object, place, etc. The neutral stimulus in classical conditioning does not produce a response until it is paired with the unconditioned stimulus.

At the second stage, a stimulus which produces no response (i.e. neutral) is associated with the unconditioned stimulus at which point it now becomes known as the conditioned stimulus (CS). For example a stomach virus (UCS) might be associated with eating a certain food such as chocolate (CS). Also perfume (UCS) might be associated with a specific person (CS). Often during this stage the UCS must be associated with the CS on a number of occasions, or trials, for learning to take place. However, one trial learning can happen on certain occasions when it is not necessary for an association to be strengthened over time (such as being sick after food poisoning or drinking too much alcohol).

Finally, at the last stage, the conditioned stimulus (CS) gets associated with the unconditioned stimulus (UCS) to create a new conditioned response (CR). For example a person (CS) who has been associated with nice perfume (UCS) is now found attractive (CR). Also chocolate (CS) which was eaten before a person was sick with a virus (UCS) now produces a response of nausea (CR).

In classical conditioning therefore, the response to be learned is initially elicited by the unconditioned stimulus. That is to say, in the classroom or school

level if a student associates negative emotional experiences with school then this can obviously have bad results, such as creating a school phobia. For example, if a student is bullied at school they may learn to associate school with fear. It could also explain why some students show a particular dislike of certain subjects that continue throughout their academic career. This could happen if a student is humiliated or punished in class by a teacher.

Operant of Instrumental Conditioning

Operant conditioning was first lengthily studied by Jerzy Konorski and next by Edward L. Thorndike, who observed the behaviour of cats trying to escape from home-made puzzle boxes. When first constrained in the boxes, the cats took a long time to escape. With experience, ineffective responses occurred less frequently and successful responses occurred more frequently, enabling the cats to escape in less time over successive trials. In his law of effect, Thorndike theorized that behaviours followed by satisfying consequences tend to be repeated and those that produce unpleasant consequences are less likely to be repeated. In short, some consequences strengthened behaviour and some consequences weakened behaviour. Thorndike produced the first known animal learning curves through this procedure (Miltenberger, 2008).

Skinner (1904–1990) is the person whose work is most often cited in connection with operant conditioning. He invented the operant conditioning chamber in which subjects such as pigeons and rats were isolated from extraneous stimuli and free to make one or two simple, repeatable responses. Another invention, the cumulative recorder, produced a graphical record of these responses

from which response rates could be estimated. These records were the primary data that Skinner and his colleagues used to explore the effects on response rate of various reinforcement schedules (Schacter, Gilbert, & Wegner, 2008).

Skinner (1938) coined the term operant conditioning; it means roughly changing of behaviour by the use of reinforcement which is given after the desired response. Skinner identified three types of responses or operant that can follow behaviour.

1. Neutral operant: responses from the environment that neither increase nor decrease the probability of a behaviour being repeated.
2. Reinforcers: Responses from the environment that increase the probability of a behaviour being repeated. Reinforcers can be either positive or negative.
3. Punishers: Responses from the environment that decrease the likelihood of a behaviour being repeated. Punishment weakens behaviour.

Skinner showed how positive reinforcement worked by placing a hungry rat in his Skinner box. The box contained a lever in the side and as the rat moved about the box it would accidentally knock the lever. Immediately it did so a food pellet would drop into a container next to the lever. The rats quickly learned to go straight to the lever after a few times of being put in the box. The consequence of receiving food if they pressed the lever ensured that they would repeat the action again and again. Positive reinforcement strengthens a behaviour by providing a consequence an individual finds rewarding. For example, if your teacher gives

you five pounds sterling each time you complete your homework (i.e. a reward) you are more likely to repeat this behaviour in the future, thus strengthening the behaviour of completing your homework.

The removal of an unpleasant reinforcer can also strengthen behaviour. This is known as negative reinforcement because it is the removal of an adverse stimulus which is 'rewarding' to the animal. Negative reinforcement strengthens behaviour because it stops or removes an unpleasant experience. Skinner showed how negative reinforcement worked by placing a rat in his Skinner box and then subjecting it to an unpleasant electric current which caused it some discomfort. As the rat moved about the box it would accidentally knock the lever. Immediately it did so the electric current would be switched off. The rats quickly learned to go straight to the lever after a few times of being put in the box. The consequence of escaping the electric current ensured that they would repeat the action again and again.

Punishment is defined as the opposite of reinforcement since it is designed to weaken or eliminate a response rather than increase it. Like reinforcement, punishment can work either by directly applying an unpleasant stimulus like a shock after a response or by removing a potentially rewarding stimulus, for instance, deducting someone's pocket money to punish undesirable behaviour.

A Skinnerian advance to the study of attitude change was employed by Bem (1967), whose major assumptions reflected the viewpoint that attitudes were learned as a result of previous experience with the environment. Bem proposed that since the person trying to change attitudes usually lacked direct knowledge of

the internal stimuli available to the learner, it was necessary to rely on external cues in order to reward and punish the individual. It was the combination of external cues and observable behaviours that produced changes in attitude (Himmelfarb, & Eagly, 1974; Kiesler et al., 1969; Insko, 1967).

In a nutshell, operant or instrumental conditioning, which can be termed “trial-and-error learning”, involves a situation in which the organism initially emits a variety of different responses (McLeod, 2008). One of these responses is reinforced; i.e., the response is instrumental to obtaining some reward or avoiding some punishment. The probability of the recurrence of the reinforced response increases with each reinforced trail, and the response is said to be learned when it occurs with high probability. This is how individuals learn and develop attitudes.

Putting together the ideas from both learning theories of attitude, it becomes obvious that most learning theories of attitude development are concerned with the ways in which attitudes are acquired, that is, how implicit (evaluative) responses become associated with a given stimulus object.

This is evident in the definition of attitude given by Doob (1947) who saw it as a learned, implicit anticipatory response. He viewed attitude as an unobservable response to an object that occurs prior to, or in the absence of, any overt response. Also, Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957) said that the implicit response represents the meaning of the object and they suggested that attitude refers only to the evaluative part of the total meaning response. Their view of attitude as a mediating evaluative response has met with general acceptance by theorists working within the behaviour theory tradition.

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In the context of the present study, issues from the learning theories of attitude formation and development can be related to the attitudes that students have towards social, moral and religious issues. In each of the issues, there are concepts that the students learn in the schools. Fishbein (1967) has hinted that whenever a new concept is learned, an attitude towards that concept is acquired simultaneously. He goes on to argue that, once a concept has been learned, new stimuli may be associated with it and the mediating evaluative reaction elicited by these new stimuli will also become conditioned to the concept and change the attitude towards it.

This means that, students form attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues once they learn the concepts that relate to them. The attitudes towards these concepts may also be learned before coming to school. In the school, the information or the school environment makes them learn new concepts or add to what they already know about the concepts. This can therefore lead to a change in their attitude towards the issues. The issue of the factors that influence these attitudes related to the development of these attitudes and will be dealt with after looking at the cognitive theories of attitude formation.

Cognitive (Consistency) Approach to Attitude Formation and Change

Consistency theories of attitude development and formation can be largely traced to the works of Fritz Heider (1944; 1946; 1958). The basic assumption of these theories is the need of the individual to be consistent with attitude. There must be consistency between attitudes, between behaviours, and among attitudes and behaviours. A lack of consistency causes discomfort so that an individual

attempts to ease the tension by adjusting attitudes or behaviours in order to once again achieve balance or consistency. One of the earliest consistency theories was balance theory (Himmelfarb, & Eagly, 1974; Kiesler, Collins & Miller, 1969; O'Keefe, 1990). Three main theories are under this theoretical umbrella. These are the Balance Theory, Congruity Theory and Dissonance Theory.

Balance Theory

The balance theory was developed by Fritz Heider. His concern with balance configuration grew out of his interest in the factors that influence attribution of an event to a person. Relationships among the perceiver, another person, and an object are the main focus of balance theory (Heider, 1958). Relationships are either positive or negative, based on the cognitive perceptions of the perceiver. In this theory, there are eight possible configurations; four balanced and four unbalanced. Unbalanced states are recognized as being unstable. Under these conditions, perceivers attempt to restore balance by changing their attitudes toward objects or other persons. His theory is based on the conclusion that, "if the attitudes towards a person and event are similar, the event is easily ascribed to the person...a balanced configuration exist if the attitudes towards the parts of a casual unit are similar" (Heider, 1958, p.107).

A basic principle of attitude development that emerges from this theory is that, "in the case of two entities, a balanced state exist if the relation between them is positive (or negative) in all respects...in the case of three entities, a balanced state exist if all three relations are positive in all respects, or if two are negative and one positive" (Heider, 1958, pp.110-111). Another principle is that

liking and unit relations tend towards a balanced state. By a balanced state is meant a situation in which the relations among the entities fit together harmoniously; there is no stress towards change. Further, if a balanced state does not exist, then forces towards such a state will arise. If a change is not possible, the state of imbalance will produce tension (Himmelfarb, & Eagly, 1974).

Two extensions of Heider's balance theory include the work of Newcomb (1961) and that of Abelson (Abelson, & Rosenberg, 1958). Newcomb studied interpersonal situations as well as cognitive balancing and transferred these ideas to research on the pressures for uniformity in groups. Abelson proposed four additional modes of restoring balance: (a) denial, (b) bolstering, (c) differentiation, and (d) transcendence (Himmelfarb, & Eagly, 1974; Kiesler, Collins, & Miller, 1969; Insko, 1967; O'Keefe, 1990). Establishing balance was critical to individuals. Attitude changes occurred when the individual attempted to re-establish balance by modifying their attitudes.

Relating this to the present study, there will be balance if a student's attitude towards social issues is similar to both religious and moral issues. In the same analysis, if a student's attitude towards a concept under social issues is similar to his attitude towards other concepts under social issues, then there is balance. Going further, this theory puts forward that, if a student has positive attitude towards mathematics then the student will have a positive attitude towards the teacher of mathematics and vice versa.

Congruity Theory

The congruity theory of attitude formation and development was developed by Osgood and Tannenbaum (1955). This theory deals with attitudes (evaluations) and relationships. Just as the balance theory begins with a consideration of unit formation, the congruity theory has as its starting point an assertion that links two objects of judgement. For them, attitudes are always towards some object or concepts or issue. Objects may become linked in our mind that is form a bond.

There are two types of bonds: associative (positive link between objects); dissociative (negative link between objects). The simplest assertion is merely a descriptive statement such as 'Pastors are good'. A more complex situation is that in which a source makes an assertion about a concept, e.g. 'Students have negative attitudes towards social issues'. These assertions may be either associative (favour, are) or dissociative (opposes, are not) (Osgood, & Tannenbaum, 1955).

Haddock (2004), analysing this theory posited that, congruity exists when our evaluation of (attitude toward) two objects that are associatively bonded are identical in magnitude and direction. A student likes Mathematics, and likes the teachers (Associative Bond). Congruity also exists when our evaluation of (attitude toward) two objects that are dissociatively bonded are identical in magnitude and opposite in direction. We like the Democratic Party, and we dislike Multinational Companies and we learn that the Democratic Party rejects Multinational Companies (Dissociative Bond). When there is incongruity people

feel the effects and are motivated to change their attitudes to make them congruent. Both attitudes change. The weaker attitude changes more, the stronger attitude changes less. Attitudes do not change direction (Ajzen, 2005).

Dissonance Theory

The dissonance theory, also known as the cognitive dissonance theory was proposed by Leon Festinger, and has generated more research and controversy than any other cognitive consistency theory because of its ability to make non-obvious predictions. Cognitive dissonance refers to a situation involving conflicting attitudes, beliefs or behaviours. This produces a feeling of discomfort leading to an alteration in one of the attitudes, beliefs or behaviours to reduce the discomfort and restore balance etc. Example, people smoke (behaviour) while they know that smoking causes cancer (cognition) (Forgas, Cooper, & Crano, 2010).

Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance begins with a consideration of the relations between two cognitive elements. These elements refers to "...the things a person knows about himself, about his behaviour, and about his surroundings" (p. 9). He gives the following examples; "I know I smoke," "I know smoking causes cancer," "I know I enjoy smoking" and "I know that George is my brother". According to Festinger, we hold much cognition about the world and ourselves; when they clash, a discrepancy is evoked, resulting in a state of tension known as cognitive dissonance. As the experience of dissonance is unpleasant, we are motivated to reduce or eliminate it, and achieve consonance (Mahaffy, 1996).

Festinger (1957) described four basic situations that give rise to cognitive dissonance: decision-making, forced compliance, voluntary and involuntary exposure to dissonant information, and disagreement with other persons. For example, when a person makes a choice between two or more alternatives, dissonance is assumed to exist. This is, his knowledge that the un-chosen alternatives have favourable aspects and his knowledge that the chosen alternatives have unfavourable aspects are both dissonant with his knowledge of his choice. The simple act of decision making creates dissonance, too. The magnitude of the dissonance is related to the importance of the decision and the attractiveness of both the chosen and the unchosen alternatives (O'Keefe, 1990).

In relation to the present study, a subject like Religious and moral education, that touches on social, moral and religious issues with its many learner choices, provide a great deal of decision making that may influence learner's attitudes in either a positive or negative direction, depending on the success and attractiveness of the decisions.

One of the major criticisms of consistency theories is that there are too many of them. Since they all work from the similar theme of an individual's trying to maintain consistency, it has been suggested that the area would be stronger if the various sub theories were consolidated. Today, interest in dissonance theory specifically, and consistency theories generally, have waned considerably in social psychology (Eagly, & Chaiken, 1995). This loss of interest is, in part, due to the growth of understanding about the conditions and processes responsible for the phenomena dissonance theorists investigated.

Other Theories Emerging

Apart from the two main schools of thought forming the origins of contemporary attitude formation theories, it has been discovered that two other theories have emerged from the discussions of the previous theories. These theories are the Functional theories and the Social judgment theories. The ensuing paragraphs would take a brief look at these theories and contextualise them to suit the present study.

The Functional Theory of Attitude Development

The functional theory of attitude development and change is attributed to Katz (1960). Katz (1960) proposed a functionalist theory of attitudes. He holds the view that attitudes are determined by the functions they serve for us. People hold given attitudes because these attitudes help them achieve their basic goals. That is, what functions do attitudes serve? Understanding the purposes of attitudes is the identifying characteristic of functional theories. Attitudes serve different functions for different individuals or for the same individual in different settings. The reasons for attitude changes are individualized and related to personal functions of attitudes (Solomon, 2009).

According to Shaughnessy (2010), Katz (1960) identified four main psychological functions that attitude serve:

1. Instrumental: individuals develop favourable attitudes towards things that aid or reward them. People want to maximize rewards and minimize penalties. Katz (1960) says we develop attitudes that help us meet this goal. We favour concepts, issues and object that will

advance our wellbeing - if we are in business, we favour the party that will keep our taxes low, if unemployed we favour one that will increase social welfare benefits. We are more likely to change our attitudes if doing so allows us to fulfil our goals or avoid undesirable consequences.

2. Knowledge: According to Katz, an individual seeks knowledge to give meaning to what would otherwise be a chaotic and unorganized universe. Attitudes provide meaningful, structured environment. In life we seek some degree of order, clarity, and stability in our personal frame of reference. Attitudes help supply us with standards of evaluation. Via such attitudes as stereotypes, we can bring order and clarity to the complexities of human life.
3. Value-expressive: These attitudes have the function of giving positive expression to central values and to the type of person an individual conceives himself to be. A man, for instance, may think of himself as an internationalist. It expresses basic values and reinforces self-image. For instance, if you view yourself as a Catholic, you can reinforce that image by adopting Catholic beliefs and values. If you see or portray yourself as an academic, then you therefore cultivate an attitude that indicates such a core value.
4. Ego-defensive: This is where attitudes proceed from within the person, and the objects and situation to which they are attached are merely convenient outlets for their expression. Katz gives the

example of an individual who projects hostility to a minority in order to protect himself from feelings of inferiority. Some attitudes serve to protect us from acknowledging basic truths about ourselves or the harsh realities of life. They serve as defence mechanisms. Those with feelings of inferiority may develop attitude of superiority.

Katz's (1960) functionalist theory also offers an explanation as to why attitudes change. According his theory, an attitude changes when it no longer serves its function and the individual feels blocked or frustrated. That is, attitude change is achieved, not so much by changing a person's information or perception about an object, but rather by changing the person's underlying motivational and personality needs (Perner, 2010). This means that, students would develop certain attitudes in the classroom based on the functions they serve for them. Example, a student will develop positive attitude towards moral issues in school probably because it makes him/her feel like a good boy/girl. The attitudes that students have towards social, moral and religious issues are no exception in this case.

These attitudes are formed or developed based on the functions they serve, either instrumental, knowledge, value-expressive or Ego-defensive. It is very interesting to note that this theory, in the light of the earlier theories, reduces the development of attitude to the functions they serve. I do agree to this because there is nothing that human does that, S/he doesn't think about its benefits to her/him.

Social Judgment Theory of Attitude Development

The social judgement theory was first developed by Muzafer Sherif, with significant input from Carl I. Hovland and Carolyn W. Sherif (Ferguson, 2004). Rooted in judgment theory, which is concerned with the discrimination and categorization of stimuli, it attempts to explain how attitudes are expressed, judged, and modified (Darity, 2008). The theory details how attitudes are cognitively represented, the psychological processes involved in assessing persuasive communications, and the conditions under which communicated attitudes are either accepted or rejected. It offers a common sense plan for inducing attitude change in the real world (Wood, 2000).

According to Sherif, Sherif, and Nebergall (1965), an individual's initial attitude serves as an anchor for the judgment of related attitude communications. Opinions are evaluated against this point of reference and are placed on an attitudinal continuum. Opinions that most characterized the individual's own opinion are in the latitude of acceptance. Those opinions found most objectionable are placed in the latitude of rejection. The latitude of non-commitment consists of those opinions that are neither accepted nor rejected.

Castillo (2010) also has posited that, the Social judgment theory claims that there are two internal elements present within each person that shapes how messages of persuasion are perceived. The first element is our anchor points or attitudes are internal references with which we compare the information that we process. These anchor points are always present and influence decision making. Characteristics of attitudes are:

1. Stronger attitudes have more influence on the decision to accept or reject information.
2. Attitudes can be positive or negative and not all attitudes have equal weight, for example, social views are stronger attitudes than moral views
3. Attitudes are unique to each person and can vary greatly making them difficult to predict.
4. Behaviour does not always reflect attitude.

The second element at play in social judgment theory, according to Castillo (2010), is ego involvement. In decision making, the more personal investment that we have to an issue, the more ego involved we become. It is based on deeply held beliefs that are central to who we are such as politics, religion, and relationships. Individuals with increased ego involvement are far less willing to accept a message.

When combined, attitudes and ego involvement help shape our affiliation with others as we seek to associate with like-minded individuals. Users of Apple products are an example of a social assembly of similarly minded individuals. Due to this sense of belonging they are far less likely to accept an idea that goes against the accepted attitudes of the group.

When the Android technology was introduced a competitor of the iPhone, Apple fans were quick to dismiss and criticize its adoption. People tend to group attitudes and beliefs about particular issues, resulting in the formation of individual attitudes.

Latitudes are clusters of attitudes that determine how we will receive a message based on levels of commitment or sacrifice.

1. Latitude of Acceptance – options that are most likely to be welcomed or accepted.
2. Latitude of Rejection – options that are most contrasting with our attitudes and most likely to be rejected.
3. Latitude of Non-commitment – options that we have neutral or no feelings toward.

Sherif and Hayland (1961) also identified two key behaviours to social judgment theory that occur mostly in more ego involved individuals: assimilation and contrast. He offers that assimilation occurs when an idea is similar to a person's current attitudes and therefore the information is manipulated into being more alike than it may be actually. Conversely, contrast occurs when an idea is present that is not similar to theirs and therefore distorted into seeming that there is a greater discrepancy present.

Relating issues in this theory to the classroom and the present study, two main issues emerge. First, students or learners in the school may develop an attitude towards a subject or issue based on the judgment their initial attitude would give about the new information or the environment. That is to say that, students' attitude towards social, moral and religious issues are developed based on what their initial attitude about these issues tell them. Therefore it means that certain factors affect the attitudes of students and individuals as a whole.

The second issue that crops up is, students or learners develop attitudes with their ego involved. That is, students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues are developed based on their ego. This relates to Katz's (1960) functional theory when he said one of the reasons why individuals form attitude is to defend their ego.

Put together, all the theories of attitude formation and development reveal two main things: attitudes are learned and they are cognitive. Individuals and for that matter, students develop attitudes through learning. It is again a fact that attitude development relates to the mind as we saw earlier from the definitions of the concept. Already this present study has discussed theories that hinted on the fact that attitudes are developed only and only if they are functional as well as if they serve our ego.

One thing that is clear through the theories, which other researchers (DeRose, 1984; Kelley, & Evans, 1995; Kelley, 2001; Silva, & Schensul, 2003) agree, is the fact that attitudes are influenced by cardinal factors. In the ensuing paragraphs, there would be a look at these cardinal factors and then a conceptualisation of the present study in the light of these factors.

Cardinal Factors that Influence Attitude

Straight down from the emerging definitions of attitude, through the theories of attitude development and change, one cannot help it but want to find out what influences attitude. It must be said that inherent in the theories of attitude development and changes are certain factors that aid in attitude development.

There are three identified factors: Target characteristics, Sources characteristics and Message characteristics (Whitley, 2010).

Target characteristics are the characteristics of the individual who develops the attitude towards issues, objects or other persons. The characteristics of the individual in terms of intelligence, gender, self-esteem as well as mind frame aids the development of their attitude (Rhodes, & Woods, 1992).

In the context of this present study, I relate that students' attitude towards social, moral and religious issues are influenced by their characteristics which include gender, intelligence level, age, ethnicity, self-esteem, religious affiliation, economic state of homes, and state of mind (Smith, 2003; Arndt, & Bruin, 2006; Lehman, & Thornwall 2011; Awopetu, & Fasanmi, 2011).

Source characteristics talks about the source of information the individual receives. Issues here include expertise, trustworthiness and interpersonal attraction. The credibility of perceived information that helps in developing or changing attitude has been found to be a key variable in attitude formation.

Hayland and Weiss (1951) introduced the term sleeper effect. This is where the effect of telling people that a message came from a credible source disappeared after several weeks. For them, perceived wisdom is that if people are informed of the source of a message before hearing it, there is less likelihood of a sleeper effect than if they are told a message and then told its source.

In relating this to the present study about students' attitude towards social, moral and religious issue, I argue that in the school system variables under source characteristics includes the teacher, the subjects studied, peer group influence, the

school environment as well as the type of school. These are the characteristics of the source of the information and knowledge on social, moral and religious issues for the students in the school and they influence their attitudes (Kasomo, 2011; Comegys, 2010; Mukama, 2010).

Lastly, Message characteristics talks about the nature of the information and knowledge received. The nature of the message plays a role in attitude formation. Sometimes presenting issues from sides of a story is useful to help the development and change of attitudes (Petty, & Cacioppo, 1984). Simply put, the number of critical and analytical arguments presented in a persuasive message will influence attitude formation and change, such that a greater number of arguments will produce greater attitude formation and change.

In the classroom level, in relation to message characteristics, the teacher and the subject studied plays an important role in attitude formation and change. How teachers present information and knowledge influences attitude. Related to this present study, it would be argued that the attitudes that students have towards social, moral and religious issues are influenced by teacher's characteristics and the nature of the subjects studied (Kasomo, 2011; Comegys, 2010).

Put together, the variables that have been found to have an influence on students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues from the literature are numerous. They include; gender, intelligence level, age, ethnicity, self esteem, religious affiliation, economic state of homes, state of mind, the teacher, the subjects studied, peer group, school environment as well as type of school. However arguments in the literature reveal that some of these factors are more

influential than others depending on the context. In this present study, some of the factors that have much influence on students' attitude towards social, moral and religious issues have been identified. These are their gender, type of school (mission or non-mission), religious affiliation, subjects studied (religion and ethics related), school environment (rural or urban), age and ethnicity.

Progressing from the above, it is important to state that the main focus of this present study is to find out the extent to which these factors influence students' attitudes, if not to find out if they do at all. With this in my, I will like to indicate how this present study is conceptualised.

The Conceptual Framework

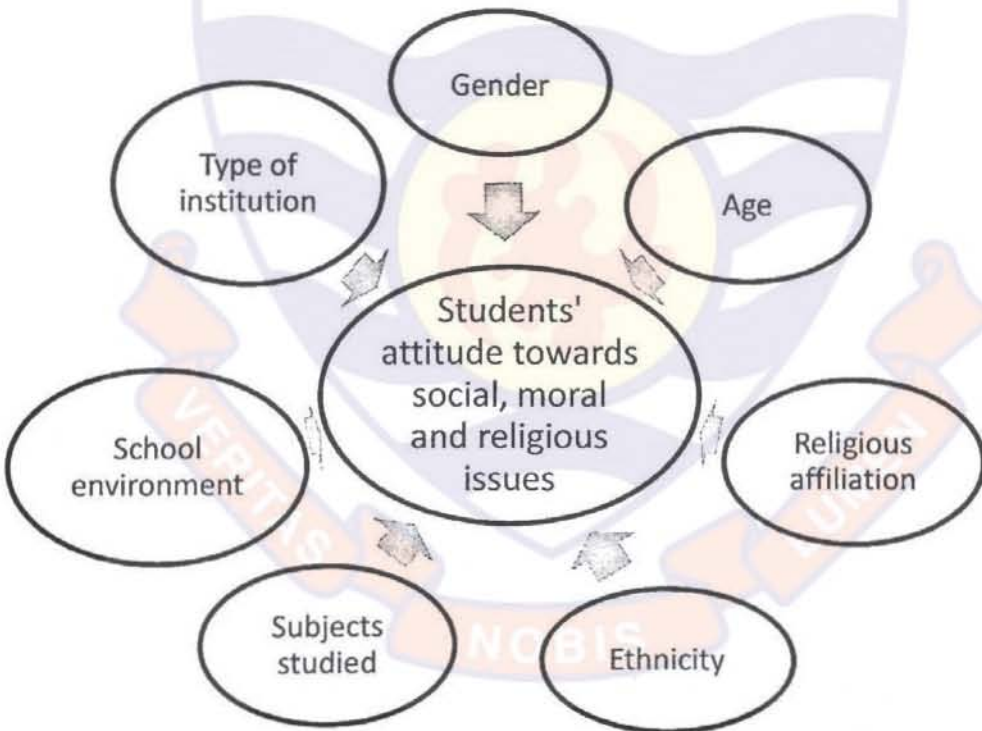


Figure 2: Factors that influence students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues

Source: Author's construct, 2014

The Concept of Religious and Moral Education

Religious and moral education as a concept can be discussed under two main umbrellas. Looking at the concept, one is able to bring out Religious Education and Moral Education. There have been attempts to put the two together, based on the hypothesis that religious adherence or strict adherence to religious doctrines may lead to high morality; in other words religiosity and morality are bed fellows. This view is given emphasis when Straughan (1992, p. 45), says that, “one cannot talk about morality without mentioning religion”. I however believe that there are morally upright people who are not religious, but the question one may ask is, “Is there a non-religious being”? An attempt would be made from here to look into detail what the two concepts (religious education and moral education) consist of.

Religious Education

Religious education would be looked at first by trying to bring out some of the attempts made to define *religion*. Smart (1969, p.11), explains that, “throughout history and beyond in the dark recesses of men’s earliest cultures, religion has been a vital and pervasive feature of human life”. This means that religion has been part of man since the beginning of the world: religion cannot be separated from man. The Encarta World English Dictionary defines religion by looking at it from five perspectives: beliefs and worship; a particular system; personal beliefs or values; obsession; and a monk or nuns life. All five perspectives relate to the idea of religion but the first three serves the purpose of the present study. Religion basically thrives around beliefs and worship. All

religions in the world consist of various beliefs which are mostly the undergirding spirit for their various doctrines and worship.

Beliefs form a very important part of every religion in that what the adherents do is based on their beliefs. Worship is also an integral component of every religion since the act of worship runs through all religions in the world. A careful look at my views brings out the fact that I use religion to mean a particular system or sect. Religion can be used to describe a particular sect with beliefs, doctrines and also the act of worship. In Ghana for instance, the three main religions are Christianity, Islam and the African traditional religion. People also describe their personal beliefs and values as religion since they may be members of a particular sect.

Otto (1996) produced a battery of Latin terms that suggest aesthetic dimensions in religion. He wrote of human confrontation with the “numinous,” which is “wholly other” or outside normal experience and which is indescribable, terrifying, fascinating, characterized by dread and awe. The experience is of a *mysterium tremendum et fascinosum*, an “awe-filled and fascinating mystery.” He wrote of the *numen tremendum*, which refers to the sense of the uncanny or that which renders a person “awestruck.” All of these feeling responses he associated with religion. He looked at the term with a description of the experience the religious adherent goes through. He introduces a phrase “wholly other” which grants me the permission to mention the ultimate being.

The ultimate being or ultimate reality is a word used to describe who all religious worships are directed to: in other words God. He explains further by

saying that, because man is lesser, any encounter with the ultimate reality brings about some fear in man. In the same vein, Tillich (1958, p.124) wrote of religion in terms of ultimate concern within which he would include secularism “for secularism is never without ultimate concern.” Wilson, Williams, and Sugarman (1997), quote Karl Marx when they say that religion is the opium of the masses. Pressing this point further, they explain this description as religion making people do things they do not carefully think about. This, it is argued that, when people become adherents of a particular religion, every belief and doctrine is followed. Any way one would want to look at the term suits particular occasions.

From the above, it becomes clear that, the term religion defies a definition and the more scholars try to arrive at a definition, the more complicated the issue becomes. This is because scholars from various fields in the humanities define the term to suit their various dispositions and orientations. The philosopher, sociologist, historian, scientist and the educationist, all define the term to suit their purpose at any giving time. Putting the above definitions together, I simply see religion to be the relationship that exists between the ultimate reality and man: the relationship between God and man.

Religious education can simply be said to be the inculcation of religious beliefs and practices into members of the religion. The nomenclature changes from society to society and from country to country. In secular usage, religious education is the teaching of a particular religion (although in England the term religious instruction would refer to the teaching of a particular religion, with religious education referring to teaching about religions in general) and its varied

aspects - its beliefs, doctrines, rituals, customs, rites, and personal roles. In Western and secular culture, religious education implies a type of education which is largely separate from academia, and which regards religious belief as a fundamental tenet and operating modality, as well as a prerequisite condition of attendance (Burns, 2007).

In the United States of America, religious education is more or less a supplementary programme. This is by Sunday schools, Hebrew schools, Catechism etc. These schools teach children religious practices, worship and beliefs after school hours. Parents who however feel that this is not enough enrol their wards in schools attached to religious bodies called parochial schools. In Canada, religious education has a varying status: on one hand, publicly funded Catholic education is mandated by various sections of the Constitution Act, 1867 and with a growing level of multiculturalism, particularly in Ontario, debate has emerged as to whether publicly funded religious education for one group is permissible.

This debate has led to some sections of the community going for religious education by public schools and others going otherwise. In the United Kingdom, religious education by the Catholic Church and the Jewish schools has enjoyed tremendous support from the government. There is no agreed curriculum for religious education. This is the trend of the support and otherwise that religious education enjoys in various countries across the globe; in some countries it is well instituted while in others it lacks support (Burns, 2007).

The views of people about religious education are somehow acceptable. This is because I think that in a country where there is proliferation of religions, the government should not fund religious education at the expense of other religious sects. But the debate about this over the years makes me want to ask if man is a religious being by birth? Is every human religious? The best solution is to have a curriculum which encompasses all the religions in the country so as to create a balance if government support is really needed. This is why in the case of Ghana, the Curriculum for Religious and moral education consists of all the three notable religions. This has one way or the other taken care of the troubles, making the programme enjoy government support.

Again the question is, are the three the only religions in Ghana? Definitely not; there are smaller religions in the country as well. Examples of these are Buddhism, Hinduism and Krishna. If these people are to protest, I don't think the programme would be as it is. Even with this the programme is having problems; people are questioning its ability to achieve its aims. Other people also feel there is no need for religious education. Does this answer my question? Although views vary, religious education does teach people about the practices, worship, values and beliefs of religions.

Moral Education

The concept of moral education is slightly broad. It encompasses morality as well as the moral development of the child. With regards to the moral development of the child, psychologist like Jean Piaget, Sigmund Freud and Lawrence Kohlberg have done enormous work bringing out the developmental

stages of the child. In moral education the theories of these psychologists become the undergirding principles for inculcating the appropriate morals into the child at the appropriate time, and at the same time the selection of appropriate methodology for teaching the learner.

Morals are evaluated through logic, experience and proper judgment, whether this originates from culture, philosophy, religion, society or individual conscience. In normative and universal sense morality refers to an ideal code of conduct, one which would be espoused in preference to alternatives by all rational people, under specified conditions. To deny 'morality' in this sense is a position known as moral scepticism (Williams, & Williams, 1970). Morality is about what is wrong and right, what is good and bad. It thrives on the distinguishing of the two concepts.

The universality of morals and morality codes has also been on the debate platform for some years now. Individuals, communities and countries differ in their understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Values differ from region to region in Ghana. What the inhabitants in the Northern Region would value may not be valued in, let us say, the Central Region and vice versa. The other side of the coin is the fact that certain values and moral codes are recognised universally. For instance, killing is accepted as a bad behaviour universally-excluding mercy killing and religious inclined killing.

The need for a morally upright society has increased the demand for a comprehensive programme. In the United States, moral education has always been an issue in schools, although the methodology and the content have changed

over the past years. Especially after World War II, moral education was largely impacted on by social and cultural change, and it also had a huge influence on the society. Today, moral education has become one of the biggest concerns of the public since our society is facing an increasing amount of juvenile crime. According to the twenty seventh annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools, the American public has pointed out to "lack of discipline" as what it sees as the biggest problem for local public schools (Elam, & Rose, 1995).

Other countries like Germany, United Kingdom, Canada and Japan have had their fair share of moral education. Sometimes Japanese moral education is viewed as the counterpart of the one in the United States in terms of the perception of values. Japanese education aims to preserve social values and transmit them to the next generation, while American schools try to be neutral in terms of values. Often the philosophical foundation of Japanese education is introduced to other countries with some distortion due to the unpleasant period in the modern history and cultural misunderstandings. However, the Japanese moral education which is currently being implemented, can give meaningful suggestions to American education facing moral confusion (Klaus, 1990).

In Ghana, morality is held up high. The Ghanaian traditions and values seek to promote a high moral society. There are certain actions and words that are not encouraged to be spoken in public. In the same way the child is supposed to respect the elderly no matter what happens. The need to guard these values in the Ghanaian society has been the premise for the introduction of programmes like

cultural studies and now religious and moral education. These programmes aim at inculcating the values of the Ghanaian tradition *vis á vis* the religious doctrines into the child.

Inculcating good morals into the child means making the child aware of what is wrong and right so that the child is able to choose what is right: moral education. In education, the child is supposed to be made knowledgeable and left to decide (anonymity). This idea is echoed by Wilson, Williams, and Sugarman (1997, p.14) when they said that, "Moral principles and actions are things which the individual can only believe and do for himself. He can be helped but not forced". But, how does the child choose the 'path of righteousness'? There have been arguments as to whether the child is a moral being from birth or not. This argument is quenched when Bull (1989, p.15) explains that, "the child is not born with a built-in moral conscience. But he is born with those natural, biologically purposive capacities that make him potentially a moral being".

Although the moral educator would want the child to pick good morals, the child decides. This then calls for the appropriate skills from the educator to know the right method appropriate for the various stages of the child's development. This is because Durkheim (in Wilson, 1990, p.154) says, "[T]he child must come to feel himself that there is in a rule which determines that he should abide by it willingly. In other words, he must sense the moral authority in the rule, which renders it worthy of respect". This then calls for a look at some of the moral development theories propounded by psychologists I mentioned earlier.

Moral education is becoming an increasingly popular topic in the fields of psychology and education. There have been increasing attempts to link moral education to moral development which introduces psychology. This has led many psychologists to bring theories of child development and also link them to the moral development of the child, which is now forming the basis for moral education.

Content of RME Curriculum for Senior High Schools

It has been established that the content of the Religious and moral education subject is already in existence in the lives of students. This is evident in their relationship with fellow human beings and with supernatural forces beyond the physical world. The subject seeks to help the development and growth of learners in the Ghanaian society in order for them to acquire the needed competences and skills in dealing with social, moral and religious issues. And this has been the responsibility of the school to provide the type of education which would develop the students' moral, social and religious principles, attitudes and values that will help them make good choices and decision in their adulthood. The rationale for teaching the subjects is to reinforce the informal moral education that children undergo in their various homes

The aims for the teaching of RME are to help learners; to develop an awareness of the creator and the purpose of their existence, to develop understanding and tolerance of other people's faith, to help students, understand the differences between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, thereby making the right decision in situations and becoming good citizens as well; through the

acquisition of socio-cultural values inherent in the mainline religions in Ghana and thus, help in facing moral issues embodied in today's changing world (RME syllabus for senior high school, 2009).

The religious and moral issues the subject looks at can also be elaborated to include social issues. The main issues found in the Religious and moral education syllabus for both JHS and SHS include God's creation and his attributes, money and leisure and moral teachings and commitment, just to mention a few. It must then be studied to achieve knowledge and understanding; application of the acquired knowledge to real life issues and developing attitudes, values and processing skills in related topics.

The subject is planned to make use of variety of teaching strategies including debates, role play, discussion and brainstorming. This would help the student to be able to recall, identify, describe, summarise, predict, theorize, distinguish, organize, judge, listen, conform, propose and modify topics which would be taught, learnt and assessed. The main content of the syllabus would be looked at in the ensuing paragraphs, illuminating the religious, social and moral issues embedded in the topics.

Religious Issues

In the first year of both junior and senior high school, students are introduced to the topic 'God and Creation'. This topic exposes students to some of the mythological and conceptual perspectives of who God is. It again exposes the students to doctrinal and religious perspectives on why things were created by God and the usefulness of the things created. The subject through this topic,

makes students aware of the usefulness of animals, plants and heavenly bodies. Again, students are made aware of the importance of these creations and why they are supposed to develop the attitude of the need to maintain and protect the natural environment.

Students are to be made aware of the fact that God created all things to reflect his beautiful handiworks, nature, and application of the nature and for human beings to have dominion over all creatures and serve God as well. The topic also seeks to establish the creative and beautiful nature of God. The second section of unit three in the syllabus introduces students to both religious and social issues.

Two topics that depict both religious and social issues are religious home and neighbourhood which look at the life patterns of the three main religions in Ghana (Christianity, Islam, and Traditional African religion) and how individuals from these homes can live a peaceful co-existence life which is the social aspect of the topic. Religious practices from the perspectives and doctrines of the three main religions (Christianity, Islam, and Traditional African religion) in Ghana are also looked at in terms of the times and the way the activities are performed.

These practices include prayer, fasting, worship, religious festivals, hajj and the pouring of libation. The various times and activities involved in these practices are looked at from the perspectives of Christians, Muslims and the African traditional religious members, respectively. After going through the main doctrines behind the various activities, students are made to discuss the main

tenets of the various practices in the three main religions and also discuss the moral significance of these practices.

In the second year, the syllabus is structured to introduce students to another religious issue; patriarchs/prophets/caliphs and traditional religious leaders. This topic exposes students to the various religious leaders in the three main religions in Ghana. Students are also helped to acquire knowledge of the aforementioned religious leaders and the associated terminologies. The topic looks at the activities of these religious leaders as well as the exemplary lives they lived. They therefore serve as role models for students.

Social Issues

The first topic in the first year section of the syllabus that depicts a social issue is the 'Family system'. Students are exposed to the main issues and tenets of the family system in Ghana from the perspectives of the three main religions. The topic looks at the two main family systems: that is, the nuclear and extended. Students are made to learn the merits and demerits, role of the members, ways of promoting members' good relationship and the importance of achieving healthy relationship among the members.

The second social issue that students are exposed to could be established under the topic 'work'. The Religious and moral education syllabus defines work as anything which a person does as an occupation, especially in order to earn money. Students acquire competences and skills through teaching and learning to know some of the basic importance of work and the reasons for them to work,

developing the spirit of hard work and the importance of hard work to the state, school and religion.

Another topic in the syllabus that can be seen from the perspective of a social issue is 'Money'. Students are exposed specifically to competences and skills to help them acquire basic knowledge on the usefulness and a successful and wise use of money. The appropriate ways of handling money, honest ways of earning money, importance of contributing money into the church and reasons for not stealing, cheating and practicing bribery and corruption are all embedded in the topic for the consumption of students. It is believed that these lessons would help students acquire competencies and skill in order to develop positive attitudes towards money and its acquisition as well as develop the attitude of living self-reliant lives.

Another topic that depicts a social issue is 'Time and Leisure'. This topic exposes students to the proper use of time as well as establish the clear differences between leisure and idleness. The effect of idleness is condemned as students are encouraged to adopt the attitude of making use of their leisure periods to develop plans for life.

'Religious festivals', is another topic in the syllabus for teaching RME at the junior high schools. It exposes students to the various festivals in the three main religions in Ghana. The topic gives students knowledge about when and how the various religious festivals are celebrated. The main tenets and reasons behind the celebration of these festivals as well as the need for students to

participate in these festivals are touched on. Finally, the lesson draws moral values students can incur from the issues.

Again, there is Rites of passage. The topic exposes students to rituals that are performed for an individual at every stage of life: birth; adulthood (puberty); marriage; and death. These rituals are performed to mark the transition of the individual through the stages of life cycle. They cover a period of birth to death. The first aspect of the rites is naming ceremony. The process, in the various religions is taught, including the importance of the ceremony. The puberty subtopic looks at the various physical changes that occur in boys and girls, including the emotional changes.

The various puberty rites in the Ghanaian societies as well as the various religions are made known to students as well as the significance of the practice. Unit three talks about the marriage rites in the three main religions; it affirms the importance of marriage, how to sustain marriages, the benefits individuals can derive when they sustain their marriage. The last aspect of the rites of passage talks about death rites in the mainline religions in Ghana. It explains the various process in the three religions and the significance of the rites.

The third section in the third year looks at religious youth organization. These organizations include boys' and girls' brigade, Muslim youth organization, Youth Asafo companies and many more. The aims and objectives of the youth organizations are studied including the moral teachings of the clubs and the need to join such youth organizations.

Moral Issues

In section two of year one according to the religious and moral education syllabus, the first moral issue could be established under the topic 'obedience' (RME syllabus or Senior high school, 2009). Based on the objective and the teachers activities stipulated for this topic, religious issues are covered. However, students are to acquire knowledge of the important reasons to obey God, rules and regulation, authority and parents.

The first topic on moral issues in the syllabus is Religious songs. It introduces students to some of the religious songs and their moral implications. It differentiates between religious songs and non-religious songs and identifies the moral significance in the songs and how they can be applied in the daily lives of the student. Teachers are encouraged to use the discussion method of teaching to help students acquire the competences and change in behaviour expected.

Furthermore, topics like 'Manners, greeting, dressing, comportment and courtesy' are all in the second section of the Religious and moral education syllabus that can be grouped under moral issues. These topics expose students to the way individuals are expected to behave in the Ghanaian society. They equip the student with knowledge on how to relate to the elderly in society in all forms of association with them. In so doing, students are exposed to how to relate to people in authority as well. It seeks to bring together cultural expectation of the Ghanaian society and how students should be dressing, greeting, control their temper and give a helping hand to the needy, just to mention a few.

Again, the second aspect of the topic 'religious personalities' outlines the teachings of the leaders of the three main religions. The lives of Jesus Christ, Prophet Mohammed and Egya Osofo Ahor, Okomfo Anokye just to mention a few are among the Christian, Islamic and African traditional religious leaders outlined, respectively. Students are then led to draw moral lessons from the lives of these individuals and how to apply such moral values from the leaders into people or students' lives.

Also, a section of the second year syllabus has the topic, 'leading a chaste life'. Chastity is explained as a way of life in which there is absence of sexual indulgence, especially for religious reasons. Students are made aware of what it means to live a chaste life. The topic exposes students to the importance of leading a chaste life, as well as ways of leading such a life. There is the next subtopic, immorality. It condemns sexual behaviours deemed not right and other social behaviours that are termed to be sinful. It also looked at the effect of such behaviours or immorality on students.

Section one of the third year syllabus for teaching Religious and moral education also establishes a topic concerned with moral issues. The subtopic, moral teachings look at teachings in the three mainline religions. It looks at the Ten Commandments; teachings in the Holy Quran and traditional wise sayings of the Christian, Islamic and African traditional religions, respectively. It delves into the ways students would be assisted in applying those moral teaching in their individual lives. The next unit talks about commitment. It is the process of devoting oneself to something worthwhile. Commitment to God, the family and

society are what the topic strives on. It also looks at ways students can practically apply commitment in their day to day activities.

Section two, unit one of the religious and moral education syllabus for junior high school year three, again, talks about another moral issue; Good deeds and rewards. This moral issue topic talks about acts that are considered to be good deeds, types of rewards such as praise, handshake, awards just to mention a few. It talks about the need to show appreciation and some of the moral significance for performing good deeds. Unit two talks about bad deeds and punishments; just like the earlier topic, it also looks at acts deemed bad and some of the types of punishment. It describes activities that are punishable and those that need to be avoided, including ways people can accept responsibilities for their bad deeds. The next sub topic talks about repentance. It establishes the stages involved in repentances and the importance of repentance.

The last section of the religious and moral education syllabus is on the topic 'Decency'. This is the acceptable and commendable behaviour in a given society. It gives students knowledge on the significance of decency, behaviours that are deemed to be decent and the need to lead a decent life. Unit two which also talks about both moral and social issues is on substance abuse. Students are exposed to the types of substances that can be abused, the causes of the substance abuse and its effect, the need to avoid them, and defensive skills one can demonstrate to be protected from substance abuse.

Empirical Review

Various qualitative and quantitative studies have been conducted in the field of human psychology and human behaviour. A lot have focused on attitudes of individuals. Attitudes of individuals are measured to be either negative or positive towards other people, elements, objects, concepts and information. This section of the literature review focuses on previous studies conducted on the attitude of students in general, towards social, moral and religious issues. Again, various studies that have been conducted on variables or factors that influence these attitudes will also be looked at in this section of the review. It is important to note that while much of the studies on students' attitudes have been directed towards many issues, just a few of them focus on their attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues.

Attitudes of Students' Towards Social Issues.

Studies on students' attitudes towards social issues are scarce. Social issues refer to issues that concern life and how to live in a society. In the context of this study, social issues include marriage, divorce, homosexuality, teenage pregnancy, family, work and money, humility, peace and harmony etc.

A study by Lehman, and Thornwall (2011) examined college students' attitudes towards homosexuality. Although the purpose of the study was to identify if there are gender differences determining what influences or shape their attitudes towards homosexuality, it also sought to find out their general attitudes towards homosexuality first. In conducting this study, they used 128 male and female students. Findings from their study indicated that the participants in the

study had positive attitudes towards homosexuality and issues related to it. They speculated that students' positive attitudes towards homosexuality may be due to the sensitization programmes and education on the negative effects of homosexuality. It was concluded in their study that Midwestern University students had positive attitudes towards homosexuality because of the mass education that have been carried out by religious groups on the negative effects of homosexuality.

A similar study on students' attitudes by Mukama (2010) was to find out the relationship between peer group influence, alcohol consumption, and students' attitudes towards school. For the purpose of this present study, schooling or education is seen as a social issue. Specifically, he wanted to establish the relationship between peer group influence and secondary school students' attitudes towards school, to establish the relationship between peer group influence and alcohol consumption and to find out the relationship between alcohol consumption and secondary school students' attitudes towards school. The study adopted a correlational research design. Questionnaires to measure peer group influence, alcohol consumption, and students' attitudes towards school were administered to 200 senior four students from four government-aided secondary schools in Mbarara District, Kampala and they were selected using simple random sampling technique. Spearman's rank order correlation was used to test.

Findings from the study indicated that students had positive attitudes towards schooling and education. So for education as a social issue, the students

showed positive attitudes towards it. Again, the findings from the study indicated that:

1. There was no significant relationship between peer group influence and students' attitudes towards school.
2. There was no significant relationship between peer group influence and alcohol consumption.
3. There was a positive significant relationship between alcohol consumption and students' attitudes towards school.

Also, Borne (2011) conducted a study to examine the interrelationships among religiosity, feminist ideology and attitudes toward teenage pregnancy prevention. In this interest of this study, teenage pregnancy is seen as a social issue. Although the researcher sought to see how religion and feminist ideologies affect attitudes towards teenage pregnancy, it also sought to find the attitudes of students towards the issue. The study sampled a population that has not been tested in previous literature, Masters of Social Work (MSW) students, who are different from previous samples due to their overall education level, and possibly, previous experiences they may have had with pregnant or parenting teens and at-risk youth. A self-report survey instrument was used to collect data from the students.

Findings from this study among other things indicated that students had negative attitudes towards teenage pregnancy as a social issue. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement regarding the best type of sex education for preventing teen pregnancy and most of them indicated that absolute abstinence was the best prevention. It was therefore concluded that the participants were not in favour of teenage pregnancy and teenage sex.

In another empirical study related to social issues, Paruk, Mohamed, Patel, and Ramgoon (2006) wanted to find out the attitude of students towards people living with HIV/Aids. The interest of the present study hinges on the attitudes of students towards people living with HIV because it is a social issue. The study focused on the influence of religiosity on the attitude of students towards HIV/Aids victims. The study surveyed these variables in a sample of South African Muslim university students using the Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) and an attitude to people with HIV scale.

The sample comprised 90 male and female undergraduate and postgraduate Muslim students. Participation in the research was purely voluntary and ethical issues around such concerns as consent, confidentiality, and anonymity were discussed and guaranteed. Consent forms were presented for signature. The questionnaires were handed out to individual participants or groups of participants (where possible) for completion, and collected once completed.

The findings from their study indicated that despite inconsistent and confusing messages from religious and political leaders, this sample of South African Muslim students, with their high levels of religiosity, displayed an unexpectedly tolerant attitude toward people with HIV. The students had very high positive attitudes to people with HIV. They speculated that this finding may be due to the intensive campaign and education on the need for all religions to embrace people living with HIV. They again thought that all religions have a soft spot for humanity and that may have influenced the responses of the participants.

Karnik, Kamel, and Harper (2000) also conducted a survey to find out the attitudes of college students towards end-of-life issues in State University of New York at Stony Brook School of Medicine. This study was purposed to find out how students see issues of end-of-life and how they give care to the aged. The issues of life are social issues, therefore their study relates to the present study and review of students' attitude towards social issues. Although they were interested in students' attitudes towards end-of-life issues, they also focused on variables like ethnicity of students and their religious affiliation and how they influence their attitude.

Their study was a cross-sectional study that surveyed the attitudes of undergraduate students toward end-of-life care using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire started by an introductory paragraph followed by questions on whether the respondents would like one or more of 5 medical interventions in case they become seriously ill with a small chance of recovery. The last section included questions related to respondent's gender, study major, ethnic background and religious belief. Questionnaires were distributed to undergraduate students at the University of Rochester in the spring of 1997. Potential respondents were identified from two sources: students attending three different classes (history of medicine class, and two medical sociology classes) and from a random sample obtained using a random number generator to produce numbers between 271,000 and 277,000 which is the range of the undergraduate students' mail box numbers. Students' participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Findings from their study indicated among other things that, students had very positive attitude towards issues of end-of-life care. It was assumed that as medical students they are been trained to care for people the best possible way they can and so their positive attitude was not a surprise. The study also confirmed that students' ethnicity and religion have a very high influence on their attitudes towards issues of end-of-life care.

Arndt, and Bruin (2006) also conducted a study in a South African University in Gauteng to find out students' attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. The study was positing that although the South African government has shown an unprecedented commitment to acknowledging and upholding the human rights of lesbians and gay men, negative attitudes exist towards lesbians and gay men in university communities. They also sought to find out if variables like gender, ethnicity and religion influences the attitudes of students towards lesbians and gay men. The study was a cross-sectional survey of 880 heterosexual students (356 men and 524 women) in a university community was conducted using the Attitudes towards Lesbian and Gay Male Scale (ATLG).

The results from the study indicate that heterosexual students at a University in Gauteng have negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. Thus they did not accept homosexuality as something that is part of humanity. The study also revealed that gender and religiosity of students has an influence on their attitudes towards lesbians and gay men, and that no differences exist between race groups concerning attitudes towards lesbians and gay men.

A study on students' attitudes towards marriage and divorce as social issues was conducted by Fagan (2006). The main purpose of the study was to get students' attitude towards marriage and divorce. The study was also interested in knowing how well strong religious affiliation of students influenced their attitudes towards marriage and divorce. The study was a descriptive cross-sectional survey and was conducted in a college in Downtown, Chicago in the United States of America. The researcher sampled 400 students out of a population of 3,000 using the stratified and cluster sampling techniques.

Questionnaires were used as the instrument for data gathering. Data was collected from the respondents after prior discussions were held with college authorities for permission. Data gathered were analysed with the help of data analysis software statistically.

Findings from his study revealed that students have very positive attitude towards marriage as an institution. Surprisingly, they also have very positive attitude towards divorce, explaining that divorce is the best means to a happy life if marriage is not offering that happiness one deserves. In the context of this study and in our Ghanaian society, divorce is seen as a negative social issue and therefore attitudes of people towards it, is expected to be negative. However, it is important to point out that the study was conducted in the United States of America, a society that perhaps holds different views about marriage and divorce.

Generally it can be seen that most of the studies conducted to find out students' attitudes towards social issues reported positive attitudes. That is to say from the studies looked at in this review, most of the findings indicated that

students had positive attitudes towards positive issues and negative attitudes towards negative issue. This makes it positive in general. It is worth mentioning that, in almost all the studies reviewed here, researchers were also interested in how certain identified variables influence these attitudes. These variables and how they influence attitudes towards social issues will be looked at in the subsequent reviews to come.

Attitudes of Students Towards Moral Issues

Issues of morality bring about the discussions and arguments of universality and subjectivity of morals. Morality looks at the rightness or wrongness of an action (Tritter, 1992). Despite the acceptance that there is subjectivity and relativity in morality, some moral codes and values have a universal nature. In the context of the present study, moral issues include issues like abortion, euthanasia, drug abuse, alcoholism, smoking, robbery, cheating, sex, sexual harassment, rape, etc. This part of the empirical review will look at studies conducted on the attitude of students' towards moral issues.

Ugodulunwa (2006) conducted a study in Nigeria about the cheating behaviours of university students. The purpose of the study was to establish the attitude of undergraduate students to cheating in examination and also to examine the interaction effects of gender, course of study, level of study and religion on students' attitude to cheating in examination. Of interest here is the attitude of students towards cheating which is a moral issue. Interaction effect of the demographic variables will be looked at later.

The study employed a survey and ex-post facto approach and used 230 (made up of 147 males and 83 females) university graduates of the University of Jos from three faculties. The data was collected with a Students' Examination Cheating Attitude Scale developed by the researcher. The students were required to express their attitude to cheating in examination by indicating the extent to which they agree with the statements using a five-point Likert Scale. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha method and the coefficient obtained was 0.81. The data was analysed using descriptive and factorial analysis of variance statistics.

Results from the study revealed that most of the students had very positive attitudes towards cheating in examinations. That is to say most students selected for the study did not like to cheat in examinations. The study reveals very interesting interaction effects which will be considered when looking at how demographic factors influence attitudes of students. This finding was attributed to the religious doctrines that students are exposed to as well as the punishment meted out to students who are caught cheating during examinations.

Issues of adolescent sexual activities is worrying and has been giving a lot of attention by researchers. Odimegwu (2005) conducted a study in two national universities to find out the influence of religion on adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviour among Nigerian University students. Most importantly, the study sought to find out how students react to issues of adolescent sexual activities. Using the descriptive survey design, the study selected 1,870 students out of a population of 40,000.

Findings from the study revealed among others that, students had positive attitudes towards adolescent sexual activities. Results showed that the students frowned upon adolescents involving themselves in sexual activities. They were also found to have a positive behaviour towards issues of adolescent sexuality. Again the study revealed that there was a strong relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards adolescent sexual issues.

Software piracy is cheating and fraud and as such it is a moral issue. Acilar (2010) from Bilecik University, Turkey conducted a study to find out how freshmen in his university react towards the issues of software piracy. He noted that, worldwide software piracy rate went up to 41 percent in 2008 and worldwide losses to software vendors due to software piracy totalled more than \$50 billion in 2008. Besides being an economic problem, software piracy is also an ethical issue, especially in academic settings. The evidences from numerous studies suggest that many undergraduate students consider software piracy and other unethical use of information technologies as an acceptable behaviour.

The purpose of the study was to determine the attitudes of students towards software piracy. The study also investigated the relationships between the demographic characteristics of freshman students and their attitudes towards software piracy. In the study, a self-report questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument. Eleven statements were used to measure students' attitudes towards software piracy. Statements were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). As a measure of internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the 11 items. The

resultant alpha coefficient of 0.883 provided evidence of adequate internal consistency.

The data for this study was obtained by surveying a sample of 160 freshman students at the Department of Business Administration at a public university in Turkey. The survey was conducted in November 2009. After eliminating incomplete and unusable responses, 125 usable responses were used for analysis. The study found that overall attitudes of freshman students towards software piracy are close to neutral position on the Likert scale. This means that students neither had a positive or negative attitude towards software piracy. It suggests that the majority of the participants do not have a strong opinion about software piracy either way. This may be due to the fact that most of the students were involved in software piracy.

Ramabele (2004) as part of the requirements for the award of a Master Artium (Clinical Psychology) degree conducted a study to find out the attitudes of people towards euthanasia. Euthanasia, also known as mercy killing is a moral issue which has been discussed for many years. A lot of views have been expressed and attitudes formed. The purpose of the study was to determine attitudes of the elderly towards euthanasia.

The aim of this research study was achieved by gathering data from a number of elderly respondents at several old age homes in the Bloemfontein area. Six old age homes were identified and permission was obtained from the management to approach the residents. A total of 200 questionnaires were completed. Interviews were also utilized to assist some of the elderly to fill in the

questionnaires. Two questionnaires batteries were administered in English and Afrikaans only. For many of the respondents, English or Afrikaans is their second or third language and in order to compensate for any possible misunderstandings, each question was explained making use of their own language, for example, South Sotho and also making use of everyday examples the elderly people could understand. Each response was recorded in a written format.

Results from the research revealed that the participants had a very positive attitude towards euthanasia. That is to say, they were mostly not in favour of 'mercy killing'. The participants revealed that it is inappropriate to kill someone in the name of saving the person from pain. The study also revealed that race or ethnicity influence attitudes towards euthanasia as a moral issue.

The issue of abortion as a moral issue has also been given attention by researchers in the field of morality. The views have been on whether it is right or wrong to commit abortion. In an empirical study, Jones (2006) of the Department of Speech Communication, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS sought to find out college students' attitudes towards abortion and male students involvement in abortion decisions. In view of the extant research regarding attitudes toward male involvement in the abortion decision, several hypotheses and one research question were explored.

Employing the exploratory research design, volunteers were recruited from among undergraduate students at a public university in the South. There were 94 participants of whom 35.1% ($n = 33$) were male and 64.9% ($n = 61$) were female. The mean age was 20.07 and the mode was 19. The youngest was 18

and the oldest was 38. The sample contained several racial groups including: 2.1% ($n=1$) Asian/Pacific Islanders, 37.2% ($n = 35$) Blacks not of Hispanic origin, 57.4% ($n = 54$) Whites not of Hispanic origin, and 3.2% ($n = 3$) biracial/mixed identity individuals. The majority of the participants, 95.7% ($n = 90$), reported that they were single having never married. Three participants (3.2%) indicated that they or their partners (wife, girlfriend, etc.) had an abortion.

A previously designed survey containing 50 questions was obtained directly from a researcher who had used it earlier and was amended to gather demographic data. Questions measured attitudes toward abortion, the level of male involvement in the decision regarding abortion, commitment to the issue, and obtained demographic data. Twenty questions were used to measure attitudes regarding abortion. Reliability analysis revealed high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.86). Results from the study indicated that students had a neutral attitude towards abortion. This means that they neither had positive nor negative attitudes towards the issue of abortion. This may be due to the convincing nature of the views expressed on the issue.

In another study on abortion, Awopetu and Fasanmi (2011) wanted to find out students' attitudes towards abortion. They conducted the study to examine the psychosocial factors capable of influencing abortion attitudes among university undergraduates in Nigeria. These psychosocial factors included gender, self-esteem, religion and ethnicity. Two hundred (200) students consisted of 63(31.5%) males and 137(68.5%) females out of a population of 15,000 students participated in the survey.

The study adopted ex-post facto design which is a causal comparative under descriptive designs. Their age ranged between 16 to 40 years with mean age of 28. Six hypotheses were generated and tested and the results revealed that individuals with internal locus of control were not positively disposed towards abortion than individuals with external locus of control. The study also revealed that students had a very negative attitude towards abortion. It means that the students did not like abortion as a moral issue. This is probably because of the influence the culture of Africa has on their attitudes.

Lodhi and Siddiqui (2014) both of Hamdard University Karachi, Pakistan studied the attitudes of students' towards moral and ethical values. To them, Education is the most important factor, which trains students towards social practices and moral ethics. It is not only restricted to pursue degree for economic gain, rather attaining moral values.

As the social order is changing, children are more engaged in diverse society and extensively interacting with social media. Sound and value based education in this context has become very crucial to prepare the youth to live within ethical boundaries. The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the attitudes of school going students towards students towards moral and ethical values.

The study adopted the descriptive cross-sectional survey design. This was to allow the researchers to study the issue and report it as it was without manipulating any variables. The population for the study consists of all the students studying at secondary level in Karachi. The sample size of 200 was

selected through random sampling from five private institutions. The instrument used to obtain data was adapted from The Commitment to Ethical Goodness Scale.

Results from the study revealed that majority of the respondents are positive on greater part of the items of Ethical Identity Scale. The trend among the respondents for majority of the items in Moral Locus of Control & Ethical Self-Regulation is found to be negative. Attitude of few of the students is uncaring towards teachers and family members. Their liberal decisions are highly influenced by external environment. Majority of the students have uncaring attitude, whereas few are also engaged in unethical activities. Majority of the students follow their own rules. Majority of the students' value ethics. Put together, the study revealed that the students had very negative attitudes towards moral and ethical issues.

Last but not least study to be looked at is one that looked at the moral attitudes of Filipino college students by Cabrales, Villanueva, Cabaguing and Cosmod (2014). By moral attitudes the study sought to find out the attitudes of students towards moral issues and as well sought to find out the effect of study circle on the moral values of Filipino psychology students of Samar State University, to identify probable external factors, and to develop an improved study circle material to use in this inquiry. By study circle, the researchers meant group learning. The study was anchored on the interrelated theories of cognitive, affective and social potentials as a way to achieve moral and social learning set

forth by Kohlberg, Fraenkel, Raths, and Durkheim that occurs spontaneously within the individual.

Adopting the descriptive survey design, the study utilized the method of triangulation composed of qualitative and quantitative approaches to research, the study examined the process of participation in religious scripture-based study material resulting in the transformation of the person's moral attitude. The respondents were composed of 33 psychology students from Samar State University—College of Arts and Sciences, Catbalogan City, Philippines.

This selection method was used to avoid students becoming disoriented from their regular classes or vacant periods and, thus, avoiding unnecessary mood and predispositions change among them—a feeling which might occur and affect the results of the study. The main instrument of the study was the questionnaire and moral attitude scale which contained 35 items on moral problems and situations. The respondents were allowed to answer it anonymously to express their true feelings or opinions.

The findings revealed that participants had very high positive attitudes towards moral issues. That is to say they had positive moral attitudes. Again, it revealed that participants in the study circle developed better moral attitudes and perception from moderate to strong moral attitude. It also showed that attendance and profile variables of age, sex, family income, occupation, and religion did not correlate to the moral attitude level of the respondents.

This implied that participation in the study circle and the usage of the study material were the only factors that caused the significant difference in the mean score, and consequently, the levelling up of participants' moral attitude.

Collapsing the above studies on students attitudes towards moral issues, it becomes very obvious that although there are mixed attitudes, generally positive attitudes towards moral issues were seen. That is to say, most of the students selected in the various studies had negative attitudes towards negative moral issues and positive towards positive moral issues except in the case of euthanasia and abortion. As stated earlier, there are a lot of studies on moral attitudes of students but the above on cheating, adolescent sexual behaviour, abortion, euthanasia etc. reviewed are just a few. As noted, most of the studies also looked at the influence of certain demographic factors on the moral attitudes of the students. This issue will be dealt with in subsequent reviews in this section.

Attitudes of Students Towards Religious Issues

The issue of religion is very delicate. This is because most people take issues of the existence of God, spirituality, prayer, faith and repentance serious. Various religions have their own understanding of these issues. It is even a thinking among scholars in the field that people will not easily share their views on these religious issues freely and authentically. In the same vein, empirical studies on individuals' attitudes towards religious issues are scanty. In this part of the empirical review, a handful of studies will be reviewed. In the context of this study, the religious issues include the existence of God, worship, prayer, faith,

repentance, spirituality and life. Again, issues like forgiveness, confession of sins and purpose of creation are part of the religious issues.

In a positional study to find out the attitudes of American adolescents students, Smith (2003) formulated that a large body of empirical studies show that attitudes towards religious issues and religion often serves as a factor promoting positive, healthy outcomes in the lives of American adolescents. Yet existing theoretical explanations for these religious effects remain largely disjointed and fragmented.

The aim of the study was to find out the attitude of adolescents towards issues of religion and as well, formulate a more systematic, integrated, and coherent account of religion's constructive influence in the lives of American youth, suggesting nine key factors (moral directives, spiritual experiences, role models, community and leadership skills, coping skills, cultural capital, social capital, network closure, and extra-community links) that cluster around three key dimensions of influence (moral order, learned competences, and social and organizational ties).

Putting faith in issues in literature and data available on attitudes n religious issues, the researcher revealed that adolescents mostly have positive attitude towards religious issues like respect for sacred places like the church or mosque, religious leaders and religious activities.

According to the researcher, this may be due to the influence of their level of moral development as he puts moral development together with attitudes towards religious issue. Agreeing with Donahue (2002), it was established that a

good number of adolescents engage in religious activities more than most adults, which according to the researcher is the reason why they have positive attitudes towards religious issues. Generally, it was revealed that religion influences how individuals see a lot of things in life.

In the classroom and especially in senior secondary schools, there is religious education. These subjects are based on particular religion like Islam and Christianity. One such subject is Christian Religious Studies in Ghana. In this subject, issue of the religion are made available to students so that they learn more about the religion.

In the context of this study, the subject is a religious issue because it is religious studies and religious issues are discussed. Kasomo (2012) from the Maseno University in Kenya conducted a study on the attitudes of students towards Christian religious education in schools in Kenya. The main purpose of the study was to find out how the attitudes of students impact on the teaching of the subject.

The study adopted the descriptive cross-sectional survey where both quantitative and qualitative methods in an ex-post facto design were used. The sample comprised students and teachers from 37 secondary schools teaching Christian Religious Education from forms one to four. Using an administrative map of Machakos District, the schools registered for 2008 Kenya certificate of secondary examination (KCSE) Christian Religious Education were categorized into six geographical zones with their towns as point of accessibility.

The questionnaire used ran from low-level difficulty through items to the open-ended question of high-level difficulty. The first section of the questionnaire had questions on the demographic data. The respondents were required to indicate their background characteristics. They were used as explanatory variables. Honesty and truthfulness were encouraged from all respondents by assuring them that any information they gave was to be treated confidentially. The attitude scale, in Likert format, formed the second section of the questionnaire.

Results from the study showed that students have very positive attitude towards Christian Religious Education, which means that they had positive attitudes towards religious issues. This is because inherent in the subject are religious issues. It was revealed that most of the students had positive attitude towards the subject because they saw it as having a utilitarian value and impacting positively on their lives.

In a very similar study, Collie and Apt (1999) also conducted a study on the attitudes of secondary school students towards Religious studies. They observed that lots of surveys conducted on the attitudes of students enrolled in secondary school religion courses indicated that students' attitudes and positive value was attached to their experience of studying religion in school. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the attitudes of secondary school students enrolled in religious studies courses to determine their evaluation of the religious issues embedded in the subject.

They employed the descriptive cross sectional survey. The population of the study constituted students who were taught religious studies courses in 239

schools in Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan and Ohio. After sampling, the schools selected comprised 30 public schools and nine parochial schools. Their teachers were used to collect the data which was a paper-and-pencil attitude scale from the students. In total, 1,227 students were sampled for the study.

Results from the study revealed that students generally felt that religious issues discussed in the course were relevant for their development. Therefore they have very positive attitudes towards religious issues. This emanated from the responses from the students; they mostly either strongly agreed or agreed to the statement in the attitude scale. The students also indicated that they were happy with the religious issues and how they were taught in school because studying religion and religious beliefs in school is different from what is done in the church or temple.

From the Ghanaian perspective, Asare-Danso (2011) conducted a study in selected Junior High Schools in the Cape Coast metropolis. The study sort to determine the attitudes of junior high school pupils towards the study of Religious and Moral Education (RME). The study also sought to find out the influence of gender on the attitudes of pupils towards the study of RME. Religious and Moral Education is a subject taught with social, moral and religious issues embedded in it. The subject is the main basis for this study.

Asare-Danso (2011) posited that topics of moral issues were more popular with pupils than purely religious issues. He went on to say “although some work has been done to determine the attitudes of pupils towards the subject, little has been done on this topic” (p.112) and I relate to this assertion.

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The target population comprised all the form 3 pupils in junior high schools in the Cape Coast metropolis. The sample for the study was 600 pupils from 15 junior high schools. A three point Likert type scale was used as the main instrument to collect data from the pupils. Pupils were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with statements made based on the issues in the RME syllabus for Junior High School.

Overall, responses of the pupils to the statements indicated that they had fairly positive attitudes towards the studying of the subject. This was because while almost all of them either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements, a few of the statements received low agreement. Again because of the aims of the subject certain responses of the pupils implied a fairly negative attitudes towards the subject.

Putting all together, the above studies on the attitude of students towards religious issues have been relevant to the present study. The various issues in the religious subjects studied by students were religious and therefore their attitudes towards the subjects is the same as their attitudes towards religious issues. Generally, all the studies reported that students had positive attitudes towards religious issues embedded in the religious studies courses they studied. Some of the studies looked at other demographic variables that influence the attitudes of students towards religious issues. These and other studies that looked at how these variables influence attitudes will be reviewed in the next paragraphs.

Influence of Demographic Factors on Attitudes Towards Social, Moral and Religious Issues

A very important part of this present study is the determination of the influence of demographic factors on attitudes towards these social, moral and religious issues. Studies conducted on the issues have identified many factors that influence attitude but this present study is interested in the seven most prominent of these factors which are; gender, age, religion, ethnicity, school type, subjects studied and school environment. It is important to mention that because of the dearth of studies in attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues, in this part of the review some of the studies already looked at will be looked at again, with emphasis now on the influence of the demographics on attitudes.

As already mentioned, Cabrales, Villanueva, Cabaguing, and Cosmod (2014) conducted a study to find out the attitudes of students towards moral issues and as well the effect of study circle on the moral values of Filipino psychology students of Samar State University, to identify probable external factors, and to develop an improved study circle material to use in this inquiry. As part of the study, they also sought to find out if factors like gender, age and religious affiliation of the students affected their attitudes towards moral issues.

Their study revealed that although students had very high positive attitudes towards moral issue, gender, age and religious affiliation of the students did not correlate with their attitudes. That is to say from their study, gender, age and religious affiliation of students do not influence their attitudes.

Mohamed, and Waheed (2011) were interested in finding out the attitude of secondary school students towards mathematics. In the context of this study mathematics which is related to education which is a social issue. They posited that Students' attitude towards mathematics has been a factor that is known to influence students' achievement in mathematics. The purpose of the study was to find out students' attitudes towards mathematics and find out gender difference in these attitudes.

They employed a quantitative approach to the study using the descriptive survey design. The population for that study was secondary school students of an island in southern part of Maldives. The school had a population of 395 students. A sample of 195 students was determined as appropriate however, the study used 200 students from grade 9 and 10. The instrument for data collection was an attitude scale developed over the years for measuring attitudes towards mathematics.

The study revealed that students' attitudes towards mathematics was medium. That is to say, their attitude was neither positive nor negative. More importantly the study revealed through a two tailed t-test that there was no gender difference in students' attitudes towards mathematics. Meaning there was no statistically significant difference between the students' attitude towards mathematics between male and female.

In a study already reviewed in this study Arndt, and Bruin (2006) also conducted a study in a South African University in Gauteng to find out students' attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. They also sought to find out if variables

like gender, ethnicity and religion influence the attitudes of students towards lesbians and gay men.

Results from their study showed that gender and religiosity has an influence on attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. This means that the attitudes of the students was influenced by whether they are male or female. Again, the religion they belong to influenced their attitudes. The study also showed that no differences exist between race groups concerning attitudes towards lesbians and gay men. That is to say, the attitudes towards lesbians and gay men were not influenced by ethnicity.

Jones (2006) sought to find out college students' attitudes towards abortion and male students involvement in abortion decisions. Aside finding out the attitudes of students towards abortion, the study also sought to find out if gender, race and religiosity significantly predicted these attitudes. He employed the exploratory research design recruiting volunteers from among undergraduate students at a public University.

He used 94 participants of whom 35.1% ($n = 33$) were male and 64.9% ($n = 61$) were female. The sample contained several racial groups including: 2.1% ($n=1$) Asian/Pacific Islanders, 37.2% ($n = 35$) Blacks not of Hispanic origin, 57.4% ($n = 54$) Whites not of Hispanic origin, and 3.2% ($n = 3$) biracial/mixed identity individuals.

Using previously designed survey containing 50 questions, results from the study indicated that students' gender, race and religiosity predicted their attitudes towards abortion. This meant their attitude towards abortion was

influenced and affected by their gender, their ethnicity as well as their religious affiliation.

Lehman, and Thornwall (2011) also examined college students' attitudes towards homosexuality. Although the purpose of this study was to identify if there are gender differences determining what influences or shape their attitudes towards homosexuality, it also sought to find out their general attitudes towards homosexuality first. In addition to that, they sought to find out if the subjects studied and age of students affected these attitudes.

They used a small Midwestern university; participants were 128 male and female students. Survey data was statistically analysed using cross-tabulations, mean comparisons, independent t-tests, and a reliability analysis. The study revealed that most students who participated in the study had positive attitudes towards homosexuality and issues related to it. It also revealed that gender, age and subjects studied by students had an influence on their attitudes towards the issues of homosexuality

Awopetu, and Fasanmi's (2011) study on students' attitudes towards abortion, also sought to find out if their attitudes were influenced by their age, ethnicity, religion and environment. They conducted the study to examine the psychosocial factors capable of influencing abortion attitudes among university undergraduates in Nigeria.

Two hundred students consisted of 63(31.5%) males and 137(68.5%) females out of a population of 15,000 students participated in the survey. The study employed the ex-post facto design which is a causal comparative under

descriptive designs. The study revealed that students had a very negative attitude towards abortion. It means that the students did not like abortion as a moral issue. It was revealed that there is a significant effect of age on attitude towards abortion among undergraduates $\{t(198) = 2.67; P < .05\}$; also, the study showed that individuals rural areas were not significantly different in their attitude towards abortion than those from urban areas $\{t(198) = .192; P > .05\}$; the result went further to reveal that ethnic grouping has no significant influence on undergraduate students' attitude towards abortion $(F(2,199) = 2.93; P > .05)$; and finally revealed that religion has significant effect on undergraduate students' attitude towards abortion $(F(2,199) = 8.98; P < .05)$.

Yenilmez, Ayranci, Ay, Erkaya, Ozdemir, and Kaptanoglu (2006) conducted a survey into the changing attitudes of male and female university students towards social issues in the new millennium. The purpose of the study was to explore the general attitudes of some Turkish university students towards social issues in a developing society. Aside this, the study also purposed to find out if gender, school, subjects studied and environment of the students affected their attitudes.

All participants in the study were voluntary, and were informed that this study was being conducted in order to aid understanding of students' current situations. All of the respondents gave their informed consent prior to their inclusion in the study and were promised anonymity. Respondents were told that their responses would not become part of their school record, nor any other type of record. The interview stage was first completed, with students then going on to

complete the social attitude questionnaire. Some of the social issues included in the questionnaire were child care, harmful industrial institutions, homosexuality, censorship, Darwin's theory, dangerous nuclear energy switchboards, a happy world, the death penalty, curettage, beating and a high life standard. The data was collected from 604 students in the members of seven of the university faculties.

Results from the study indicated that there were clear differences in gender attitudes towards all the social issues of interest. It was also revealed that those who attended mission schools (church attached) had positive attitudes towards social issues as compared to those who did not. Again, those who studied subjects related to ethics and religion also had positive attitudes towards social issues as compared to those who did not. Lastly, their study revealed that environment had an influence on the attitudes of students towards social issues.

Another study of interest was conducted in Nigeria by Jekayinfa (2004) to find out how gender and environmental factors affected attitudes of secondary school students towards social studies. He premised his study on the fact that attitudinal studies have been areas of exploration by many researchers because of the desire to gain insights into the foundation of such attitudes and the variables that influence their formation.

Adopting the descriptive cross-sectional survey design, he adapted an attitude scale developed by Ato, and Wilkinson (1979) with a 30- item attitude scale. Five hundred and forty (540) secondary school students provided the data for the investigation. The sample was stratified and matched for sex and location

of schools. This was to ensure that there was fair representation in terms of gender and school environment.

The result of the investigation showed that enjoyment of social studies and social studies lessons, social implications of social studies, attitudes towards social studies teachers, career interest and leisure interest in social studies are dependent on the location of the school in their influence on attitudes to social studies. That is to say, where the school is located (rural or urban) influenced students attitudes towards the subject. Also, it was revealed that attitude toward social studies teachers and career interest in social studies as factors influencing students' attitude to social studies are sex-linked. Therefore, both environment and gender influenced students' attitudes.

The study by Paruk, Mohamed, Patel, and Ramgoon (2006) which wanted to find out the attitude of students towards people living with HIV/Aids didn't only focus on the influence of religiosity on the attitude of students towards HIV/Aids victims. It also sought to find out if there were any gender differences in the attitudes. The study surveyed these variables in a sample of South African Muslim university students using the Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) and an attitude to people with HIV scale.

The findings from their study showed that despite inconsistent and confusing messages from religious and political leaders, this sample of South African Muslim students, with their high levels of religiosity, displayed an unexpectedly tolerant attitude toward people with HIV. The students had very high positive attitudes to people with HIV. It also revealed that, no gender

differences were found on the attitude to people with HIV scale, with students indicating positive attitudes to people with HIV. Higher religiosity was significantly correlated with a more positive attitude to people with HIV.

Ugodulunwa's (2006) study which was conducted in Nigeria about the cheating behaviours of university students sought to establish the attitude of undergraduates to cheating in examination. It was also to examine the interaction effects of gender, course of study and religion on students' attitude to cheating in examination. Using the survey and ex-post facto approach, she selected 230 (made up of 147 males and 83 females) university graduates of the University of Jos from three faculties. The data was collected with a Students' Examination Cheating Attitude Scale developed by the researcher.

Results from the study revealed very interesting interaction effects between gender, course of study and religion of students. Results from t-test and ANOVA analysis revealed that gender differences in terms of attitudes towards cheating was significant. This means that gender influenced attitude towards cheating. Again, course of study and religion of students also have an influence on students' attitudes towards cheating in examinations.

Another study already looked at but of interest, is that of Kasomo (2012). He is from the Maseno University in Kenya. He conducted a study on the attitudes of students towards Christian religious education in schools in Kenya. The main purpose of the study was to find out how the attitudes of students impact on the teaching of the subject. He also sought to find out how if age,

school type and school environment had any influence on the attitudes of students towards Christian religious education.

Adopting the descriptive cross-sectional survey, he sampled students and teachers from 37 secondary schools teaching Christian Religious Education from form one to four. He used a questionnaire that ran from low-level difficulty through items to the open-ended question of high-level difficulty. The first section of the questionnaire had questions on the demographic data. The attitude scale, in Likert format, formed the second section of the questionnaire.

Results from the study revealed among other things that, students have very positive attitude towards Christian Religious Education, which means that they had positive attitudes towards religious issues. The study again indicated that age has an influence on the attitudes of students as the analysis showed statistically significant difference. However, both school type and school environment was found not to have any influence on the attitudes of students towards Christian Religious Education.

In a study to find out attitudes toward homosexuality, Besen, and Zicklin, (2007) posited that Attitudes toward gays and lesbians are an important topic for social scientists, politicians and policy makers. Many recent studies have documented the increasing acceptance of gays and lesbians in the United States. They went on to say while many organizations have become more accepting and supportive of gay rights, religions and religious institutions have in general been unsupportive. The purpose of the study was to find out attitudes towards gays and lesbians, and explore the complex relationship of religiosity, youth, masculinity

and support for gay rights. That is to say, to find out how religious affiliation, age and gender affects attitudes towards homosexuality.

They took their data from a national data of Pew Centre in the United States of America, which conducts regular national surveys that measure social and political attitudes, values and public attentiveness. The dataset provided extensive information on factors predicting attitudes towards gays and lesbians, ranging from demographic factors to attitudinal factors, providing the opportunity to estimate a comprehensive model in understanding opinions. The sample was as large as 1405 students.

Results from the study revealed positive attitudes of students towards issues of homosexuality. That is to say most of the students didn't have problems with homosexuals. They concluded that while religiosity and fundamentalism negatively affect support for all three issues, the relationship varies by age and gender. Generally, young men do not show differences in their views of gay marriage, but men, especially religious, young men do show more negative attitudes than their female counterparts in support for gay adoption.

Comegys (2010) studied the impact of religiously affiliated Universities and courses in ethics and Religious Studies on students' attitude toward Business Ethics. He posited that, unethical events are continuing in the business arena and now more than ever these business judgmental shortcoming focus attention on the ethics of business executives. Thus, colleges and universities must continue to address business ethics as they prepare and train the next generation of executives. The study sought to find out students' attitudes towards business

ethics in relation to the type of institution and courses they studied. That is to say, if attending a religiously affiliated educational institution impact these ethical attitudes, and if completing ethics courses or religious studies courses effects these ethical attitudes.

Comegys (2010) adopted the descriptive survey design to conduct his study. He selected 400 students out of a population of 2400. He used a 50 item attitude scale to collect data from the selected students. This instrument was developed by the researcher himself. Results from the study indicated that business majors with one or more religious studies course were slightly more ethical in their outlooks. That means that, students who studied religion had positive attitudes towards business ethics as compared to those who did not.

The influence of religious studies courses on ethical attitudes was far greater for non-business majors. The implications of the results were that ethical education and institutional climate may play a role in effectively shaping students attitudes about business ethics. This study suggests that completing ethics courses for business majors and religious studies courses for non-business majors may impact undergraduate students' attitudes towards business ethics.

The studies reviewed under this main section gives a general indication that gender, age, religion, ethnicity, school type, subjects studied and school environment are very influential in determining the attitudes of students. The above studies have almost in all cases indicated that these factors do affect students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues despite the fact that in some cases, it was revealed there was no influence.

The review of previous studies from the attitudes of students towards social, moral and religious issues through to the influence of demographic factors like gender, age, religion, ethnicity, school type, subjects studied and school environment on the attitudes of students are revealing. These studies are also very important and crucial to the present study. This is because, these studies informed the scope and methodology of the present study. In most of the reviewed studies, the attitude scale was used; either adapted or designed by the researcher. In the case of this present study, an attitude scale has been designed to measure students' attitude.

It is again important to mention that the measures used by the previous studies to analyse data collected are also crucial to this study. The previous studies inform that, in almost all the cases students have positive attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. In terms on the influence of gender, age, religion, ethnicity, school type, subjects studied and school environment on these attitudes, most of the studies found that, these factors had major influence.

Demographic Characteristics that Predict Students' Attitudes Towards Social, Moral and Religious Issues

The literature on attitude is inconsistent and inconclusive. It also informs that attitudes can be predicted by many factors. These factors are able to help in the prediction of individuals' attitudes towards many issues of life. In the same way, attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues can be predicted by many factors (Awopetu, & Fasanmi, 2011; Arndt, & de Bruin, 2006; De Vaus, 2001; Ajzen, 1988). Researchers in education are also interested in factors that predict

students' attitudes. This is to ensure effective teaching and management of students' development in the classroom. Students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues are the main focus of this study. Students' attitudes can be predicted by many factors.

However for this study, factors of interest are demographic characteristics of students and how they predict students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. Literature on prediction of students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues by demographic characteristics are uncommon. This is because most of the studies focused on the effects of the demographic characteristics. Just a few looked at how they predict attitudes and these would be looked at in the ensuing paragraphs.

In a study on abortion which is considered a moral issue in this study, Jones (2006) sought to find out college students' attitudes concerning male involvement in the abortion decision-making process. He posited that, the physical and psychological effects of abortion on women and their male partners are controversial as well. More than 250 published reports discuss the emotional effects of abortion in women, and the majority of scholars contend that at least a minority of women experience adverse psychological effects such as anxiety and depression (Ruhl, 2002). The study also sought to find out if gender, race and religiosity significantly predicted these attitudes. The study employed the exploratory research design recruiting volunteers from among undergraduate students at a public University.

The study used 94 participants of whom 35.1% ($n = 33$) were male and 64.9% ($n = 61$) were female. The sample contained several racial groups including: 2.1% ($n=1$) Asian/Pacific Islanders, 37.2% ($n = 35$) Blacks not of Hispanic origin, 57.4% ($n = 54$) Whites not of Hispanic origin, and 3.2% ($n = 3$) biracial/mixed identity individuals. Regression results showed that the linear combination of gender, race, and religiosity in the overall model significantly predicted male attitudes towards abortion, $R^2 = .09$, $R^2_{adj} = .06$, $F(3, 87) = 2.97$, $p < .05$. This model therefore accounted for 9% of the variance in the male involvement support score. This means that there is a relationship between these demographic characteristics and the attitudes towards abortion.

A study on homosexuality was conducted by Woodford, Silverschanz, Swank, Scherrer, and Raiz (2012) to find out the predictors of United States heterosexual undergraduates and graduate college students' attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. They were of the view that, Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals experience discrimination and oppression, which can negatively affect their well-being (Harper, & Schneider, 2004; Meyer, 2003; Stotzer, 2009). While some of these discriminatory practices involve blatant hostility and violence, most emerge in subtle mistreatment and biases (Nadal, Rivera, & Corpus, 2010). It was therefore necessary to explore students' attitudes towards LGBTs and also find out the demographic characteristics of students like age, gender, race and religion that predict their attitudes.

Using a cross-sectional study a sample was drawn from a census of sophomore and junior undergraduates ($N=11,342$) and 8,000 randomly selected graduate students. The sample of the study was reduced to 2,568 students due to problems with access to students. The instrument used was with items using a seven-point Likert scale. Data collected was analysed using SPSS statistics 17.0.

Results from the study showed that students had positive attitudes towards Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals. Multiple regression results indicated that the model represented a total of 59% of the variance in heterosexual students' attitudes toward LGBT people, $F(24, 1867) = 116.19, p < .001$. Students' attitudes were significantly associated with particular demographics, each of the attitudinal and framing items, and select social contact factors. Specifically, controlling for all variables in the model simultaneously, among the demographic variables, more affirming LGBT attitudes were associated with being older, being female rather than male, identifying as White/European American rather than Black/African American, and identifying as atheist or not having a religion versus being affiliated with Protestant, Roman Catholic, other Christian, or other non-Christian religion. Thus, it was found that age, gender, race and religion predicted students' attitudes towards Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals.

According to Nazir, Aslam, and Nawaz (2011), academic dishonesty has been a matter of great concern in higher education during the last few decades. The issue of dishonest behaviour of students at graduate and undergraduate level has become very severe, particularly when students continue to exercise the same

practices at the workplace. The cheating students have strong tendency to practice same unethical and dishonest behaviours at the workplace which they had exhibited during their education (Rakovski, & Levy, 2007; Lawson, 2004; Grimes, 2004). They therefore conducted a study to find out Pakistani students' attitudes towards academic dishonesty and also investigate if their demographic characteristics can predict their attitudes.

The study gathered the data from the respondents on a well-structured and self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. First part was focusing on the demographic factors of the students responding. There demographic factors were gender, age group of respondents, program level in which the student is enrolled, subject majors taken, academic performance measured in terms of CGPA the student earned. Second part consists of most commonly researched thirteen unethical academic acts the students may involve in. The responses were arranged on a five point Likert Scale which receive responses for every dishonest act of the students as always or never (i.e. 1 stands for never and 5 for always involved). The frequency of academic dishonest behaviours has been measured by second part of the questionnaire taken from the literature (Rakovski, & Levy, 2007).

There were 1000 questionnaires distributed among the respondents out of which 958 were found complete and useful questionnaire returned having 95.8% effective response rate. The internal consistency of the Scale and data collected was tested using Cronbach's alpha which produced a co-efficient of 0.85. The research has proved that the value of this alpha is greater than 0.5 and is

acceptable in social sciences (Nunally, 1978). Descriptive statistics and different measurements of association have been used to investigate the relationship of students' demographics and their academic dishonest behaviours using SPSS 16. Results from the study indicated that students had negative attitudes towards academic dishonesty. Thus students did not like cheating in any form. Results from multiple regression analysis showed that students' age, gender and subject studied predicts their attitude towards academic dishonesty.

Malone (2006) conducted a study in a college in Chicago. The purpose of the study was to find out accounting students attitudes towards ethical issues. Ethical issues included dishonesty in their profession as well as in school examinations. The study was based on the premise that there are daily reports of accountants involving themselves in dubious transactions that end up running companies into bankruptcy. Whiles some of them are apprehended, other are never caught. The researcher felt accounting students will in the future find themselves in similar situations and therefore knowing their attitudes towards ethical issues in the profession was necessary.

Adopting the descriptive survey design, 850 accounting students were selected out of 1400. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the students. The instrument contained items on students' demographic characteristics as well as a five-point Likert scale items. The items measuring students' attitudes towards ethical issues bothered on issues like corruption and bribery, dubious transactions, inflating figures, squandering funds, cheating in examinations, copying of fellow

student's term papers etc. data collected were analysed with the help of SPSS 18.0 statistics.

Results from the analysis showed that accounting students had positive attitudes towards ethical issues. Thus, the students indicated their disapproval of negative and bad habits of accountants. They also showed negative attitudes towards cheating in examinations. Overall, students' attitudes towards ethical issues were found to be significantly predicted by their age, gender, religion and race. Thus, students' demographic characteristics predicted their attitudes.

Gaines (2014) was interested in students and alcoholism. This led to a study to find out students attitudes towards drinking behaviours. The study posited that alcohol consumption is quite common on college campuses throughout the country, with studies approximating that 40% of students engage in heavy drinking (Martens, Karakashian, Fleming, Fowler, Hatchett, & Cimini, 2009). It further stated that such students range from recent freshmen, who are overwhelmingly underage, or soon to be college graduates. While it is evident that alcohol consumption occurs, little is known regarding the role that attitudes toward alcohol play; is alcohol used by students as a means of social facilitation or rather as a form of coping with negative feelings? Furthermore, what factors are predictive of the attitudes that students possess towards alcohol? The study therefore was to find out students attitudes towards alcohol consumption as well as factors that predict these attitudes.

The descriptive survey design was employed and participants were students at the University of New Hampshire, who were taking a psychology

course in the fall of 2013 that required research participation. Students were recruited through the SONA subject pool and received 1 credit for their participation in the study. Originally 405 students were recruited, but after eliminating participants with incomplete data, age less than 18, and those that indicated the same response for each survey question, and thus took no notice of what the questions asked, only 354 participants remained.

Of the remaining participants, 83 were male, 262 were female, and 9 chose not to indicate their gender. The final participants were between the ages of 18 to 25, with the majority indicating that they were 18. Participants filled out an online survey which took less than an hour to complete and asked participants about their attitudes towards alcohol. There were items to measure both positive and negative attitudes.

Results from the analysis indicated that students exhibited neutrality in terms of both positive and negative attitudes towards alcohol consumption. Thus students did not affirm either positive or negative attitudes towards alcohol consumption. Results of multiple regression analysis showed that, students' age, gender and race did not significantly predict their attitudes towards drinking behaviours or alcohol consumption.

However, conscientiousness, parent and high school influence, frequency of attending parties, and influence from a best friend and good friends were only slightly predictive of negative attitudes towards alcohol, accounting for only 18% of the variance. In fact, the only variable that accounted for a fairly substantial portion of the variance was the frequency of attending parties, which was

negatively correlated, and uniquely predicted 10.3% of the variance for negative attitudes towards alcohol. Influence from an individual's best friend and good friends was virtually insignificant, accounting for less than 1% of the variance.

Family and marriage is considered a social issue in the context of this study. Therefore the issue of genetic disease and testing is of interest. Genetic counselling is part of the domain of health, providing citizens with personalized help regarding their own and their family's genetic health. It helps lay people understand complex genetic information, and thus make more informed personal decisions (Awwad, McCarthy, Bartels, & LeRoy, 2008).

The informed decisions involving genetic risks that are dealt with in genetic counselling usually revolve around family planning and reproduction, decisions like whether to take a chance and bear a child in view of increased genetic risks, whether to use prenatal diagnosis, whether to continue a pregnancy when test results are positive or inconclusive, and what protective or preparative measures to take in the event of an increased risk to the foetus (Shiloh, 1996). A study to find out university students' attitudes towards genetic testing was conducted by Siani and Assaraf (2015). The purpose of the study was to examine the attitudes of undergraduate Israeli students towards genetic issues and learn those that are affected by the field of study, their religious affiliation and their gender.

Adopting a quantitative descriptive survey design, 490 students were selected for the study. A Likert-type questionnaire was developed specifically for the study based on the literature review and in-depth interviews with genetics

experts, all of whom have doctorates and most of whom are experts in prenatal genetic counselling at Israel's main hospitals. These resources raised issues such as: alternative conceptions concerning genetic tests and genetic diseases amongst the lay public, the layperson's difficulty in making informed choices on medical genetic issues, typical cases being dealt with in genetic counselling sessions, barriers to obtaining genetic information faced by different sectors of society, and religious influences on ethical considerations concerning genetic testing and genetic diseases. The independent variables were former knowledge, religious affiliation and gender.

Results from the analysis showed that students had positive attitudes towards early detection of genetic diseases, late-onset diseases and foetus examination. The results indicated that the students' religion was an influential factor on how their previous knowledge of genetics affected their attitudes. In religious students, the effect of the knowledge is far more substantial, and it was an acute indicator amongst the religious members of our study population for more positive attitudes towards genetic tests.

On the other hand, among the secular students, whose attitudes were more positive from the start, the fact that they study life sciences did not significantly alter their genetic attitudes in the field of early detection of genetic diseases. The findings revealed that among religious students, knowledge of genetics is an important factor in determining positive attitudes towards running genetic tests for late onset diseases. Again, the attitudes of the religious students who study life sciences tended to be more positive. Previous studies have shown that there is not

always an exact correlation between belief and behaviour, and that often the decision-making of a religious person regarding the testing of the foetus differs from the official religious stance (Frumkin, Raz, Plessner-Duvdevani, & Lieberman, 2011). Finally, results of the multiple regression showed that subject of study, religion and gender of students significantly predicted their attitudes.

Another study of interest was conducted in Nigeria by Jekayinfa (2004) to find out how gender and environmental factors affected attitudes of secondary school students towards social studies. He premised his study on the fact that attitudinal studies have been areas of exploration by many researchers because of the desire to gain insights into the foundation of such attitudes and the variables that influence their formation. These variables that influence formation of attitudes also help in the prediction of attitude.

The study employed the descriptive cross-sectional survey design. The study again adapted an attitude scale developed by Ato and Wilkinson (1979) with a 30-item attitude scale. These items measured students' attitudes towards social studies teaching and learning in the classroom. Five hundred and forty secondary school students out of 1,400 were selected and they provided the data for the investigation. The sample was stratified and matched for sex and location of schools. This was to ensure that there was fair representation in terms of gender and school environment.

The result of the investigation showed that enjoyment of social studies and social studies lessons, social implications of social studies, attitudes towards social studies teachers, career interest and leisure interest in social studies are

dependent on the location of the school in their influence on attitudes to social studies. That is to say, where the school is located (rural or urban) influenced students attitudes towards the subject.

Also, it was revealed that attitude toward social studies teachers and career interest in social studies as factors influencing students' attitude to social studies are sex-linked. Therefore, both environment and gender influenced students' attitudes. Again, the results showed that students' attitudes towards social studies lessons, social implications of social studies, social studies teachers and career interest in social studies are all significantly predicted by location of school and gender of students.

A study on the interrelationships among religiosity, feminist ideology and attitudes toward teenage pregnancy prevention was conducted by Borne (2011). In the interest of this study, teenage pregnancy is seen as a social issue. Although the researcher sought to see how religion and feminist ideologies affect attitudes towards teenage pregnancy, it also sought to find the attitudes of students towards the issue. The study also sought to find out if gender and religion affects attitudes towards teenage pregnancy.

Employing a descriptive survey, the study sampled a population that has not been tested in previous literature, Masters of Social Work (MSW) students, who are different from previous samples due to their overall education level, and possibly, previous experiences they may have had with pregnant or parenting teens and at-risk youth. A self-report survey instrument was used to collect data on the students.

Results from the analysis of data indicated among other things that students had negative attitudes towards teenage pregnancy as a social issue.

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement regarding the best type of sex education for preventing teen pregnancy and most of them indicated that absolute abstinence was the best prevention. It was realised from the study that, students' attitudes towards issues of teenage pregnancy are significantly predicted by the gender and religion.

Karnik, Kamel, and Harper (2000) also conducted a survey to find out the attitudes of college students towards end-of-life issues in State University of New York at Stony Brook School of Medicine. This study was purposed to find out how students see issues of end-of-life and how they give care to the aged. The issues of life are social issues, therefore their study relates to the present study and review of students' attitude towards social issues. Although they were interested in students' attitudes towards end-of-life issues, they also focused on variables like ethnicity of students and their religious affiliation and how they influence and predict their attitude.

Their study was a cross-sectional study that surveyed the attitudes of undergraduate students toward end-of-life care using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire started by an introductory paragraph followed by questions on whether the respondents would like one or more of 5 medical interventions in case they become seriously ill with a small chance of recovery. The last section included questions related to respondent's gender, study major, ethnic background and religious belief. Questionnaires were distributed to undergraduate students at the University of Rochester in the spring of 1997. Potential respondents were identified from two sources: students attending three different classes (history of medicine class, and two medical sociology classes) and from a random sample

obtained using a random number generator to produce numbers between 271,000 and 277,000 which is the range of the undergraduate students' mail box numbers. Students' participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Findings from their study indicated among other things that, students had positive attitude towards issues of end-of-life care. It was assumed that as medical students they are been trained to care for people in the best possible way they can and so their positive attitude was not a surprise. The study also confirmed the influence of ethnicity and religion on their attitudes. Again, it was realised that their attitudes towards end-of-life issues are significantly predicted by their ethnicity and religion.

Smith (2003) formulated that a large body of empirical studies shows that attitudes towards religious issues and religion often serves as a factor promoting positive, healthy outcomes in the lives of American adolescents. Yet existing theoretical explanations for these religious effects remain largely disjointed and fragmented.

The aim of the study was to find out the attitude of adolescents towards issues of religion and as well, formulate a more systematic, integrated, and coherent account of religion's constructive influence in the lives of American youth, suggesting nine key factors (moral directives, spiritual experiences, role models, community and leadership skills, coping skills, cultural capital, social capital, network closure, and extra-community links) that cluster around three key dimensions of influence (moral order, learned competences, and social and

organizational ties). It was also to find out if student's religion predicts their attitudes.

Putting faith in issues in literature and data available on attitudes towards religious issues, the researcher revealed that adolescents mostly have positive attitude towards religious issues like respect for sacred places like the church or mosque, religious leaders and religious activities.

According to the researcher, this may be due to the influence of their level of moral development as he puts moral development together with attitudes towards religious issue. Agreeing with Donahue (1995), it was established that a good number of adolescents engage in religious activities more than most adults, which according to the researcher is the reason why they have positive attitudes towards religious issues. Generally, it was revealed that religion influences how students see a lot of things in life and also significantly predict their attitudes towards religious issues.

There have been several social problems in the recent decade, for example; crimes, drug abuse, sexual harassment. They are all from moral and ethical decline. Although several campaigns raising awareness of morality and ethic concern have been activated by both public and private organizations, the problems still continue.

This prompted Yenilmez, Ayranci, Ay, Erkaya, Ozdemir and Kaptanoglu (2006) to conduct a survey into the changing attitudes of male and female university students towards social issues in the new millennium. The purpose of the study was to explore the general attitudes of some Turkish university students

towards social issues in a developing society and also find out if gender, school, subjects studied and environment of the students affected their attitudes. Aside this, the study also purposed to find out if these demographic characteristics predicted these attitudes of students.

The participants in the study were voluntary, and were informed that this study was being conducted in order to aid understanding of students' current situations. All of the respondents gave their informed consent prior to their inclusion in the study and were promised anonymity. Respondents were told that their responses would not become part of their school record, nor any other type of record.

The interview stage was first completed, with students then going on to complete the social attitude questionnaire. Some of the social issues included in the questionnaire were child care, harmful industrial institutions, homosexuality, censorship, Darwin's theory, dangerous nuclear energy switchboards, a happy world, the death penalty, curettage, beating and a high life standard. The data was collected from 604 students of seven of the university faculties.

Results from the study indicated that there were clear differences in gender attitudes towards all the social issues of interest. It was also revealed that those who attended mission schools (church attached) had positive attitudes towards social issues as compared to those who did not. Again, those who studied subjects related to ethics and religion also had positive attitudes towards social issues as compared to those who did not. The study revealed that environment had an influence on the attitudes of students towards social issues. Lastly, it was revealed

from the study that, students' gender, school, subjects studied and school environment, significantly predicted their attitudes towards social issues.

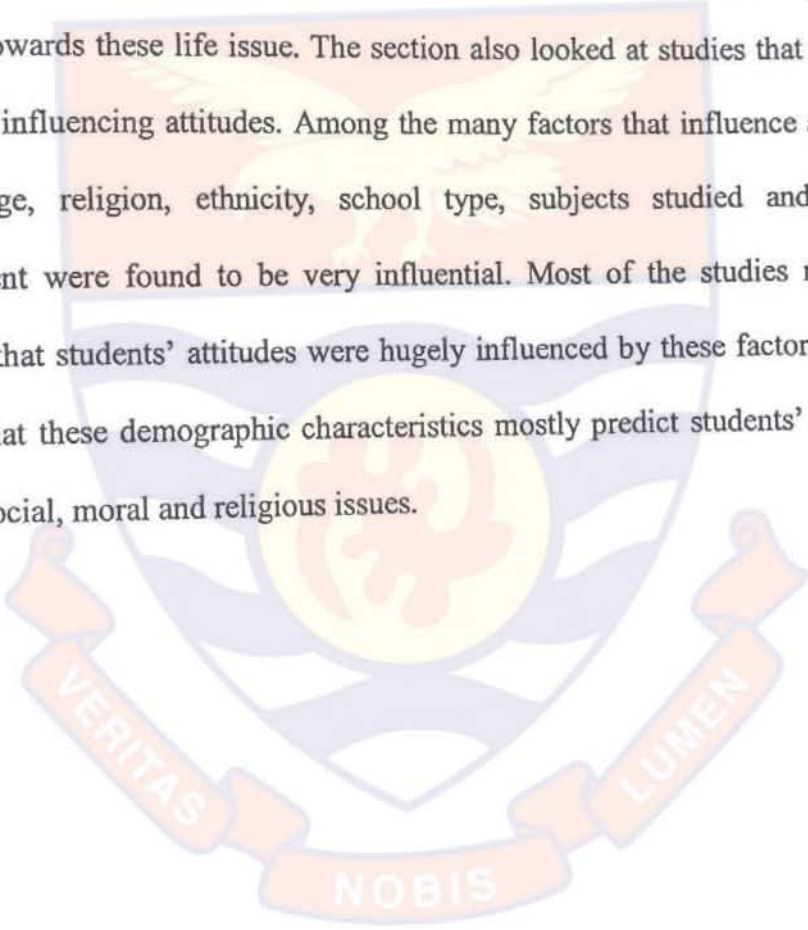
Generally, literature on demographic factors that predict students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues are inconclusive. Studies looked at, have mainly found that students' demographic predict their attitudes while a few have said they do not. These studies reviewed are relevant to this study because it gives perspectives on what others have found. Students demographic characteristics that were seen to predict attitudes were gender, age, race, religion, subjects studied and school environment.

Summary of Review of Related Literature

This chapter of the study focused on reviewing related literature. It was divided into two main sections. The first section was the conceptual review. The conceptual review focused on reviewing issues and concepts undergirding the study. The section tried to define the concept attitude, dealt with the conceptual distinctions among attitudes, beliefs, intentions and perceptions. It then focused on attitude formation and change. With regards to attitude formation and change, a number of theories were looked at from the perspectives of human scientists and behavioural psychologists.

The conceptual framework underpinning this present study was developed from the concepts. The conceptual framework looks at the relationship between demographic factors like gender, age, religion, ethnicity, school type, subjects studied and school environment and attitudes of student towards social, moral and religious issues. The concept of religious and moral education was also dealt with.

The second section is the review of previous studies. These previous studies were reviewed to inform the present study on what is already known about attitudes of students towards social, moral and religious issues, the factors that influence these attitudes as well as demographic characteristics that predict these attitudes. Studies were reviewed on students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. The review showed that students, in most cases, had positive attitudes towards these life issue. The section also looked at studies that focused on factors influencing attitudes. Among the many factors that influence attitudes gender, age, religion, ethnicity, school type, subjects studied and school environment were found to be very influential. Most of the studies reviewed indicated that students' attitudes were hugely influenced by these factors. It also showed that these demographic characteristics mostly predict students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with how the study was conducted. It focuses on the design that was employed, the study population, the number of respondents who were selected from the population and how they were selected. In addition, it focuses on the instrument that was used to collect data from respondents, how the instrument was pilot-tested to ensure reliability and validity, how the data was collected and how it was analysed.

Research Design

In this study, I collected quantitative information from students to help me ascertain their attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. Therefore, the descriptive survey design was adopted for this study (Gay, 1992; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Macmillan (1996) says that “a descriptive study describes a phenomenon; the description is usually in the form of frequencies or percentages, averages and sometimes variability” (p.168). Leedy and Omrod (2005) described this design and said it “involves either identifying the characteristics of an observed phenomenon or exploring possible correlations among two or more phenomena. In every case, descriptive research examines a situation as it is” (p.179).

A survey allows a researcher to assess thoughts, opinions, and feelings as well as analyse behaviour and describe the attitudes of the population from which the sample is drawn. Further, one can compare the attitudes of different populations as well as look for changes in attitudes over time (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Jeanne, 2011). Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) have said that, “a descriptive survey involves asking the same set of questions (what, why, which, how) often in the form of questionnaires of a large number of individuals” (p. 25). To this end, the survey design best suits this study, as the intent is to describe students’ attitude towards religious and moral issues.

The study employed a descriptive cross sectional survey. This design was adopted because it best suits the purpose of the study as well as how I want to carry out the research which is supported by the sources indicated above. Despite the fact that this design is appropriate for the study, it does not go without associated problems. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) are of the view that the difficulties in using the survey method include: ensuring that the questions are clear and not misleading, getting respondents to answer the questions honestly and thoroughly and getting sufficient number of the questionnaires completed and returned. With these difficulties in mind, I made sure that I made clear statements in the questionnaire through pilot testing and content validity before they were administered. Again, questionnaires were administered personally to ensure a high return rate.

Population

There are 62 Senior High Schools in the Brong Ahafo Region. Fourteen of the schools are mission schools and 48 non-mission. Also 24 schools are in the rural areas while 38 were urban schools. On the average, there are 800 students in each of the 24 rural schools and 1,000 students in each of the 38 schools in the urban areas (Brong Ahafo Regional Office, Ghana Education Service, 2014).

The target population for this study was 57,200 senior high school students. However, the accessible population of the study was 18,000 students from the 20 schools selected out of the 62 senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo Region. Ten of these schools were mission schools while the other 10 were non-mission.

The mission schools were: Our Lady of Apostles Girls Senior High School, Kenyasi; Our Lady of Providence Senior High School, Drobo; Sacred Heart Senior High School, Nsoatre; Bechem Presbyterian Senior High School; Yamfo Anglican Senior High School; Wenchi Methodist Senior High School; Techimantia Presbyterian Senior High School; St. James Senior High Seminary School, Abesim; Berekum Presbyterian Senior High School; and Notre Dame Senior High School, Fiapre. The non-missions schools were: Mim Senior High School; Hwidiem Senior High School; Berekum Senior High School; Goka Senior High School; Dormaa Senior High School; Kintampo Senior High School; Sunyani Senior High School; Jema Senior High School; Duayaw Nkwanta Senior High School; and Techiman Senior High School.

Again, 10 were in rural areas while the other 10 were in urban areas. The schools in the rural areas were: Mim Senior High School; Hwidiem Senior High School; Our Lady of Apostles Girls Senior High School, Kenyasi; Our Lady of Providence Senior High School, Drobo; Goka Senior High School; Kintampo Senior High School; Yamfo Anglican Senior High School; Techimantia Presbyterian Senior High School; Jema Senior High School; and Sacred Heart Senior High School. The schools in urban areas were: Bechem Presbyterian Senior High School; Wenchi Methodist Senior High School; St. James Senior High Seminary School, Abesim; Berekum Presbyterian Senior High School; Notre Dame Senior High School, Fiapre; Berekum Senior High School; Dormaa Senior High School; Sunyani Senior High School; Duayaw Nkwanta Senior High School; and Techiman Senior High School.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Out of the estimated 18,000 senior high school students, 900 were selected for the study. This comprised of 400 students from rural schools and 500 students from the urban schools. The sample size is appropriate and representative of the population as it contained students from all the selected schools. Again, a sample size of 900 out of a population of 18000 is appropriate according to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size.

Two techniques were employed to select participants for this study: the cluster and the simple random sampling techniques. The cluster sampling technique was employed to categorise students into rural and urban, and mission

and non-mission. This is the sampling technique that helps in sampling of “naturally occurring groups of individuals” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 173).

The simple random sampling technique was used to select students from the various schools in each cluster (rural and urban, mission and non-mission). This technique gives all participants in the population an equal chance of been selected (Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Jeanne, 2011). In each of the 10 senior high schools in the rural areas, 40 students were selected, totalling 400, and in each of the 10 senior high schools in the urban areas 50 students were selected totalling 500. This was done by the use of a table of random numbers.

Instrument

A researcher generated attitude scale *Mensah social, moral and religious scale* (MSMRS), was employed to collect data for this study. The instrument had 101 closed and open-ended items and consisted of four main sections; A, B, C, and D. The section A sought information from students on their gender, age, religious affiliation, their school type (mission or non-mission), whether they have studied any subject in religion and morality (CRS/IRS/ATR/RME), their school environment (rural or urban) and their tribe or the ethnic group they belong to. This section consisted of items 1 to 7 and were close-ended. On age, the ranges given were: 14-15; 16-17; 18-19; and 19-20. On religious affiliation, participants were to indicate whether they were Christians, Muslims, traditionalist, Hindu, or Buddhist. They were also to indicate their ethnicity by ticking one of these: Ashanti; Brong; Fante; Ewe; Ga; Dagomba; Dagare; Frafra; and Nzema. Participants were to respond by ticking their answers.

Section B focused on students' attitudes towards social issues. It contained 30 items consisting of items 8 to 37. The items were statements made on issues like school absenteeism, respect and how students should relate to the elderly, humility and its importance, peace and harmony in society, education as a very important venture, money and how to work for it, work and its benefits, leisure and its benefits, stress management, rites of passage and their importance, family and its relevance, marriage and the benefits it offers, divorce and homosexuality. Items 8 and 9 were on absenteeism, 10 and 11 were on respect, 12 and 13 were on humility, 14 and 15 were on peace and harmony, 16 and 17 were on education, 18, 19, 20, and 21 were on money and work, 22 and 23 were on leisure, 24 and 25 were on stress management, 26 was on rites of passage, 27, 28, and 29 were on family, 30, 31, and 32 were on marriage, 33 and 34 were on divorce, and 35, 36, and 37 were on homosexuality. Participants were to indicate their responses by ticking whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or were undecided with the statements. The weights for the scale were: Strongly agree= 5; Agree=4; Disagree= 3; Strongly disagree=2; and Undecided= 1. For this section the mean and the standard deviation ranges were between 5 and 1.

For the section C, focus was on students' attitudes towards moral issues. It contained 37 items consisting of items 38 to 74. Items focused on issues like smoking and its effects on the student, alcoholism and its effects, drug abuse and the need for people to abstain from drugs, stealing and its implications, the need to refrain from armed robbery, internet fraud and its negative effects, corruption and how to deal with it, adolescent sex and its effects, dealing with rape, dealing

with sexual harassment, instant justice, murder, abortion and its effects and euthanasia. Items 38 and 39 were on smoking, 40, 41, and 42 were on alcoholism, 43, 44, and 45 were on drug abuse, 46, 47 and 48 were on stealing, 49 and 50 were on internet fraud 51, 52, 53 and 54 were on bribery and corruption. Also, items 55, 56 and 57 were on casual sex, 58, 59 and 60 were on rape, 61 and 62 on sexual harassment, 66, 67 and 68 were on abortion, 69 and 70 were on euthanasia and items 73 and 74 were on cheating. Participants were to indicate their responses by ticking whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or were undecided on the statements. The weights for the scale were: Strongly agree= 5; Agree=4; Disagree= 3; Strongly disagree=2; and Undecided=1. For this section the mean and the standard deviation ranges were between 5 and 1.

Lastly, section D also focused on students' attitudes towards religious issues. This section contained 27 items consisting of items 75 to 101. These items were formulated from religious issues like existence of God, purpose of creation, worship, prayer, faith, repentance, forgiveness, confession of sins, spirituality and life. Items 75, 76 and 77 were on the existence of God, 78 and 79 were on the purpose of creation, 80 and 81 were on worship, 82, 83, and 84 were on prayer, 85, 86 and 87 were on faith, 88, 89 and 90 were on repentance, 91, 92 and 93 were on forgiveness, 94, 95 and 96 were on confession, 97 and 98 were on spirituality, 100 and 101 were also on life. Participants were to indicate their responses by ticking whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree or were undecided on the statements. The weights for the scale were:

Strongly agree= 5; Agree=4; Disagree= 3; Strongly disagree=2; and Undecided=1. For this section the mean and the standard deviation ranges were between 5 and 1 (see Appendix B for a copy of the instrument).

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The instrument underwent processes for both face and content validity. Face validity of the research instrument was established by ensuring that questions in the questionnaire relate with the research questions. The items were checked using the research questions of the study as yardsticks. Content validity of the instrument was established by first making the questionnaire available to my colleague graduate students for scrutiny. After this, it was subjected to critical vetting and streamlining by my supervisor, Rev. Professor Asare-Danso to ensure that items in the questionnaire were related to issues in the literature and can help in acquiring the appropriate data. This brought out some ambiguous statements as well as erroneous expressions in the instrument. These errors identified were corrected.

Again, a pilot test was conducted in the Brong Ahafo Region with four schools. These were schools that were not selected for the main data collection but shared similar characteristics with the selected schools. The school were: Nkoranman Senior High School, Seikwa; Chiraa Senior High School; and Yefiriman Senior High School and Twene Amanfo Senior High/Technical School.

Twenty five students were selected from each of the four schools using the simple random sampling technique. In all, 100 students were selected for the

pilot. Data collected was analysed using SPSS version 20 to help establish the internal consistency of the instrument. The attitudes towards social issues subscale of the instrument consisted of 30 items ($\alpha=.818$), the attitudes towards moral issues subscale consisted of 37 items ($\alpha=.827$), and the attitudes towards religious issues subscale consisted of 27 items ($\alpha=.818$). Overall, the instrument was determined to be highly reliable with a Cronbach's alpha of .892 (Trochim, 2006). After this, the main data collection commenced. The final reliability for the instrument after the main data collection was determined to be high with a Cronbach's alpha of .893 (Trochim, 2006).

Data Collection Procedure

After the approval was obtained from the University of Cape Coast, a letter from the Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, College of Education Studies, introducing me as a postgraduate student was acquired. This letter was submitted to the Brong Ahafo regional Education Service office to seek permission to collect data in the region. The purpose of the data collection was made known to the office through the letter.

After permission was granted, copies of the letter were sent to the headmasters of the 20 senior high schools selected followed by discussions. Again the purpose of the exercise was made known to them and asked for an appropriate date for data collection. After permission was sought from the Heads of the schools, teachers and students were contacted, rapport established and convenient dates for data collection were agreed upon. The services of a trained research assistant was employed and remunerated accordingly

In both rural and urban or mission and non-mission schools, the purpose of the data collection was explained to teachers and students. The teachers were informed because their instructional times were used for the exercise. Most of the rural schools had three courses (General Arts, Science and Business) while most of the urban schools had six courses (General Arts, Science, Business, Agriculture, Home Economics and Technical). In each school, attention was given to form one students. This is because RME was taught at form one in the schools that teach it. Again, the form three students were preparing for their final exams so I decided not to engage them so far as the form one students could give the needed information.

The students were selected using a table of random numbers. The purpose of the data collection exercise was explained to the students selected. Participants were assured of the confidentiality with which the information they are given will be treated. After this, students were given the instruments for them to respond to. Those who had difficulty with some aspects of the instrument were given assistance by the trained research assistant and myself. This was repeated in all the 20 senior high schools during data collection. As indicated, in each rural school 40 students were selected and in each urban school 50 students were selected. Data collection lasted for a period of four weeks. In all the instruments were administered to 900 students with the help of a trained research assistant. I had a return rate of 100%.

Data Analysis

Data collected from students were screened for normality and homogeneity of data and these assumptions were not violated. Data was then analysed with a data analysis software, SPSS version 20. Research questions one, two, and three were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations. Research question four was analysed using factorial Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Research question five was analysed using multiple regression. See Table 1 for details.

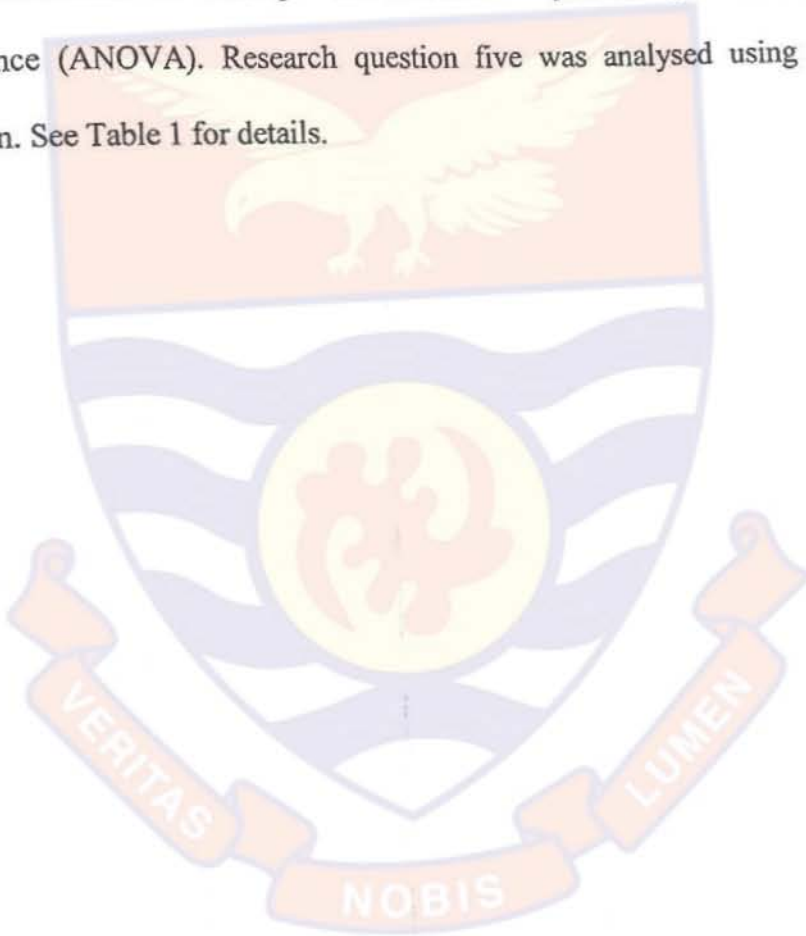


Table 1: Statistical Tools for Research Questions

	Scale	Statistical Tool(s)
1. What attitudes do senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region exhibit towards social issues?	Interval	Descriptive statistic: frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation
2. What attitudes do senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region exhibit towards moral issues?	Interval	Descriptive statistic: frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation
3. What attitudes do senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region exhibit towards religious issues?	Interval	Descriptive statistic: frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation
4. What differences exist in the attitude of senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region towards social, moral and religious issues based on gender, subjects, type of school, environment, age, ethnicity and religious affiliation?	Interval	Factorial Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)
5. What demographic factors predict the attitudes of senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region towards social, moral and religious issues?	Interval	Multiple regression

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter of the study focuses on the results of the analysis conducted on the data collected. The results emanating from the analysis are presented and discussed in relation to the research questions that undergird the study. The chapter is in two sections; characteristics of respondents and the main results and discussions.

Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents for this study were 900 selected students of senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo region. There were 480 (53.3%) males and 420 (46.7%) females. Sixty percent of the participants were studying RME/CRS while the remaining 40% were not. In terms of the school environment, 500 (55.6%) students were selected from urban schools while the remaining 400 were from rural schools. Majority ($n = 560$; 62.3%) of the students were between the ages of 18-21 years. The characteristics that were very revealing were religious affiliation and ethnicity. The results show that about 6.6 percent (Hindu, 4.4%; Buddhist, 2.2%) of the participants did not belong to the three known religions in Ghana. The participants were from various ethnic groups (Fantes, 18.9%; Ewes, 7.8%; Dagares, 6.7%; Dagombas, 5.6%; Nzemas, 3.3; and Gas, 2.2%) found in Ghana. However majority ($n = 500$; 55.6%) of the students were Bonos and Ashantis and this may be due to the location of the research site.

Table 2: Demographic Information on Respondents

Demographics	Subscale	No.	%
Gender	Male	480	53.3
	Female	420	46.7
Age Ranges	14-15	30	3.3
	16-17	310	34.4
	18-19	420	46.7
	20-21	140	15.6
School Type	Mission	450	50
	Non-mission	450	50
Studying RME	Yes	540	60
	No	360	40
Environment	Rural	400	44.4
	Urban	500	55.6
Religion	Christian	610	67.8
	Muslim	120	13.3
	Traditionalist	110	12.2
	Hindu	40	4.4
	Buddhist	20	2.2
Ethnicity	Ashanti	260	28.9
	Brong	240	26.7
	Fante	170	18.9
	Ewe	70	7.8
	Ga	20	2.2
	Dagomba	50	5.6
	Dagare	60	6.7
Nzema	30	3.3	

For these participants, there were 450 students each from mission and non-mission schools. Details are presented in Table 2.

Main Results and Discussion

This section of the chapter presents the results of the data analysis relating to the research questions that undergirded the study. The results and the discussions of the results are presented based on the research questions.

What Attitudes do Senior High School Students in the Brong Ahafo Region Exhibit Towards Social Issues?

This research question sought to find out the views of students who were selected for the study on social issues. It sought to find out if students agree or disagree with specific statements made about some social issues. Social issues in this context, included absenteeism, respect for the elderly, humility, peace and harmony, education, stress management, family, marriage, divorce and homosexuality. Participants were to indicate their views on each item on a scale of Strongly agree = 5; Agree = 4; Disagree = 3; Strongly disagree = 2; and Undecided = 1. The mean range for each item was from 1-5 therefore, a mean above 3 to 5 indicates agreement with the statement while a mean above 1 to 3 indicates disagreement. Detail of results are in Table 3.

Results in Table 3 show the extent to which students selected agreed or disagreed to statements made on specific social issues thereby indicating their attitudes. Statements on peace, humility and hard work had the highest means out of 5. Results from the analysis showed that almost all ($n = 830$) the students either strongly agreed or agreed ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 0.78$) that students should act as agents of peace in their society. The statement, 'peace is important for development of the society' also had a similar response with 830

out of 900 students in Cape Coast, Ghana, indicating they either strongly agreed or agreed ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 0.84$). Participants may have responded this way because they study social studies as well as citizenship education which exposes them to the negative effects of conflicts on the society and the development of the country as a whole. Again, they are aware of the results of some of the conflicts in the Ghanaian context.

Again, majority of the students responded positively ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.98$) on humility being a good virtue. And then majority ($n = 830$) of the students again either strongly agreed or agreed ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.01$) that it is good to be humble as a human being. Again, it is important to state that this response from the participants on humility may be due to the informal moral training they receive from home and subjects like social studies, Christian Religious Studies and Religious and Moral Education that expose them to the outcomes and benefits of being humble in life. The issue of hard work was the next to record a positive response. Out of 900 students, 730 either strongly agreed or agreed ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.01$) that laziness brings about poverty and therefore it is good to work hard always. The students also exhibited positive attitude towards education. Out of 900, 790 of them either strongly agreed or agreed ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.11$) that education is key to the development of the individual and the society at large. Their responses may be partly due to the intensive education on the need to be educated. This is just what Mukama (2010) found when he studied the relationship between peer group influence, alcohol consumption, and students' attitudes towards education. He found that students' had positive attitudes towards education and believed it was their only means to self-independence.

Table 3: Students' Attitudes Towards Social Issues

Statements	SA/A		UD		DA/SDA		Mean	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Absenting yourself from school is not good	740	82.3	30	3.3	130	14.4	4.3	1.2
No student should absent himself from school	770	85.6	110	12.2	20	2.2	4.2	1.3
Students should respect authorities in school	770	85.6	110	12.2	20	2.2	4.1	1.3
Students should respect their parents, and elders in their communities	770	85.6	110	12.2	20	2.2	4.2	1.3
Humility is a good thing	830	82.2	50	5.6	20	2.2	4.6	.98
It is good to be humble as a human being	830	82.2	50	5.6	20	2.2	4.4	1.0
Students should be agents of peace	830	82.2	20	2.2	50	5.6	4.6	.78
Peace is important for the development of society	830	82.2	20	2.2	50	5.6	4.6	.84
Education is key to the development of the individual and the society	790	87.8	60	6.7	50	5.6	4.3	1.1

Table 3 continued

Statements	SA/A		UD		DA/SDA		Mean	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
You have to work for money	750	83.3	50	5.6	100	11.1	4.1	1.0
Hard work pays with a lot of pleasures	700	77.8	70	7.8	130	14.4	3.9	1.2
You don't have to steal for money	700	77.8	140	15.6	60	6.6	3.9	1.4
Laziness brings about poverty	730	81.1	20	2.2	150	16.6	4.4	1.0
Leisure times help us to recover lost energy	690	76.7	50	5.6	160	17.8	4.0	1.2
Leisure times help us to have fun	640	71.1	20	2.2	240	26.6	3.9	1.1
Stress management is good for everybody	680	75.6	60	6.7	160	17.8	4.0	1.1
Stress should be dealt with from the causes	640	71.1	140	15.6	120	13.3	3.7	1.5
Rites of passage is an integral part of life	700	77.8	80	8.9	120	13.3	3.8	1.2
Family is an important part of society	760	85.5	80	8.9	60	6.6	4.1	1.1

Table 3 continued

Statements	SA/A		UD		DA/SDA		Mean	SD	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
We need to cherish our family relations	620	68.9	100	11.1	180	20	3.8	1.2	
One has to fulfil all family obligations, duties and responsibilities	780	86.7	40	4.4	80	8.9	4.2	.96	
Marriage is a sacred relationship before our creator	660	73.3	80	8.9	160	17.8	3.9	1.3	
Adultery should not be encouraged in marriage	700	77.8	100	11.1	100	11.1	3.9	1.3	
Married couples should be responsible for each other	780	86.7	40	4.4	80	8.9	4.2	1.1	
It is not good to divorce even if your partner cheats	580	64.4	110	12.2	210	23.4	3.6	1.3	
Divorce causes broken homes and single parenthood	610	67.8	90	10	200	22.3	3.8	1.3	
Homosexuality is not good for our society	570	63.3	130	14.4	200	22.3	3.6	1.5	
Students should not engage in homosexuality	690	76.7	130	14.4	80	8.9	4.0	1.1	
Mean of means = 4.2									

Statements on divorce, homosexuality, stress, family and rites of passage recorded the lowest means in the context and relation to the overall mean. About 580 students either strongly agreed or agreed that it is not good to divorce your partner even if they cheat on you, while 210 either strongly disagreed or disagreed ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.31$). In this light, the students are seen as having a positive attitude towards marriage indicating that divorce is not good. This response may be due to the fact that almost all the religious participants indicated they belong to, have doctrines that frown on divorce and this affects their attitudes towards it. Again, most participants are aware of the negative effects of divorce on children and therefore their response. Fagan's (2006) study revealed both consistencies and contradictions with the findings of this study. He found in his study of students' attitudes towards marriage and divorce that, students had positive attitudes towards marriage. In the same study he also found that the students endorsed divorce which contradicts the findings of the present study. This may be due to the cultural and religious backgrounds of the participants he used in his study as they are different from that of participants in this present study.

More than half of the students either strongly agreed or agreed that homosexuality is not a good practice for the Ghanaian society while 200 either strongly disagreed or disagreed ($n = 570$, $M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.50$). This meant that students did not like homosexuality and therefore a positive attitude towards disliking it. This response may be due to the campaign against homosexuality that most religious groups in the Ghanaian society have been embarking on. This finding is contrary to Lehman and Thornwall (2011) who found that American college students had positive attitudes towards

homosexuality. This conclusion may be due to the cultural differences between the two research sites as they conducted their study in the United States of America. Managing and dealing with stress from its causes also had 640 students either strongly agreeing or agreeing while only 120 disagreed or strongly disagreed ($M = 3.71, SD = 1.51$). Most of the students responded positively to the institution of rites of passage as they either strongly agreed or agreed that rites of passage is an integral part of the life of the Ghanaian ($n = 700, M = 3.81, SD = 1.21$).

The results show that senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region exhibit positive attitude towards social issues. Their responses recorded an overall mean of 4.2 out of 5. This means that the students responded positively to all the social issues raised in the study. This finding compared to other research findings indicates both similarities and differences in the attitude of students towards social issues. Most studies (Lehman, & Thornwall, 2011; Mukama, 2010; Paruk, Mohamed, Patel, & Ramgoon, 2006; Karnik, Kamel, & Harper, 2000; and Fagan, 2006) have indicated that students had positive attitudes towards social issues. However, few studies (Borne, 2011; Fagan, 2006) also indicated that students had negative attitudes towards social issues. The overall positive attitude of students toward social issues in this study may be due to the norms, values and beliefs of the Ghanaian society. Issues like homosexuality, divorce, teenage pregnancy and absenteeism are frowned upon, and issues like marriage, education, rites of passage, family, respect for the elderly, peace and hard work are encouraged.

What Attitudes do Senior High School Students in the Brong Ahafo Region Exhibit Towards Moral Issues?
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The study sought to find out whether students agreed or disagreed to statements on moral issues. In the context of this study, some of the moral issues considered were cheating, smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse, stealing, armed robbery, internet fraud, corruption, adolescent sex, rape, sexual harassment, instant justice, murder and abortion. Participants were to indicate their views on a scale of Strongly agree = 5; Agree = 4; Disagree = 3; Strongly disagree = 2; and Undecided = 1. The mean range for each item was from 1-5 therefore, a mean above 3 to 5 indicates agreement with the statement while a mean above 1 to 3 indicates disagreement. Detail of results are in Table 4.

Table 4 results show that almost all ($n = 840$) the students in this study either strongly agreed or agreed that alcohol consumption can be harmful to their health ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.96$). This finding can be attributed to the fact that these participants are receiving education on religious and moral issues and the harmful effects of alcoholism may have been dealt with. On the issue of abortion, majority of the students affirmed that abortion can lead to death ($n = 860$, $M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.72$). This shows that the participants in this study had a positive attitude towards the prevention or avoidance of abortion. This may also be due to the fact that these participants have been exposed to the harmful effects of illegal abortion. It may also be due to the fact that most of the participant have knowledge of what abortion has done to identifiable people and their education both in their communities and school. This findings is congruent with the findings of Awopetu and Fasanmi (2011) whose study found that students had negative attitude towards abortion, thereby having a

positive attitude towards the prevention and avoidance of abortion. They attributed this finding to the religious background of the participants since most of them were Christians. Therefore they concluded that religion affects attitudes towards abortion. This finding however is contrary to the findings of Jones' (2006) finding when it was revealed in his study that students had a positive attitudes towards abortion. Thus participants in that study were in favour of abortion. He attributed this to the fact that some of the participants expressed the need for legal abortion when they think they are not ready to become mothers.

Again, out of 900 students, 860 either strongly agreed or agreed that sexual harassment is not a good thing and that students who do that should be reported to school authorities ($M = 4.40, SD = 0.74$). The issue of casual sex leading to teenage and unwanted pregnancy had 820 students either strongly agreeing or agreeing while only 80 disagreed ($M = 4.40, SD = 0.74$). This may be due to the fact that students may have been victims or witnesses to this. It falls in line with the findings of Odimegwu (2005) who found in his study that adolescents frowned on sexual activities because it can lead to unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Table 4: Students' Attitudes Towards Moral Issues

Statements	SA/A		UD		DA/SDA		Mean	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Smoking is not good for my health	670	74.4	80	8.9	150	16.7	4.0	1.3
Smoking won't help me to learn	740	82.2	50	5.6	110	12.2	3.9	1.0
Alcoholism is a bad habit for students	820	91.1	20	2.2	60	6.6	4.3	.90
Alcohol consumption can be harmful to my health	840	93.3	40	4.4	20	2.2	4.6	.96
Alcohol prevents me from thinking critically	670	74.4	40	4.4	190	21.1	4.0	1.3
Taking of drugs by students is not a good habit	690	76.7	90	10	120	13.3	3.9	1.2
Drug abuse is not a good practice for anyone	630	70	20	2.2	250	27.8	4.0	1.2
Drug abuse can destroy one's life	650	72.2	140	15.6	110	12.2	3.8	1.4
Stealing is not a good way of acquiring something	790	87.8	40	4.4	70	7.8	4.3	1.1
Armed robbery should be discouraged in our society	810	90	50	5.6	40	4.4	4.4	1.1

Table 4 continued

Statements	SA/A		UD		DA/SDA		Mean	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Students should never engage in stealing or armed robbery	690	76.6	20	2.2	190	21.1	4.2	1.3
Internet fraud 'SAKAWA' is not a good practice	740	82.2	40	4.4	120	13.3	4.4	1.1
'SAKAWA' is stealing from innocent people and it is bad	660	73.4	180	20	60	6.6	3.8	1.6
Bribe taking is not good for development of our society	730	81.1	110	12.2	60	6.6	4.1	1.3
People should stop offering/taking bribes	680	75.5	50	5.6	170	18.9	4.2	1.3
Corruption brings development to a halt	780	86.7	20	2.2	100	11.1	4.4	.95
Students should avoid bribery and corruption	810	90	40	4.4	50	5.6	4.4	.99
Students should not engage in sexual activities before marriage	730	81.1	100	11.1	70	7.7	4.0	1.3
Casual sex can lead to teenage/unwanted pregnancy	820	91.1	0	0	80	8.9	4.4	.74
Casual sex can lead to contraction of diseases like HIV/AIDS	700	77.8	70	7.8	130	14.5	4.0	1.2

Table 4 continued

Statements	SA/A		UD		DA/SDA		Mean	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Rape is very immoral and should be avoided	720	80	60	6.7	120	13.3	4.2	1.2
Students who rape should be punished by the laws	780	86.6	60	6.7	60	6.7	4.4	1.1
Rape has psychological effect on the victim	780	86.6	80	8.9	40	4.4	4.1	1.2
Sexual harassment by students should be reported	860	95.6	0	0	40	4.4	4.4	.71
It is not good to sexually harass anyone	800	88.9	40	4.4	60	6.6	4.3	1.0
People who offend should not be punished without hearing them	680	75.5	60	6.7	160	17.7	4.1	1.2
Instant justice is abuse of human rights	660	73.3	140	15.6	100	11.1	3.7	1.4
Murder is not good and must be punished	740	82.2	140	15.6	20	2.2	3.9	1.4
Students who get pregnant should not abort it	740	82.2	80	8.9	80	8.9	4.1	1.2
Abortion can lead to death of the one who is pregnant	860	95.6	0	0	40	4.4	4.5	.72

Table 4 continued

Statements	SA/A		UD		DA/SDA		Mean	SD	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
Abortion can destroy a womb forever	760	84.5	40	4.4	100	11.1	4.0	1.1	
It is not good to kill people who are sick and going to die	710	78.9	110	12.2	80	8.9	3.8	1.3	
Euthanasia 'mercy killing' is murder and should be avoided	660	73.4	150	16.7	90	10	3.6	1.3	
Child bearing is good	680	75.5	60	6.7	160	17.7	3.8	1.2	
Artificial insemination is not moral and defeats natural laws	590	65.6	100	11.1	210	23.3	3.8	1.3	
Cheating in examinations is not a good practice	620	68.9	80	8.9	200	22.3	3.5	1.2	
Cheating develops stealing in students	650	73.2	120	13.3	130	14.4	3.6	1.2	
Mean of means=4.1									

Majority of the students indicated that it is not good to be corrupt. They either strongly agreed or agreed that students should avoid bribery and corruption ($n = 810, M = 4.40, SD = 0.99$) while 780 (86.7%) also either strongly agreed or agreed that corruption brings development to a halt and so should be avoided ($M = 4.41, SD = .095$). Participants are exposed to Citizenship Education, Social Studies and Religious and Moral issues which are all part of the senior high school curriculum. These exposures may account for the attitudes that they have towards corruption since these subjects talk about the effects of corruption on the entire Ghanaian society. Also, this finding or attitude of participants may be due to the intensive education and campaign against corruption and corrupt leaders which are ongoing in the country. Again, education is supposed to inculcate the right morals in students and so it isn't surprising to see this in the students.

Table 4 shows that statements on cheating, euthanasia, instant justice and artificial insemination recorded the lowest positive response. Most students (68.9%) indicated that cheating in examinations is not a good practice ($n = 620, M = 3.50, SD = 1.21$) while 73.2 percent also either strongly agreed or agreed that cheating in examinations develops the act of stealing in students for life ($n = 650, M = 3.61, SD = 1.21$). Participants may not like to cheat because they have been given enough knowledge on the effects of cheating on themselves, the society and the country as a whole through subjects like social studies as well as the informal moral training they receive at home through their parents and siblings. This was a surprise finding because participants did not like to cheat. However, cheating among students has been established through extensive research. This finding confirmed the findings of

Ugodulunwa (2006) and Coats <https://ir.ucc.edu.gh/xmlui> study indicated that students had a positive attitude towards cheating, thus they did not like to cheat in examinations.

Out of 900 students, 660 responded positively to the statement that euthanasia “mercy killing” is murder and should not be practiced in our society ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.31$). This is likely to be because of the value the Ghanaian society places on human life. Apart from that, various religious bodies which participants belong to, all have value for human life as a cardinal issue in their doctrines. This is because it is believed in all religions that, the Ultimate Reality is the giver and taker of human life. Congruent with this, Ramabele (2004) found in his study in South Africa that students had a very positive attitude towards euthanasia. That is to say, they were mostly not in favour of ‘mercy killing’ and I am very positive that his findings are similar to that of this present study because of the African values that place importance on human life. Participants in this study again either strongly agreed or agreed that instant justice is abuse of human rights whiles 140 were undecided and 100 either strongly disagreed or disagreed ($n = 840$, $M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.41$). Artificial insemination also recorded 590 of the students either strongly agreeing or agreeing that it is not moral and defeats natural laws ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.31$). Meaning most participants in this study strongly stood against getting pregnant not by the usual way, thus a man and a woman having sexual intercourse and the woman getting pregnant. It therefore implies that participants would prefer getting pregnant the normal way and not through artificial insemination.

Putting together results from Table 4, it becomes clear that Senior High School students in the Brong Ahafo region had positive attitude towards moral

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issues. Their responses recorded an overall mean of 4.1 out of 5. This finding implies that students responded positively to positive statements on moral issues and responded negatively to negative statements on moral issues. This positive attitude towards moral issues can be attributed to the fact that participants are receiving education in social studies, citizenship education and religious and moral issue and have been exposed to most of the effects and implications of immorality on the individual, society and the country as a whole as well as the culture (norms, values and beliefs) of the various societies these students are coming from. This can also be attributed to the informal moral training students acquire from their various homes.

This finding is congruent with Ugodulunwa (2006), Odimegwu (2005) and Awopetu and Fasanmi (2011) who found in their various studies that students had positive attitudes towards moral issues. Others either indicated that students had neutral attitudes towards moral issues (Acilar, 2010; Jones, 2006) or negative attitudes towards moral issues (Ramabele, 2004).

What Attitudes do Senior High School Students in the Brong Ahafo Region Exhibit Towards Religious Issues?

The study sought to establish the attitudes of students towards religious issue. Students were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with statements on religious issues. Their responses to these statements determined their attitudes towards the issues. Some of the religious issues included existence of God, purpose of creation, worship, prayer, faith, repentance, forgiveness, confession of sins, spirituality and life. Participants were to indicate their views on a scale of Strongly agree = 5; Agree = 4; Disagree = 3; Strongly disagree = 2; and Undecided = 1. The mean range for each item was

from 1-5 therefore a mean above 3 to 5 indicates agreement with the statement while a mean above 1 to 3 indicates disagreement. Table 5 gives details of results from data.

Results in Table 5 show the extent to which students agree or disagree with statements on religious issues. Their responses (agreement or disagreement) indicates their attitudes towards these religious issues. Almost all ($n = 770$, $M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.10$) the students either strongly agreed or agreed that without prayer humans cannot communicate with God and get what they want from him while 90 either strongly disagreed or disagreed. Out of 900 students, 740 (82.2%) also affirmed that prayer is communication between man and God while 140 of them either strongly disagreed or disagreed ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.11$). This is rightly so because it is known that prayer is the only way to communicate with God. It was interesting to know that some students did not agree with that.

Again, most ($n = 760$, $M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.31$) students either strongly agreed or agreed that human life is very precious and should be cherished while 50 (5.6%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed. Again, this may be due to the value that the Ghanaian society places on human life. In the religious context, God is the only giver of life and therefore he alone can take it back. This response may also be due to the fact that participants are receiving education on religious and moral education which exposes them to the reasons and purpose of God creating human beings.

Table 5: Students' Attitudes Towards Religious Issues

Statements	SA/A		UD		DA/SDA		Mean	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
There is a creator of the universe	700	77.8	40	4.4	160	17.8	4.1	1.2
God oversees everything that goes on in the world	720	80	60	6.7	120	13.3	4.1	1.2
God has power to create and destroy	660	73.4	50	5.6	190	21.1	4.1	1.2
God created man to inhabit the earth and make use of the things on earth	520	57.8	170	18.9	210	23.3	3.4	1.5
Man is supposed to take care of the earth and the things on it	540	60	90	10	270	30	3.6	1.4
God is to be worshiped by human beings for the good things he does for them	520	57.8	200	22.2	180	20	3.3	1.6
Different people have different ways of worshipping and praising God	660	73.4	110	12.2	130	14.4	3.8	1.3
Prayer is communication between man and God	740	82.2	20	2.2	140	15.5	4.3	1.1
Without prayer humans cannot get what they want from God	770	85.5	40	4.4	90	10	4.4	1.1
It is good to always pray as a religious person	690	76.7	80	8.9	130	14.4	4.1	1.2

Table 5 continued

Statements	SA/A		UD		DA/SDA		Mean	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Faith is an essential part of religion	710	78.9	20	2.2	170	18.9	4.1	1.1
Without faith it will be difficult to be religious	570	63.4	90	10	240	26.7	3.9	1.4
Without faith you cannot receive from God	660	73.3	60	6.7	180	20	4.0	1.3
It is good to show repentance when you offend God and your friends	660	73.3	60	6.7	180	20	3.9	1.3
Repentance is the only way God forgives humans	660	73.3	120	13.3	120	13.4	3.8	1.4
Repentance indicates we are sorry about what we have done	660	73.3	60	6.7	180	20	3.9	1.3
Forgiveness is the divine nature of God	700	77.8	140	15.6	60	6.7	3.8	1.3
We have to forgive people who offend us no matter how bad we feel	620	68.9	40	4.4	240	26.7	3.7	1.2
If you don't forgive people who offend you, God won't forgive you your sins	640	71.1	60	6.7	200	22.2	3.9	1.3
Confession of sins is an integral part of religion	610	67.7	80	8.9	210	23.3	3.6	1.2

Table 5 continued

Statements	SA/A		UD		DA/SDA		Mean	SD	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
Confession brings about forgiveness from God	600	66.7	140	15.6	160	17.7	3.8	1.5	
Students should confess when they sin or go against school regulations	540	60	140	15.6	220	24.4	3.4	1.5	
Spirituality is vital to have a good religious life	570	63.3	180	20	150	16.6	3.6	1.6	
People who are not spiritual are not religious	550	61.1	130	14.4	220	24.4	3.6	1.5	
Life is to be lived in accordance with what God has stipulated for us.	620	68.9	80	8.9	200	22.2	3.9	1.3	
Enjoy life to the fullest	730	81.1	80	8.9	90	10	4.0	1.3	
Human life is precious	760	84.5	90	10	50	5.6	4.1	1.3	
Mean of means=3.9									

On the issues of God's existence, majority of the students responded positively that there is a creator of the universe ($n = 700$; $M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.20$), God oversees everything that goes on in the world ($n = 720$; $M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.20$) and that God has power to create and destroy ($n = 660$; $M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.20$). All the participants indicated that they belonged to religious groups and these groups believe in the existence of God, therefore these responses were expected. It would have been a surprise finding if the participants responded negatively to the existence of the ultimate reality.

The results show that issues of worship, confession, the purpose of humans on earth and spirituality recorded the lowest positive responses in context and in relation to the overall mean. However, more than half ($n = 520$, 57.8%) of the students either strongly agreed or agreed that God is to be worshipped by human beings for the good things he does for them while about 180 (20%) of them strongly disagreed or disagreed to this ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.61$). Worship is an integral part of religion and because of that all religions have devised a way of worshipping God. However, some people believe it should not be a ritual. It is therefore not surprising that some of the participants responded negatively to worshipping God for the good things he does for humans. Again, 540 (60%) students either strongly agreed or agreed that students should confess when they sin or go against school regulations while 220 (24.4%) of them either strongly disagreed or disagreed ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 1.51$). This may be because of the two dimensions here. For the religious dimension, all religious people need to acknowledge that they are sinful and therefore must always confess their sins. However on the social dimension, students would not want to confess when they go against school regulations

believe in the fear of punishment. Out of 900 students, 520 (57.8%) affirmed positively that God created man to inhabit the earth and make use of the things on it while 210 (23.3%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed ($M = 3.41, SD = 1.51$). Most of the students positively affirmed that spirituality is vital to have a good religious life ($n = 570, M = 3.61, SD = 1.61$) and that people who are not spiritual are not religious ($n = 550, M = 3.61, SD = 1.51$).

Put together, results from Table 5 reveals that Senior High School students in the Brong Ahafo region exhibited positive attitudes towards religious issue. This is because their responses resulted in an overall mean of 3.9. This finding implies that students responded positively to positive statements on religious issues and responded negatively to negative statements on moral issues. This positive attitude towards religious issues can be attributed to the fact that Ghana is seen as a religious nation. Again, the demographic information about the participants in this study indicated that all of them belong to a religious group. This may also be due to the influence of their level of moral development. Therefore it is not surprising that they have a positive attitude towards religious issues.

This finding is comparable to findings in the literature. Smith's (2003) study that focused on American adolescents' attitudes towards religious issues revealed that adolescents mostly have positive attitude towards religious issues like respect for sacred places like the church or mosque, religious leaders and religious activities. Although there is societal differences between his study and the present, the findings are the same. Kasomo (2012), Asare-Danso (2011) and Collie and Apt (1999) who conducted their studies in Africa also found that students had very positive attitude towards Christian/Religious

studies, RME, which means that they had positive attitudes towards religious issues. They established that a good number of adolescents/students engage in religious activities more than most adults, which according to the researcher is the reason why they have positive attitudes towards religious issues.

What Differences exist in the Attitude of Senior High School Students in the Brong Ahafo Region towards Social, Moral and Religious Issues Based on their Demographic Characteristics?

This research question sought to find out if students' demographic characteristics have any effect on their attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. These demographics were gender, age, school environment (urban or rural), subjects studied (CRS/RME or not), school type (mission and non-mission), ethnicity and religious affiliation. Separate factorial between groups univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted for the demographics and each of the dependent variables (social issues, moral issues and religious issues). Preliminary assumptions testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, and none of these assumptions was violated. The effect of the demographics on students attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues are presented in the paragraphs that follow.

Differences in Attitudes Towards Social Issues based of Demographics

A factorial ANOVA was conducted to find out the effects of students' demographic characteristics (gender, age, school environment, subjects studied, school type, ethnicity and religious affiliation) on their attitudes towards social issues. These social issues include; absenteeism, respect,

human rights, education, money, work, leisure, stress management, rites of passage, family, marriage, divorce and homosexuality.

Table 6: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Social Issues

Source	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta ²
Corrected Model	52	57410.423	.000*	1.000
Intercept	1	112532928.12	.000*	1.000
Gender	1	10641.795	.000*	.926
Age	2	8177.845	.000*	.951
School type	1	.675	.411	.001
Subject	1	18351.667	.000*	.956
Environment	1	2857.916	.000*	.771
Religion	2	46892.388	.000*	.991
Ethnicity	5	112566.853	.000*	.998
Age*School type	2	14.419	.000**	.033
Age*Environment	1	46.538	.000**	.052
School type*Religion	1	21.718	.000**	.025

*Significant at $p \leq 0.05$

** Significant interaction effect at $p \leq 0.05$

The results of the General Linear Model (GLM) corrected model showed a statistically significant effect of the demographics on students' attitudes towards social issues, $F(52, 847) = 57410, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = 1.00$. Statistical significant interactions were found between age and school type $F(2, 847) = 14.42, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .033$, age and environment $F(1, 847) = 46.54, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .052$, and school type and religion $F(1, 847) = 21.72, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .025$. The results indicated that there was a

statistically significant main effect for gender $F(1, 847) = 10641, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .926$, age $F(2, 847) = 8177, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .951$, subject studied $F(1, 847) = 18351, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .956$, environment $F(1, 847) = 2857, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .771$, religion $F(2, 847) = 46892, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .991$, and ethnicity $F(5, 847) = 112566, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .998$ on attitudes towards social issues. Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni tests revealed statistically significant mean differences at all levels of age ranges, religious affiliations and ethnicity of students on attitudes towards social issues (see Table 7). The main effect of school type was not statistically significant, $F(1, 847) = .041, p = .411$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$.

The results mean that students' demographic characteristics (gender, age, school environment, subjects studied, school type, ethnicity and religious affiliation) combined, have a statistically significant effect on their attitudes towards social issues. Considering the demographic characteristics individually, all except school type, had statistically significant effect on students' attitudes towards social issues. Thus, differences exist in students' attitudes towards social issues based on their gender, age, school environment, subjects they study, their ethnicity and their religious affiliation. The results also implied that the impact of age on students' attitudes towards social issues depends on whether they attend mission or non-mission school. Again the impact of students' age on their attitudes towards social issues depends on whether they are in rural schools or urban schools. Lastly, the impact of school type (mission or non-mission) on the attitudes of students depends on their religious affiliation in influencing their attitudes towards social issues.

Table 7: Descriptive Data for Demographics on Attitudes Towards Social Issues

Demographic	Subscale	Mean	SD	N
Gender	Male	121.9	14.4	480
	Female	122.2	14.2	420
Age	14-15	109.0*	.0	30
	16-17	124.2*	14.3	310
	18-19	123.5*	9.5	420
	20-21	116.5*	22.6	140
Subjects studied	Yes	120.1	16.9	540
	No	125.3	8.0	360
Environment	Rural	120.7	12.1	400
	Urban	123.4	15.7	500
Religion	Christian	125.5*	12.2	610
	Muslim	125.0*	12.2	120
	Traditionalist	107.0*	12.9	110
	Hindu	120.0*	8.1	40
	Buddhist	90.0*	.0	20
Ethnicity	Ashanti	122.3*	10.3	260
	Brong	115.8*	18.0	240
	Fante	118.3*	15.1	170
	Ewe	131.4*	6.7	70
	Ga	128.0*	.0	20
	Dagomba	138.4*	.5	50
	Dagare	126.0*	.0	60
Nzema	134.0*	.0	30	

*Mean difference significant at $p \leq .05$

Thus, age, school type, age and environment, and school type and religion relate to influence students' attitudes towards social issues.

The findings are congruent with the findings of most studies (Lehman, & Thornwall, 2011; Yenilmez, et al., 2006; Jekayinfa, 2004; Besen, & Zicklin, 2007) on the influence of students' demographics on their attitudes towards social issues. Thus, gender, subjects of study, age, environment, ethnicity and religion are found to influence students' attitudes towards social issues. None of these studies looked at the interaction effect of these characteristics on each other in influencing students' attitudes. This finding may be due to a few reasons. In the first place, it is obvious that females approach social issues in a softer manner as compared to males. A look at the results indicates that females had slightly positive attitudes. Again, ethnic groups and religions have different values and practices. These values and practices are defined in the context of the group. It is therefore expected that students from these groups would not approach social issues in the same way despite they studying the same subjects. Also every stage of life affects how an individual thinks and reacts to issues. The different ages of the students mean they would not be on the same level of thinking. Interestingly, none of the studies indicated that school type typically influenced students' attitudes just as was found in this present study.

Mohamed and Waheed (2011) and Ardnt and Bruin (2006) have contrary findings as they indicted that students' demographics did not influence their attitudes on social issues. This may be due to differences in location of these studies as well as the exposure students have thereby indicating differences in values, beliefs and norms on these social issues.

A factorial ANOVA was conducted to find out the effects of students' demographic characteristics (gender, age, school environment, subjects studied, school type, ethnicity and religious affiliation) on their attitudes towards moral issues. These moral issues include; smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse, stealing, armed robbery, internet fraud, corruption, adolescent sex, rape, sexual harassment, instant justice, murder, abortion and euthanasia.

Table 8: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Moral Issues

Source	df	F	Sig.	Partial Eta ²
Corrected Model	52	8337.082	.000*	.998
Intercept	1	19123104.00	.000*	1.000
Gender	1	3474.872	.000*	.804
Age	2	7311.428	.000*	.945
School type	1	.675	.411	.001
Subject	1	977.308	.000*	.536
Environment	1	8.028	.005*	.009
Religion	2	44280.896	.000*	.991
Ethnicity	5	28077.758	.000*	.994
Age*School type	2	14.419	.000**	.033
Age*Environment	1	46.538	.000**	.052
School type*Religion	1	21.718	.000**	.025

*Significant at 0.05

** Significant interaction effect

The results of the General Linear Model (GLM) corrected model showed a statistically significant effect of the demographics on students'

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attitudes towards moral issues, $F(52, 847) = 8337, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .998$.

There was statistically significant interactions between age and school type $F(2, 847) = 14.42, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .033$, age and environment $F(1, 847) = 46.54, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .052$, and school type and religion $F(1, 847) = 21.72, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .025$. The results indicate that there was statistically significant main effect for gender $F(1, 847) = 3474.9, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .804$, age $F(2, 847) = 7311, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .945$, subject studied $F(1, 847) = 977, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .536$, environment $F(1, 847) = 8.02, p = .005, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .009$, religion $F(2, 847) = 44280, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .991$, and ethnicity $F(5, 847) = 28077, p = .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .994$ on attitudes towards moral issues. Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni test revealed statistically significant mean differences at all levels of age ranges, religious affiliations and ethnicity of students on attitudes towards moral issues (see Table 9). The main effect of school type was not statistically significant, $F(1, 847) = .675, p = .411, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$.

Results show that students' demographic characteristics (gender, age, school environment, subjects studied, school type, ethnicity and religious affiliation) combined, have a significant effect on their attitudes towards moral issues. Again, considering the demographic characteristics individually, all except school type, had a significant effect on students' attitudes towards moral issues. Thus, differences exist in students' attitudes towards moral issues based on their gender, age, school environment, subjects they study, their ethnicity and their religious affiliation. The results also indicated that the impact of age on students' attitudes towards moral issues depends on whether they attend mission or non-mission school. Again the impact of stud

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 on their attitudes towards moral issues depends on whether they are in rural schools or urban schools.

Table 9: Descriptive Data for Demographics on Attitudes Towards Moral Issues

Demographic	Subscale	Mean	SD	N
Gender	Male	151.3	13.5	480
	Female	149.9	19.3	420
Age	14-15	147.0*	.0	30
	16-17	145.9*	17.9	310
	18-19	153.8*	16.8	420
	20-21	152.2*	9.0	140
Subject studied	Yes	148.1	17.2	540
	No	154.4	14.2	360
Environment	Rural	152.9	14.9	400
	Urban	148.8	17.2	500
Religion	Christian	151.9*	16.4	610
	Muslim	144.5*	9.0	120
	Traditionalist	156.2*	6.3	110
	Hindu	135.0*	33.4	40
	Buddhist	151.0*	.0	20
Ethnicity	Ashanti	151.3*	8.3	260
	Brong	144.3*	24.0	240
	Fante	148.7*	13.9	170
	Ewe	165.3*	6.7	70
	Ga	168.0*	.0	20
	Dagomba	140.6*	.5	50
	Dagare	154.0*	.0	60
Nzema	170.0*	.0	30	

*Mean difference significant at $p \leq .05$

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Lastly, the impact of school type (mission or non-mission) on the attitudes of students depends of their religious affiliation in influencing their attitudes towards moral issues. Therefore, age and school type, age and environment, and school type and religion interact to influence students' attitudes towards moral issues.

There are both similarities and differences when you compared these findings to results of other studies conducted on the influence of students' demographic characteristics on their attitudes towards moral issues. Most studies (Jones, 2006; Awopetu, & Fasanmi, 2011; Ugodolunwa, 2006; Comegys, 2010) agreed that demographic characteristics like gender, religion, ethnicity, subjects studied, age, and environment have influence on students' attitudes towards moral issues.

This finding may be due to the unique nature of the demographic characteristics. For example, in Ghana, it is thought that people living in the rural areas have higher moral standards as compared to those in urban areas due to urbanisation. Again, religious and ethnic groups have their own doctrines, values, beliefs, norms and practices. These practices may differ from religion to religion and ethnic group to ethnic group, therefore they will have a significant influence on how members would perceive and react to moral issues. Paruk et al, (2006) and Cabrales et al, (2014) however found that some of these demographic characteristics of students do not significantly influence their attitudes towards moral issues. Again, the issue of study location, culture, and environment come to the forefront for speculating the differences in study findings.

The results of the General Linear Model (GLM) corrected model showed a statistically significant effect of the demographics on students' attitudes towards religious issues, $F(52,847) = 274.8, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .944$. There was statistically significant interactions between age and school type $F(2,847) = 14.42, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .033$, age and environment $F(1,847) = 46.54, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .052$, and school type and religion $F(1,847) = 21.72, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .025$. The results indicate that there was statistically significant main effect for gender $F(1, 847) = 652.5, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .435$, age $F(2, 847) = 72.1, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .145$, subject studied $F(1, 847) = 463.8, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .354$, religion $F(2, 847) = 577.9, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .577$, and ethnicity $F(5, 847) = 499.8, p = .000$, partial $\eta^2 = .747$ on attitudes towards religious issues. Post hoc analyses using Bonferroni tests revealed that the attitudes of students at age 14-15 ($M=104, SD=.0$) towards religious issues is not statistically significantly different from those at age 16-17 ($M=104.5, SD=13.1$). Also, the attitude of students who are Ashanti ($M=109.2, SD=11.5$) towards religious issues is not statistically significantly different from those who are Nzema ($M=108, SD=.0$). There were statically significant mean differences at other levels of age ranges, religious affiliations and ethnicity of students on attitudes towards moral issues (see Table 11). The main effect of school type $F(1, 847) = .675, p = .411$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$ and environment $F(1, 847) = .144, p = .704$, partial $\eta^2 = .001$ was not statistically significant.

Results show that students' demographic characteristics (gender, age, school environment, subjects studied, school type, ethnicity and religious affiliation) combined, influence their attitudes towards religious issues.

Table 11: Descriptives for Demographics on Attitudes towards Religious Issues

Demographic	Subscale	Mean	SD	N
Gender	Male	101.8	14.6	480
	Female	107.3	15.5	420
Age	14-15	104.0	.0	30
	16-17	104.5	13.1	310
	18-19	108.9*	16.2	420
	20-21	90.6*	8.8	140
Subject studied	Yes	102.5	12.8	540
	No	107.1	17.9	360
Religion	Christian	105.7*	15.1	610
	Muslim	101.6*	7.7	120
	Traditionalist	111.6*	14.7	110
	Hindu	77.0*	3.0	40
	Buddhist	96.0*	.0	20
Ethnicity	Ashanti	109.2	11.5	260
	Brong	95.9*	13.9	240
	Fante	105.1*	18.6	170
	Ewe	117.6*	1.6	70
	Ga	74.0*	.0	20
	Dagomba	93.0*	.0	50
	Dagare	117.0*	.0	60
	Nzema	108.0	.0	30

*Mean difference significant at $p \leq .05$

Again, considering the demographic characteristics individually, all except school type and environment, had a significant effect on students' attitudes towards religious issues. Thus, differences exist in students' attitudes towards moral issues based on their gender, age, school environment, subjects they study, their ethnicity and their religious affiliation. The results also showed that the impact of age on students' attitudes towards religious issues depends on whether they attend mission or non-mission school. Again the impact of students' age on their attitudes towards religious issues depends on whether they are in rural schools or urban schools. Lastly, the impact of school type (mission or non-mission) on the attitudes of students depends of their religious affiliation in influencing their attitudes towards religious issues. Therefore, age and school type, age and environment, and school type and religion interact to influence students' attitudes towards religious issues.

This finding is not new because researchers (Kasamo, 2012; Smith, 2003) in religious education have confirmed that students' age, gender, ethnicity, religion and subjects they study affects their attitudes towards religious issues. Although a critical look at the results reveal non-significant influence of age and ethnicity, it is important to speculate that students at different age level do not think alike. It is obvious that females are more religious than males and therefore I am not surprised gender influences attitudes towards religious issues. Various ethnic groups have different views on religious issues in Ghana.

Kasamo (2012) however, in the same study revealed that students' school type and school environment do not influence their attitudes towards religious issues. Collie and Apt (1999) in the same vein, confirmed this by

By using this students' attitudes towards religious studies are not influenced by whether they attend mission schools or non-mission schools. This is because religious views are doctrinal and does not depend on where a person stays.

These findings are not surprising since literature on factors influencing attitudes mentions all these demographic characteristics indirectly. Whitley (2010) identified three factors that affect attitudes: target characteristics, source characteristics and message characteristics. Target characteristics are the characteristics of the individual who develops the attitude towards issues, objects or other persons. These characteristics include intelligence, gender, self-esteem and mind frame (Rhodes, & Woods, 1992). Source characteristics talks about the source of information the individual receives. Issues here include expertise, trustworthiness and interpersonal attraction. Message characteristics talks about the nature of the information and knowledge received. The nature of the message plays a role in attitude formation.

Putting the above findings together, it is realised that students' demographic characteristics influence their attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. Importantly, a critical look at the characteristics on these issues separately revealed that school type does not significantly influence students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. Also school environment does not influence students' attitudes towards religious issues. Again, students' age and school type, age and school environment as well as school type and religion significantly interacted to influence their attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues.

What Demographic Characteristics Predict the Attitudes of Senior High School Students in the Brong Ahafo Region Towards Social, Moral and Religious Issues?

This research question sought to find out how well students' demographic characteristics predict their attitude towards social, moral and religious issues. These demographics were their gender, age, school environment (urban or rural), subjects studied (CRS/RME or not), school type (mission and non-mission), ethnicity and their religious affiliation. Separate standard multiple regression was conducted for each of the dependent variables: attitude towards social issues, moral issues and religious issues. Preliminary assumptions testing was conducted to check for multicollinearity, singularity, outliers, normality, linearity, homogeneity and independence of residuals, and none of these assumptions was violated. The results of the analysis are presented under each of the dependent variable.

Attitude Towards Social Issues

A standard multiple regression was conducted to see if students' gender, age, school environment, subjects studied, school type, ethnicity and religious affiliation predicted their attitudes towards social issues. Using the enter method, the results indicated that the predictors (gender, age, school environment, subjects studied, school type, ethnicity and religious affiliation) explain 64.7% of variance in the attitude towards social issues $F(7,892) = 91.8, p < .05, R^2 = .42, R^2_{\text{Adjusted}} = .41$. See Table 12 for the model.

TABLE 12: ANOVA and Model Summary for Social Issues

Model	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R	R ²	R ² _{Adj}
Regression	7	10968.29	91.82	.000 ^b	.647 ^a	.419	.414
Residual	892	119.455					
Total	899						

The analysis showed that gender ($\beta = -.182, t = -5.40, p = <.05$), age ($\beta = .116, t = 3.85, p = <.05$), subjects studied ($\beta = .289, t = 9.93, p = <.05$), religious affiliation ($\beta = -.587, t = -19.90, p = <.05$) and ethnicity ($\beta = .384, t = 13.84, p = <.05$) did significantly predict the attitudes of students towards social issues. However, it was found that school type ($\beta=.022, t=.75, p=.455$) and environment ($\beta=.015, t=.53, p=.596$) did not significantly predict students' attitude towards social issues (see Table 13).

Table 13: Coefficients for Social Issues

Model	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)		31.154	.000
Gender ⁴	-.182	-5.381	.000*
Age ⁵	.116	3.848	.000*
School type	.022	.747	.455 ^{ns}
CRS/RME/ATR ³	.289	9.932	.000*
Environment	.015	.531	.596 ^{ns}
Religious affiliation ¹	-.587	-19.877	.000*
Ethnicity ²	.384	13.841	.000*

¹=highest predictor, ⁵= lowest predictor

*significant at $p \leq .05$, ns=not significant at $p \leq .05$

Results from the analysis indicated that the attitudes of students towards social issues are significantly predicted in order of magnitude, by their religion, ethnicity, subjects they study, gender and age. However, the type of school they attend and the environment do not significantly predict their attitude towards social issues. In other words, the religion, ethnicity, subject of study, gender and age of a student can help you know what their attitude towards social issues like absenteeism, respect for the elderly, humility, peace and harmony in society, education etc. would be. This students' attitudes towards social issues are influenced by their demographic characteristics. It again implies that somehow there is a relationship between the demographic characteristics of students in senior high schools in the region and their attitudes towards social issues.

This finding was largely expected because it has already been established in this present study that all students' demographic characteristics, except school type influences their attitudes towards these social issues. In this sense, this finding may be due to the influence of the background characteristics of the participants on their attitudes. Again, most studies (Siani, & Assaraf, 2015; Woodford et al., 2012; Borne, 2011; Yenilmez et al., 2006; Jekayinfa, 2004) conducted on prediction of attitudes found that students' age, gender, race, religion and subjects studied significantly predicted their attitudes towards social issues. On the contrary, Jekayinfa (2004) and Gaines (2014) revealed that gender, ethnicity and age do not significantly predict students' attitudes towards homosexuality and also school environment predicts students' attitudes which is quite different from findings here. Based on these, it is evident that religion, ethnicity, subjects of study, gender and age

of senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region predict their attitudes towards social issues and not the type of school they attend.

Attitude Towards Moral Issues

A standard multiple regression was conducted to see if students' gender, age, school environment, subjects studied, school type, ethnicity and religious affiliation predicted their attitude towards moral issues. Results from the analysis, using the enter method indicated that the predictors (gender, age, school environment, subjects studied, school type, ethnicity and religious affiliation) explain 45.5% of variance in the attitude towards moral issues $F(7,892) = 33.3, p < .05, R^2 = .21, R^2_{Adjusted} = .20$. See Table 14 for model.

Table 14: ANOVA and Model Summary for Moral Issues

Model	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R	R ²	R ² _{Adj}
Regression	7	7108.39	33.3	.000 ^b	.455 ^a	.207	.201
Residual	892	213.28					
Total	899						

The results further showed that age ($\beta = .301, t = 8.54, p = <.05$), school type ($\beta = -.138, t = -3.97, p = <.05$), subjects studied ($\beta = .317, t = 9.32, p = <.05$), environment ($\beta = -.213, t = -6.39, p = <.05$), religious affiliation ($\beta = -.226, t = -6.55, p = <.05$) and ethnicity ($\beta = .223, t = 6.89, p = <.05$) significantly predicted the attitudes of students towards moral issues. However, gender did not significantly predict students attitude towards moral issues ($\beta = .024, t = .61, p = .544$). However, (see Table 15).

Model	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)		27.187	.000
Gender	.024	.607	.544 ^{ns}
Age ²	.301	8.536	.000*
School type ⁶	-.138	-3.965	.000*
CRS/RME/ATR ¹	.317	9.324	.000*
Environment ⁵	-.213	-6.288	.000*
Religious affiliation ³	-.226	-6.550	.000*
Ethnicity ⁴	.223	6.891	.000*

¹=highest predictor, ⁶= lowest predictor

*significant at $p \leq .05$, ns=not significant at $p \leq .05$

Results from the analysis indicated that the attitudes of students towards moral issues are significantly predicted in order of magnitude, by the subjects they study, their age, religion, ethnicity, school environment and type of school they attend. However, their gender did not significantly predict their attitude towards moral issues. In other words, the study of CRS/RME, students' age, religion, ethnicity, school environment and type of school they attend can help you know what their attitudes towards moral issues like smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse, stealing, armed robbery, internet fraud, corruption, adolescent sex, rape, sexual harassment, instant justice, murder, abortion and euthanasia would be. This implies and confirms that students' attitudes towards moral issues are influenced by their demographic characteristics. It somehow also implies a relationship between the demographic characteristics of students in senior high schools in the region

and their attitudes towards moral issues. Therefore according to the findings of this study, students' gender is not a predictor of attitude towards moral issues.

This finding is not surprising and mostly confirms what the literature says about prediction of students' attitudes towards moral issues. Again, previous analysis and results in this study have shown significant interaction effect between some of these demographic characteristics in influencing students' attitudes toward these moral issues. Therefore this finding may be due to the influence of background characteristics of participants on their attitudes towards moral issues. Studies (Nazir et al., 2011; Jones, 2006; Malone, 2006) reviewed in this present study have indicated that students' attitudes towards moral issues like abortion, cheating and ethical issues are significantly predicted by gender, ethnicity, religion, subjects of study and age.

However, Gaines's (2014) study both contradicted and confirmed this findings by revealing that students' attitudes towards alcoholism are not significantly predicted by gender, ethnicity and age. Based on these, it is clear that subjects of study, age, religion, ethnicity, school environment and type of school of Senior High School students in the Brong Ahafo region predict their attitudes towards moral issues and not their gender.

Attitude Towards Religious Issues

A standard multiple regression was conducted to see if students' gender, age, school environment, subjects studied, school type, ethnicity and religious affiliation predicted their attitude towards religious issues. Results from the analysis, using the enter method showed that the predictors (gender, age, school environment, subjects studied, school type, ethnicity and religious

explain 36% of variance in the attitude towards religious issues $F(7,892) = 18.9, p < .05, R^2 = .13, R^2_{Adjusted} = .12$. See Table 16 for model.

Table 16: ANOVA and Model Summary for Religious Issues

Model	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R	R ²	Adj. R ²
Regression	7	3870.27	18.96	.000 ^b	.360 ^a	.130	.123
Residual	892	204.09					
Total	899						

Results from the analysis further indicated that gender ($\beta = .218, t = 5.27, p < .05$), school type ($\beta = -.137, t = -3.76, p < .05$), subjects studied ($\beta = -.269, t = 7.55, p < .05$), environment ($\beta = -.097, t = -2.73, p < .05$) and religious affiliation ($\beta = -.132, t = -3.6, p < .05$) significantly predicted students' attitudes towards religious issues. However, age ($\beta = -.025, t = -.69, p = .493$) and ethnicity ($\beta = -.017, t = -.51, p = .607$) did not significantly predict students' attitude towards religious issues (see Table 17).

Table 17: Coefficients for Religious Issues

Model	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)		20.290	.000
Gender ²	.218	5.265	.000*
Age	-.025	-.686	.493 ^{ns}
School type ³	-.137	-3.763	.000*
CRS/RME/ATR ¹	.269	7.547	.000*
Environment ⁵	-.097	-2.729	.006*
Religious affiliation ⁴	-.132	-3.639	.000*
Ethnicity	-.017	-.514	.607 ^{ns}

¹=highest predictor, ⁵= lowest predictor

*significant at $p \leq .05$, ns=not significant at $p \leq .05$

The results show that the attitudes of students towards religious issues are significantly predicted in order of magnitude, by the subjects they study, their gender, type of school they attend, their religion, and school environment. However, it showed that their age and ethnicity did not significantly predict their attitude towards religious issues. In other words, the study of CRS/RME, gender, type of school, religion, and the environment of the school they attend can help you know what their attitudes towards religious issues like existence of God, purpose of creation, worship, prayer, faith, repentance, forgiveness, confession of sins, spirituality and life would be. Therefore according to findings of this study, age and ethnicity are not predictors of attitudes towards religious issues. This implies and confirms that students' attitudes towards religious issues are influenced by their demographic characteristics. These demographic characteristics of the students have also been found to influence their attitudes towards social issues.

This finding was expected because it has already been established that students' attitudes towards religious issues are influenced by their demographic characteristics. This finding is congruent with other studies on prediction of students' attitudes towards religious issues found. Karnik et. al, (2000) and Smith (2003) both found in their study that students' demographic characteristics, specifically, ethnicity and religion significantly predicted their attitudes towards religious issues. Whiles Smith (2003) found religion to significantly predict attitudes, Karnik et al (2000) in addition to religion found ethnicity to also predict attitudes. This contradicts the findings of this present study. Based on these, it is clear that subjects of study, gender, type of school, religion, and school environment of Senior High School students in the Brong

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Age significantly predict their attitudes towards religious issues and not their age and ethnicity.

Putting together the results of the three standard multiple regression conducted, it is obvious that demographic characteristics of students significantly predict their attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues as confirmed by many of the previous studies looked at in this study. It is clear that students' attitudes towards social issues are predicted by their religious affiliation, ethnicity, subjects studied, gender and age. Also, students' attitudes towards moral issues are predicted by the subjects studied, age, religion, ethnicity school environment and school type. Lastly, students' attitudes towards religious issues are predicted by the subjects they study, gender, school type, religion and school environment. These support Whitley's (2010) arguments in the literature of factors that influence attitudes. From his three factors (target, source and message characteristics) based on Rhodes and Woods (1992) framework, it was deduced that these demographic characteristics of students play very vital roles in determining attitudes of individuals.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter of the study focuses on the summary of the research process, summary of major findings and conclusions from the findings. It also provides recommendations for curriculum and practice improvement and policy formulation. It finally suggests possible research problems that can be looked at in the future.

Summary of Research Process

The issue of attitude affects almost all aspects of human existence. Peoples' attitudes are their reaction to situations and issues based on the information available to them. Attitudes are influenced by various factors. That is why researchers over the years have devoted a lot of attention to studying attitude formation and change. The factors that affect students' attitudes have also been given attention by researchers in education so that findings can help them educate students well. Over the years, religious and moral educators have been interested in the attitudes of students towards social, moral and religious issues. Studies conducted in this area reveal both positive and negative attitudes of students towards these issues. But in Ghana, little is known about the attitudes of students towards these issues.

The purpose of this study was to find out the attitudes of senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region towards social, moral and religious issues. It was also hypothesised that gender, subjects studied, type of school,

environment, age, ethnicity and religious affiliation of students have effect on students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. The demographic characteristics of students that predict these attitudes were also determined. To this end, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What attitudes do senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region exhibit towards social issues?
2. What attitudes do senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region exhibit towards moral issues?
3. What attitudes do senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region exhibit towards religious issues?
4. What differences exist in the attitude of senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region towards social, moral and religious issues based on gender, subject studied, type of school, environment, age, ethnicity and religious affiliation?
5. What demographic characteristics predict the attitudes of senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region towards social, moral and religious issues?

The study adopted the descriptive cross-sectional survey as a design. Having environment, gender, and type of school in mind, 900 students from 20 senior high schools in the region were selected as participants for the study using cluster and simple random sampling techniques. A questionnaire measuring students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues was designed and used for data collection. The initial Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the instrument for the pilot test in four schools was 0.892. The final Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was 0.893 after main data was

Data collected were analysed with the help of SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistical tools of frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation were used to analyse data for research questions 1, 2 and 3. Factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse data for research question 4 while multiple regression was used for research question 5.

Summary of Major Findings

Findings from the study showed that students in senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana had positive attitudes towards social issues (absenteeism, respect, humility, peace and harmony, education, money, stress management, rites of passage, family, marriage, divorce and homosexuality), moral issues (smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse, armed robbery, internet fraud, corruption, adolescent sex, rape, sexual harassment, instant justice, murder, abortion and euthanasia) and religious issues (existence of God, purpose of creation, worship, prayer, faith, repentance, forgiveness, confession of sins, spirituality and life) see Tables 3, 4 and 5. Students' attitudes towards social issues had a mean of 4.2, moral issues 4.1 and religious issues 3.9 out of a possible mean of 5.

Findings from the study also showed that gender, age, ethnicity, subject of study, environment and religious affiliation of students had a significant effect on their attitudes towards social issues. Also, gender, age, ethnicity, school environment, religious affiliation and subjects of study significantly influences students' attitudes towards moral issues. Again, gender, age, subjects of study religion and ethnicity of students affects their attitudes towards religious issues. It was revealed that, age and school type, age and school environment, and school type and religion had significant

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interaction effect on students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues (see Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11).

In addition, findings from the study indicated that gender, age, type of school, ethnicity, subject of study, environment and religious affiliation of students explained a significant amount of variance in students' attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. Religious affiliation, ethnicity, subjects of study, gender and age of students significantly predicted their attitudes towards social issues (see Table 12 and 13). Again, subjects of study, age, religious affiliation, ethnicity, school environment and type of school students attend, significantly predicted their attitudes towards moral issues (see Table 14 and 15). Also, subjects of study, gender, type of school, religious affiliation, and school environment of students significantly predicted their attitudes towards religious issues (see Table 16 and 17).

Conclusions

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that students in senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana had positive attitudes towards social (absenteeism, respect, humility, peace and harmony, education, money, marriage, divorce and homosexuality), moral (smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse, armed robbery, adolescent sex, rape, sexual harassment, abortion and euthanasia) and religious (existence of God, purpose of creation, worship, prayer, faith, repentance, forgiveness, confession of sins, spirituality and life) issues.

Also, it can be established that demographic characteristics (gender, age, type of school, ethnicity, subject of study, environment and religious affiliation of students) of students in senior high schools in the Brong Ahafo

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region had an effect on their attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues. This means that students' positive attitudes are not due to the subject RME but other demographic factors. Again, it can be said that the attitudes of senior high school students in the Brong Ahafo region towards social, moral and religious issues are predicted by their demographic characteristics (gender, age, type of school, ethnicity, subject of study, environment and religious affiliation of students).

Recommendations for Improvement in Curriculum and Practice

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are provided:

1. The Brong Ahafo regional directorate of the Ministry of Education through the Regional Education Services, should continue to intensify education on social, moral and religious issues through subjects like Citizenship education and Religious and moral education. This is to ensure that the positive attitudes of students' towards social, moral and religious issues can be sustained.
2. Again, Brong Ahafo regional directorate of the Ministry of Education through the Regional Education Services should endeavour to make the teaching of Religious and Moral Education in senior high schools in the region compulsory. This will help improve students' positive attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues.

Teachers of Christian religious studies and Religious and moral education should also endeavour to make their subjects interesting to students through the use of varied approaches as well as appropriate resources. This will help sustain the positive attitudes students develop towards social, moral and religious issues.

4. The Brong Ahafo directorate of the Curriculum, Research and Development Division of the Ghana Education Service should inform National Headquarters to always endeavour to consider the characteristics of learners when planning the curriculum. This is because students' demographic characteristics do affect their attitudes towards social, moral and religious issues.
5. Stakeholders (Heads, Teachers and Parents) of non-mission Senior High schools in the Brong Ahafo region should institute activities like compulsory worship, strict discipline and common etiquettes among their students. This can be done through clubs and societies, sports and games etc. This will help the students continue to have positive views on social, moral and religious issues that confront them daily thereby making them develop positive attitudes towards these issues.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The issue of students' attitudes have taken centre stage in educational research. With this interest, I recommend that this present study is replicated in all regions in Ghana. Again separate studies can be conducted to find out attitudes of senior high school students towards Christian religious studies,

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Religious and moral education and West African traditional religion. Finally, a replication of this study in another region with a qualitative methodological approach can also be looked at to get in-depth information from participants.



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INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES

Department of Arts & Social Sciences Education

TELEPHONE: +233 03321 354111 / +233 03321 32480/3.

EXT: (268), Direct: 35411.

Telegrams & Cables: University, Cape Coast.

OUR REF: DASSE/ED/ECT/12/0006

YOUR REF:



University Post Office,
Cape Coast, Ghana.

Date: 16th November, 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The bearer of this letter Mr. Eric Mensah is a graduate student of the Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

He requires some information from your institution for the purpose of writing a thesis as a requirement for the pursuit of Ph.D Programme. His topic is "Students' attitude towards Social, Moral and Religious Issues: A study of Senior High Schools in the Brong Ahafo Region, Ghana".

I would be grateful if you would kindly allow him to collect the information from your institution. Kindly give the necessary assistance that Mr. Mensah requires from you.

I will appreciate any help that you may be able to give.

DR. KOFI TSIVANYO YIBOE
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION

PhD Thesis Title: Students' Attitude towards Social, Moral and Religious Issues: A Survey of Senior High Schools in the Brong Ahafo Region.

Dear Respondent,

This survey is to collect information on attitudes that Senior High School students show towards Social, Moral and Religious issues. The information is to help me find answers to questions that make my research work with the above title. I want to state that, your response will be treated in a way that no one will see what you said and also your identity will be protected. Thank you.

Instruction: Tick appropriately in response to the following items.

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender

Male []

Female []

2. Age

14-15 []

16-17 []

18-19 []

19-20 []

Mission []

Non-mission []

4. Do you study CRS/RME/ATR?

Yes []

No []

5. Environment

Rural []

Urban []

6. Religious affiliation

Christian [] Muslim [] Traditionalist [] Hindu []

Buddhist []

Others []

7. Ethnicity

Ashanti [] Brong [] Fante [] Ewe [] Ga []

Dagomba []

Dagare [] Frafra [] Nzema [] Others,

state.....



SECTION B: STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOCIAL ISSUES

Instructions: Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements by ticking (✓) the appropriate box. (SA= strongly agree; A=agree; UD=Undecided; DA=disagree; SDA=strongly disagree)

Social Issues	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
8. Absenting myself from school is not a good behaviour					
9. No student should absent him/herself from school					
10. Students should respect authorities in school					
11. Students should respect their parents, elder siblings and elders in their communities					
12. Humility is a good thing					
13. It is good to be humble as a human being					
14. Students should be agents of peace					
15. Peace is important for the development of society					

16. Education is key to the development of the individual and the society					
17. It is good to seek knowledge through education					
18. I have to work for money					
19. Hard work pays with a lot of pleasures					
20. I don't have to steal for money					
21. Laziness brings about poverty					
22. Leisure times helps us to recover lost energy					
23. Leisure times helps us to have fun					
24. Stress management is good for everybody					
25. Stress should be dealt with from the causes					
26. Rites of passage is an integral part of life					
27. Family is an important part of society					
28. We need to cherish our family relations					
29. One has to fulfil all family obligations,					

duties and responsibilities					
30. Marriage is a sacred relationship before our creator					
31. Adultery should not be encouraged in marriage					
32. Married couples should be responsible for each other					
33. It is not good to divorce even if your partner cheats					
34. Divorce causes broken homes and single parenthood					
35. Homosexuality is not good for our society					
36. Students should not involve in Gayism and Lesbianism					
37. Homosexuality defeats the laws of nature					

SECTION C: STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS MORAL ISSUES

Instructions: Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements by ticking (✓) the appropriate box. (SA= strongly agree; A=agree; UD=Undecided; DA=disagree; SDA=strongly disagree)

Moral issues	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
38. Smoking is not good for my health					
39. Smoking won't help me to learn					
40. Alcoholism is a bad habit for students					
41. Alcohol consumption can be harmful to your health					
42. Alcohol prevents me from thinking critically					
43. Taking of drugs by students is not a good thing					
44. Drug abuse is not a good practice for anyone					
45. Drug abuse can destroy one's life					
46. Stealing is not a good way of acquiring something					

47. Armed robbery should be discouraged in our society					
48. Students should never engage in stealing or armed robbery					
49. Internet fraud 'SAKAWA' is not a good practice					
50. 'SAKAWA' is stealing from innocent people and its bad					
51. Bribe taking is not good for development of our society					
52. People should stop offering/taking bribes					
53. Corruption brings development to a halt					
54. Students should avoid bribery and corruption					
55. Students should not engage in sexual activities before marriage					
56. Casual sex can lead to teenage/unwanted pregnancy					
57. Casual sex can lead to contraction of					

diseases like HIV/AIDS, gonorrhoea, syphilis, hepatitis etc					
58. Rape is very immoral and should be avoided					
59. Students who rape should be punished by the laws					
60. Rape has psychological effect on the victim					
61. Sexual harassment by students should be reported					
62. It is not good to sexually harass anyone					
63. People who offend should not be punished without hearing them					
64. Instant justice is abuse of human rights					
65. Murder is not good and must be punished					
66. Students who get pregnant should not abort it					
67. Abortion can lead to death of the one					

who is pregnant					
68. Abortion can destroy the womb forever					
69. It is not good to kill people who are sick and going to die					
70. Euthanasia 'mercy killing' is murder and should be avoided					
71. Child bearing is good					
72. Artificial insemination is not moral and defeats natural laws					
73. Cheating in examaminations is not a good practice					
74. Cheating develops stealing in students					

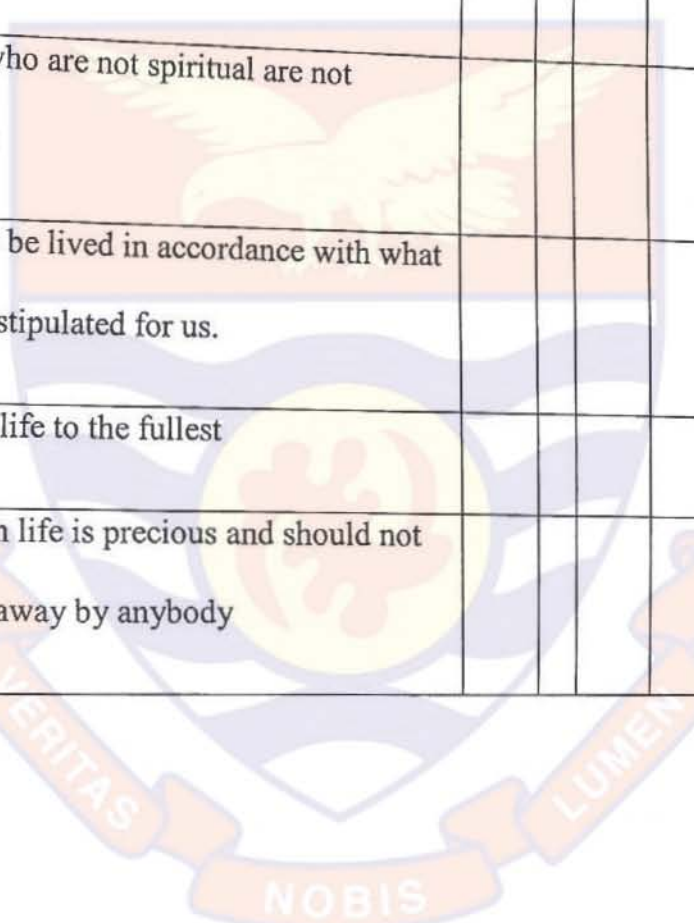
SECTION D: STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS RELIGIOUS ISSUES

Instructions: Please rate how strongly you disagree or agree with each of the following statements by ticking the appropriate box. (SA= strongly agree; A=agree; UD=Undecided; DA=disagree; SDA=strongly disagree)

Religious issues	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
75. There is a creator of the universe					
76. God oversees everything that goes on in the world					
77. God has power to create and destroy					
78. God created man to inhabit the earth and make use of the things on earth					
79. Man is supposed to take care of the earth and the things on it					
80. God is to be worshiped by human beings for the good things he does for them					
81. Different people have different ways of worshipping and praising God					
82. Prayer is communication between man and God					
83. Without prayer humans cannot get what					

they want from God					
84. It is good to always pray as a religious person					
85. Faith is an essential part of religion					
86. Without faith it will be difficult to be religious					
87. Without faith you cannot receive from God					
88. It is good to show repentance when you offend God and your friends					
89. Repentance is the only way God forgives humans					
90. Repentance indicate we are sorry about what we have done					
91. Forgiveness is the divine nature of God					
92. We have to forgive people who offend us no matter how bad we feel					
93. If I don't forgive people who offend me, God won't forgive me my sins					
94. Confession of sins is an integral part of religion					

95. Confession brings about forgiveness from God					
96. Students should confess when they sin or go against school regulations					
97. Spirituality is vital to have a good religious life					
98. People who are not spiritual are not religious					
99. Life is to be lived in accordance with what God has stipulated for us.					
100. Enjoy life to the fullest					
101. Human life is precious and should not be taken away by anybody					



Thank You for your time and cooperation.