

THE LIFESTYLE OF FEMALE HEAD PORTERS: THE SINGLE MOTHER AND HER COPING STRATEGIES AT ABOABO, KUMASI

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to find out the lifestyle of female single mothers head porters and their coping strategies at Aboabo, in the Kumasi Metropolis. The study aimed to find out the causes of migration, the health, social and institutional challenges that face these vulnerable female single mothers as they seek to meet their daily needs. The research design used for this study was quantitative survey strategy and explanatory. Purposive sampling (judgement/selective/subjective) was used to select the study sample size of one hundred (110) respondents. The data collection instruments were questionnaires. The study findings revealed that: the rainfall pattern in the Northern part of Ghana was unstable and makes most single mothers to migrate to Kumasi to work as head porters. Moreover, some of the health problems face by the head porters included; malaria, typhoid, and anaemia and other diseases due to poor shelter and sanitation. The plight of these vulnerable women would be improved if non-governmental organizations were invited, encouraged and supported them by providing affordable dormitory accommodation for them and alternative jobs.

Keywords: Female Migrants, Single Mothers, Health, Jobs, institutions

1.0 Background of the Study

Given to the indiscriminate economic challenges of the Ghanaian milieu coupled with the natural need to strive for a reputable placement in the societal caste system, people will always try their best to make ends meet through the engagement of available decent jobs (Appiah-Yeboah, 2009). However, the term 'Decent', even though relative, is far from being associated with the Ghanaian head portage business due to its somewhat ubiquitous plight it faces. With a lackluster attitude to reach a cashless / credit-based economy juxtaposition the over-emphasis on its cash equivalent which comes with its economic challenges, there has been excessive pressure on people especially breadwinners to look for a well-paying job or more than one job in order to earn a substantive income to meet the basic needs of life (Appiah-Yeboah, 2009). Female head porters in Ghana, often migrate from the northern parts of the country to urban cities in the south to look for job opportunities or well-remunerated jobs with the hope of raising enough capital to

invest in less labor-intensive ventures since they lack these opportunities in their place of origin (schandorf, 2008).

As a result of the lack of resources in certain region of Ghana, people are compelled to leave their family and friends and move to a different location as a way to make ends meet (Appiah-Yeboah, 2009). That is in search of job opportunities which are non-existent and to manumit themselves from the destitute north (their place of origin), some inhabitants of the north (mostly females) move to the south in pursuit of their economic dreams which mostly land them in the head porterage business (schandorf, 2008).

It must be noted that, migration from the north to the southern part of Ghana is not a recent phenomenon. According to Nabila (1985) cited in Kwankye, (2011) and Lobnibe (2010), migration from the northern part of Ghana to the middle and southern belts began quite early since the colonial authority was actively involved in attracting labour from the northern savannah agro-ecological zone. The tradition of kayayei is so common, even expected, that the only statistics are a handful of rough estimates from aid organizations. Some place, their numbers as high as the tens of thousands, and many Ghanaians maintain that yearly every northern woman will travel south at some point in her life (DiCampo, 2009).

Single mothers from rural areas, particularly the northern regions move to markets in urban centers to serve as kayayei, female porters, who carry goods on their heads for a negotiated fee. Away from support from their home communities and families, most end up living and working under very poor conditions and are exposed to both physical and reproductive health risks, Awumbila and Ardayfio-Schandorf (2008). It must however be quickly accentuated that, the porterage industry is not only made up of female northerners of Ghana but also, their male counterparts also engage themselves in the porterage business just that, it is prevalent amongst the females. In their line of work, whereas some are mobile, others are stationary, mostly at stores who are combat ready to carry goods purchased by buyers. There are myriad of reasons why they engage themselves in the porterage business of which the dominant one being the quest for money (Awumbila and Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008). Other peripheral reasons may include the displacement of homes due to tribal wars, fleeing from betrothal marriages, the edge to settle in the developed south.

It is true that, the youth constitute the true wealth and future of our country and thus, addressing their hopes and aspirations must be an integral part of our socio-economic development efforts. Successive government have over the years, realized the need for policies that would empower the youth for effective participation in the national development agenda, however, their approach has not achieved their set objective as kayayo incident is still on ascendancy (National Youth Policy, 2010).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

It is unarguably true that, kayayeis are fraught with poor living standards such as inability to access or afford: quality healthcare, three or two square meals a day or balanced diet, decent clothing and decent shelter. All these basic needs are interlinked such that inability to afford three or two-square meals a day or a balanced diet makes them (both mothers and children) malnourished, inability to afford decent shelter makes them prone to diseases such as malaria, pneumonia etc. of which they stand a high risk of dying since they cannot afford quality healthcare when their sicknesses get worse. Lack of proper shelter also makes them externally vulnerable to cases such as rape, teenage pregnancies and high risk of contracting

STIs. It is no surprise that, teenage kayayeis as early as 12 to 13 years do have babies and mostly do not have partners or lack committed partners / fathers to take care of them and their babies. Such kids are sometimes as a result of rape. Since some of the kayayeis are breadwinners from their place of origin, they are under intense pressure to overwork to meet up with the demands of the family. Since the human body responds to stress, constant overwork leads to physical breakdown and since they lack the ability to access quality healthcare, it could lead to their demise.

The study was therefore conducted to help attenuate the high level of single mother kayayei and to offer them other alternative of living by linking them up with appropriate agencies such as National Youth Employment Agency (NYEA), Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Agency (GYEEDA), Savannah Acceleration Development Authority (SADA) who are bent on implementing policies to curb some of these social cankers. Since most of them are illiterate, they have no idea about the policies put in place and the result of this study is also intended to help improve their standard of living by outlining other alternative source of livelihoods based on result driven or tailor-made recommendations.

1.2 Leading Research Questions

- What factors causes female porters to migrate from their destinations to the Kumasi Metropolis (Aboabo)?
- What health problems face these single mothers?
- Which social problems do the kayayei face?
- What problems do the kayayei face in their business?
- What challenges are posed by the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly to their daily activities?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

General objective:

The general objective of the study was to evaluate the lifestyle of a single mother female head porter and her coping strategies in Aboabo - Kumasi.

Specific Objectives:

To achieve the above objective, the researchers specifically intended to:

- Establish the causes of migration of the female porters from their place of origin.
- Examine the health challenges they (kayayei) face.
- Examine the social challenges they (kayayei) face.
- Identify institutional challenges they (kayayei) face in trying to meet their ends.
- Assess the coping strategies of the female head porter (single mothers)

1.4 Research Justification

As a social intervention of the new government to improve upon life in Zongo communities (i.e. a slum residence mostly concentrated with indigents and somewhat a hub for the kayayeis), it has introduced the Zongo Development Fund with a seed capital of USD 50,000,000 to help ameliorate the plight of such residents which there is the likelihood of the creation of improved shelters in such communities. There is

also an abolishment of the popular ‘kayayei taxes’ which has been greeted with immense applause. It is likely that, all these interventions would change the status quo of the kayaye is and researchers may have to review, conduct, assess and assume new assertions because the situation may not be the same now. This then provides justification as to why it is prudent for this research to be undertaken.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section mainly explored some eminent theories and relevant studies in this area of study. Accordingly, the literature review offered a thorough look at the theoretical framework, historical background of head portage reviewed, socio-demographic profile of head potters reviewed, review of some relevant studies, conceptual framework and summary of work done.

2.1 Theories/Models/ Perspectives

According to Comte (the father of sociology), research in the sciences should always be guided by a theory so that the findings will either support or reject the theory. It was therefore necessary to dive deep with some sociological theories to see their viability and also in helping researchers of this study explore the lifestyle of female head porters and their coping strategies.

This study therefore applied the assumptions of five (5) theories/models, namely: The Push and Pull Theory of Migration, The Survival Strategy Approach and Household Strategy Approach, the Urban Bias Theory, The Harris-Todaro Model and The Theory of General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) as a Coping Mechanism to Stress.

2.1.1 The Push and Pull Theory of Migration

Most studies on migration for example consider the “push and pull” theoretical framework developed by Lee in 1966 as one of the major theoretical underpinning for rural-urban migration especially for head portage (Yeboah, 2008). The theory indicates that ‘push’ factors exist at the point of origin and act to trigger emigration. The push factors include, poverty, lack of adequate infrastructure in rural areas, parental neglect, breakdown of family structures, lack of education and employment opportunities, low family incomes, peer influence and debilitating socio-cultural

practices. On the other hand, the ‘pull’ factors’ include the perceived availability of jobs at the destination, better infrastructure/social services and food and freedom from family pressure (Opare, 2003; Awumbila, 2007; Berg, 2007; Kwankye et al., 2007). This means that migration can only occur if the reason to emigrate (the push) is remedied by the corresponding pull factors at an attainable destination (Muñiz-Solari et al. 2010 cited in Solem et al. 2011). The theory however stipulates that the flow of migrants between two places may not totally develop if intervening opportunities exist between them; that is, the presence of other places between an origin and destination point to which one could migrate. Two issues emerged from the discussion of the causes of migration with the Lee’s theory of migration:

1. That a combination of socioeconomic and political reasons influences people’s decision to either emigrate (push factors) or in-migrate (pull factors); and

2. That the destination of the migrants is the shortest destination which has the socioeconomic and political answers the migrants seeks.

The intervening opportunity in the case of child migrants from Northern Ghana to the south could have been the Tamale metropolis or the Sunyani municipality. However, relative to the Kumasi metropolis which is the commercial hub of the northern sector of Ghana, the interventions from Tamale and Sunyani are not enough to prevent the child migrants from choosing Kumasi as their destination (Ghana Statistical Service, 2005). Thus, the Kumasi metropolis' endowment in social and economic infrastructure coupled with its proximity to the north relative to Accra, Sekondi-Takoradi and a host of other cities in the north makes it the first destination for migrants including the children.

In sum, the Lee's push and pull theory has affirmed the economic dimension of migration alluded to by the authors of this paper in the above. What is evident is that economic reasons are the major triggers of migration across the globe.

2.1.2 Urban Bias Theory

The Urban Bias Theory indicates that the concentration of economic opportunities (investments) results in the exodus of rural labour to the urban areas. This bias in favour of city has created a disparity between rural and city (in terms of consumption, wage and productivity levels), and thus translating into a higher standard of living by urban citizens which draws migrants from poorer (rural) areas. Juxtaposing this theory to the kayayei case, the head potters (kayayei) move from Ghana's 'deplorable north' to the 'rich and economically-vibrant south' in search of better future prospects; in this case Kumasi and Accra where socio-economic activities are vibrant. This theory is given credence by the Classical Economists who argue that rural inhabitants are attracted to the urban areas by high industrial wages which happens to be the premise of the Modernisation Theory.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section focuses on the procedures employed in collecting and analyzing the data for the study.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed the quantitative survey strategy using questionnaires among head porters (kayayei) located at Aboabo – Kumasi. This strategy was mainly used in tandem with other research strategies and approaches such as explanatory or exploratory research approaches. The survey strategy was used because it helps illicit information from a larger number of sample size which helps to generalize findings unlike qualitative research methods.

3.2 Population

The target population were female head porters (single mothers) in Aboabo in the Kumasi Metropolis. It was chosen because of time and the concentration of head potters in the area.

3.3 Source of Data

The data for the study were obtained from two main sources. These are primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained through questionnaires, direct observations and interviews. This helped to provide first-hand information and to minimize errors in the process of data collection. The secondary data sources were journals, articles textbooks, internet publications and other relevant and useful published materials.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Interview administered questionnaire was administered by researchers to collect the data. For the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire comprising 27 items (both open and closed-ended questions) was applied in this study.

3.5 Data Analysis

The researchers used descriptive statistics to make the analysis more meaningful. Data collected were presented in simple tables and cross tabulations, percentages and frequencies.

3.6 Study Area

Aboabo in the Asokore Mampong Municipal Assembly which is located within the Kumasi metropolitan area of the Ashanti region of Ghana, was the study area. The region is currently the second most urbanized in the country after Greater Accra (87.7%), the national capital. The housing stock in the region is 329,478, of which about 37% are in urban areas and 63% in rural areas (GSS, 2000). Due to its central location, all road networks linking the northern sector and the southern sector of Ghana pass through Kumasi, resulting in a high daily influx of traders and civil workers. Aboabo is about five to ten (5-10) Kilometers away from the center of Kumasi, the Ashanti regional capital. The Study area lies between latitude 7°38'04.6'' North and longitude 2°01'48.9'' West and presents a scenery of buildings, schools, and community center.

3.7 Sampling Techniques and Sampling Size

Convenience sampling was the non-probability sampling approach used, this sampling technique allowed the researcher to select respondents that were readily available at the time the study was being conducted. A total of one-hundred and ten (110) respondents were sampled to represent the entire population of female head porters (single mothers) in Aboabo in the Kumasi Metropolis.

The highest ethical consideration was observed in this study respondents' right to confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent, and total disclosure on the part of the researchers, were ensured by the researchers.

3.9 Limitation of the Study

During the data collection process, the kayayeis indicated that, they had very limited spare times to spend on answering items on the questionnaire. Some could not make time to answer the questions considering

their workload. As a result of this the data collection process spanned over a period of eight weeks instead of a four-week period postulated by researchers.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This section outlines the results of the study. It focuses on the presentation, interpretation and analysis of the responses of respondents sampled for the study.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The age distribution of respondents showed that most of respondents sampled for the study were under the age of 18, which according to the laws of Ghana and the ILO law, depicts child labour. Thus, most people engaging in kayayei in the Kumasi municipality are said to be engaging in child labour. With the marital status of respondent’s, it was not surprising that most of the kayayei that made up the study were single, as the literature indicates that most of the people engaging in kayayei were children below 18 years.

Significant number of the respondents were seen to have had no formal education (59.1%). Only three out of the 110 respondents had senior high education. The result pulled no surprise as kayayeis move away from home at a very young age which tend to affect their educational attainment. The resident of the respondents was also seen to be of important to the study as it will help to identify the living conditions of kayayeis. It was revealed that 71.8% of the respondents were lodging in wooden structures while 18.2% were in uncompleted building.

Table 1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Age of respondents	Below 18 years	43	39.1
	21-25 years	6	5.5
	26-29 years	27	24.5
	30-35 years	19	17.3
	36-39 years	10	9.1
	40 and above	5	4.5
	Total	110	100
Educational level	No education	65	59.1
	Primary	27	24.5
	JHS	15	13.6
	SHS	3	2.7
	Total	110	100
Marital status	Married	5	4.5
	Single	70	63.6
	Widowed	25	22.5
	Divorced	10	9.1
	Total	110	100
Ethnic Group	Akan	2	1.8

	Ga-adamgbe	4	3.6
	Guan	20	18.2
	Ewe	7	6.4
	Dagomba	77	70.0
	Total	120	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

4.2 Nature of activities

One of the objective of the study was to identify the kind of job activities engaged in by kayayeis. In achieving this objective, respondents were asked to indicate some of the activities they engage in, this section summarizes the nature of activities of kayayeis.

4.2.1 Nature of activity

When respondents were asked to indicate the difficult nature of their job, overwhelming, majority of the respondents, argued that the nature of the kayeyei activity is very tedious. Thus, 90% of the respondents asserted to that nature of their job was very difficult. Whiles only 10% of the respondents were of the notion that the nature of their job is easy and less tiring.

4.2.2 Nature of goods

With regards to the nature of goods carried by the kayayeis, it was found that majority of the respondents argued that the nature of goods carried was very heavy having a percentage of 81. Only eight out of the 110 respondents sampled concluded that they did not carry heavy goods. From all indication, we can conclude from the study that kayayeis tend to engage in jobs that possess high threat on their wellbeing.

Table 2 Nature of goods

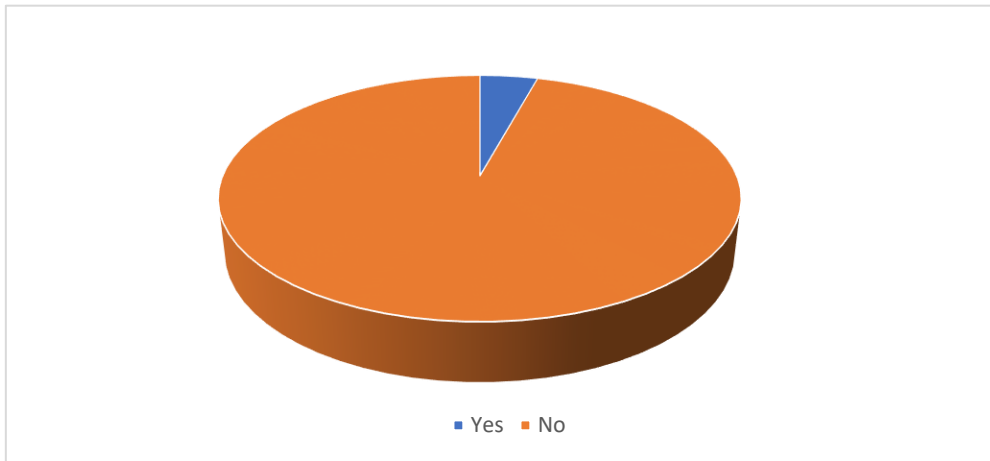
<i>Nature of goods</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
<i>Heavy</i>	89	81
<i>Moderate</i>	13	12
<i>Light</i>	8	7
Total	110	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

4.2.3 Employing special skills in kayayei activity

Another result from the study was to look at whether kayayeis employ any special skills in their activity which tend to reduce the difficulty in their job. However, 96% of the respondents argued that they do not employ any skills in the kayayei activity. Looking at the findings, it was concluded that majority of the respondents do not employ any skills in the kayayei activity. Thus over 96% of the respondents, representing majority of the respondents asserted to that.

Figure 1 Employing special skills in kayayei activity

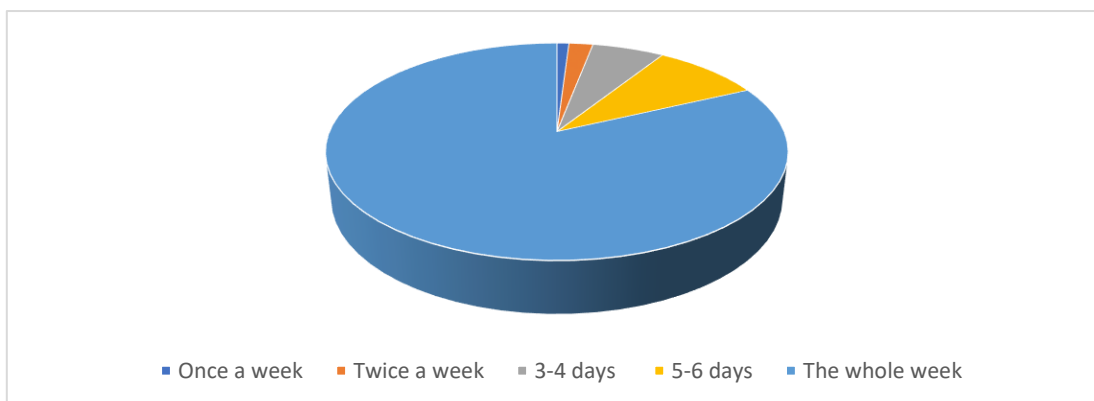


Source: Field Survey, 2017

4.2.4 Number of days worked in a week

Another approach in identifying the nature of activities of kayayeis was to find out the numbers of days they spend working in a week. From the findings, it was revealed that majority (82%) of respondents did not take a break from work throughout the week. According to them, they had to work every day if they want to earn money to survive. They were of the view that spending a single day at home could pose a threat on their living condition and that every day count. This revelation was found to pose serious health challenges on the respondents which would be discussed in the next section.

Figure 2 Number of days worked in a week



Source: Field Survey, 2017

4.3 Challenges they encountered in the kayeyei activity

The challenges kayayeis encountered in the nature of the work they engage in was seen to be of value to the study. This section provides a summary of some of the challenges they kayayeis go through.

4.3.1 Health Challenges

On the part of malaria, on few of the respondents concluded that malaria poses no threat on them, however, over 90% of the kayayeis that formed part of the study were of the view that malaria poses a significant

threat on their life as the nature of their job was quite difficult and also, also stay in a poor sanitation environment leading to malaria.

Another issue on the health challenges showed that typhoid fever was very rampant among the kayayeis with about 75% of them attesting to the fact that typhoid fever did cause serious health challenges among them. However, 25% of the respondents also disagreed to the assertion that typhoid is a health challenge encountered when engages in kayeyei business.

With regards to issue of cholera which has had lot of attention in Ghana in recent times was also accessed among the kayayeis, from their view, majority (95%) concluded that the incidence of cholera outbreak in Ghana is of no different from the their own. Thus, cholera seems to be a challenge faced by people engaged in kayayei. According to them, their job is in such way that they do not get time to practice personal hygiene which in effect, result in in health challenges.

As respondents indicated that they fall sick, they were further asked about how often they fall sick. From the data gathered, it was deduced that 40% of the respondents argued that they experience such illness every day; with a further 15% of the respondents also argued that they experience such illness on weekly basis. However, 30% out of the total percentage also asserted that they experience such illness on monthly basis, with a further 15% also arguing that they experience such illness yearly.

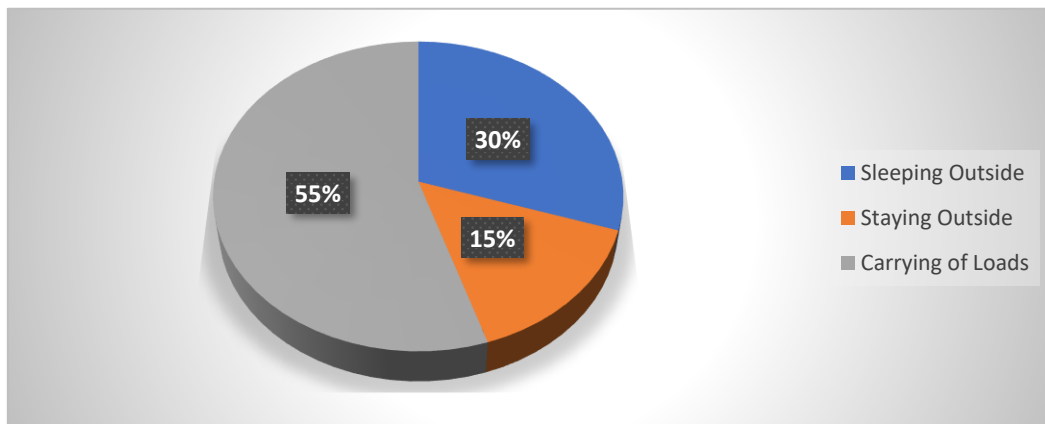
Stress which is mostly discussed by several literatures seen to have a significant effect on kayayeis as majority (85%) of the people that formed part of the study concluded that stress tend to be their most common challenge due to the nature of their job. Most of the respondents gave the notion that due to stress, they tend to experience headaches and back pain from carrying heavy goods to and from and for working all week.

When respondents were asked if they face any social challenges, it was revealed that out of the total percentage, 55% of the respondents argued that they do not face any social challenge with regards to their kayeyei business. On the flip side, 45% of the respondents argued that they do face social challenge with regards to their activity. Those who argued that they do face social challenge were of the view that at times they are been sacked by the KMA security guards, and in the long run, their pans that they used in carrying the loads are being seized.

4.3.2 What make head porters vulnerable to these illness

Aside getting to find out from the respondents the kind of diseases they encountered when engaged in kayeyei business. It was also the need to find out from the respondents what actually make them vulnerable to such illness. It was revealed that out of the total percentage, 30% of the respondents argued that sleeping outside makes them vulnerable to such illness, with a further 15% of the respondents also arguing that staying outside makes them vulnerable to such illness encountered when engaged in kayeyei business. However, 55% of the respondents argued that the carrying of loads make them vulnerable to such illness.

Figure 3 What make head Porters (Kayayei) Vulnerable to illness



Source: Field Survey, 2017

After identifying what causes kayayeis to fall sick, there was the need to find out where they seek treatment when they are sick. From the respondents, it was revealed that 20% of the respondents argued that they seek treatment from the hospital when they encounter any illness; with a further 5% also argued that they seek treatment from the herbalist. However, 35% of the respondents out of the total percentage also argued that pharmacy is the best place they consult when they want to seek treatment. 40% of the respondents also argued that they do self-medication when encountering any kind of illness, than to go to other places for medication.

4.3.3 Social challenge in the kayeyei business

Respondents that concluded that they did have social challenges were further asked if family expectation was a factor for engaging in kayayei activity, it was revealed 15% of the respondents disagreed to the assertion that family expectation back home is the reason why they venture into the kayeyei activity, However, majority of the respondents indeed argued that family expectation back home is the reason why they ventured into the kayeyei business. Thus over 85% of the respondents asserted to that.

Marriage is very profound to the northern part of Ghana and due to the fact the most people engaged in Kayayei were from the northern Ghana, there was the need to find out from them whether it has an issue with their involvement in kayayei. Only 30% however indicated that pressure from the family to marry was a contributing factor for moving to Kumasi to engage in kayayei as a way to survive.

4.4 Effects of the kayeyei phenomenon on the kayeyeis themselves

After taking a look at the challenges encountered by the kayeyei people, it became necessary for the researchers to find out the effects of the kayeyei phenomenon on the kayeyei people themselves. Below sections are the effects, both positive and negative of the kayeyei phenomenon on the kayeyei people.

4.4.1 Positive effects

There is a perception among the outside world that, the involvement into the kayeyei business is to get money in order to acquire items for marriage, as such respondents were made to indicate if the activity was

to earn them enough money marriage. Out of 110 respondents sampled, 15 % each said they are into this activity in order to gather money for marriage whereas the other indicated the opposite. The 70% of respondents were unsure about their position on whether their activity was marriage purpose.

In view of getting to know from the respondents the positive effects they get when engaged in kayeyei business, it became necessary for the researchers to find out if indeed is because of the hardship situation in the country that is making them involve in the activity, so that in the long run they will be able to survive the hardship. it was deduced that out of the total percentage, about 55% of the total respondents engage in kayeyei as a way to support the hardship circumstances of their life, whereas only 10% of the respondents revealed that they did not engage in kayayei for the purpose of reducing the hardship burden.

In another instance, respondent were made to indicate if they engage in kayayei as a stepping stone to move into other ventures. From the data gathered, it was found that majority of respondents making a percentage of 65% had the notion that their motive was to gather money to engage in different business other than kayayei, whiles few of the respondents (8%) indicated that they had no intention of doing any other job.

Table 3 Positive Effect

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Money to acquire items for marriage	not at all	17	15.5
	a little	11	10
	moderate	38	34.5
	quite a bit	27	24.5
	extreme	17	15.5
	Total	110	100
To survive the hardship	not at all	11	10
	a little	3	2.7
	moderate	28	25.5
	quite a bit	7	6.3
	extreme	61	55.5
	Total	110	100
To make money to undertake buying and selling for profit	not at all	9	8.2
	a little	2	1.8
	moderate	28	25.5
	quite a bit	22	20
	extreme	49	45.5
	Total	110	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

4.4.2 Negative Effects

After getting to know the positive effects of the kayeyei phenomenon on the kayeyei people, it became necessary for the researchers to depict the negative effects the phenomenon has on the kayeyei people.

Respondents were asked to indicate if they engage in kayayei as a way to steal from others, it was revealed that out of the total percentage, 15% of the respondents argued that not at all do kayayei phenomenon makes the kayayei people involve in stealing, with a further 15% also arguing that its quite a little. However, 20% of the respondents asserted that it is moderate while others argued that sometimes kayayei phenomenon leads to them involving into a stealing, with a further 20% arguing that it is extremely.

Respondents were made to indicate if kayayei results in physical defect, only 5% of the respondents were of the view that they had suffered physical effect from the work they do, where as 55% of the respondents concluded that there had not been any physical challenges on the work they do.

Cases of rape was also seen to be of vital to the study as most literature shows that rape cases are mostly recorded among kayayeis. However, when participants made to indicate whether there had been cases of rape incidence, 4% of the entire sample size concluded that there had not been any incidence of rape in their line of operation. The majority of respondents on the other hand gave the notion that the incidence of rape cases was very rampant in their area. This confirms reports of several literature on kayayei.

Table 4 Negative effect

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Involvement of kayeyi in stealing	not at all	17	16
	a little	16	15
	moderate	22	20
	quite a bit	33	30
	extreme	22	20
	Total	110	100
Suffered physical defects	not at all	61	55.5
	a little	27	24.5
	quite a bit	17	15.5
	extreme	5	4.5
	Total	110	100
Cases of rape issues	not at all	4	3.6
	a little	7	6.4
	moderate	22	20
	quite a bit	17	15.5
	extreme	60	54.5
	Total	110	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

4.5 Coping strategies of female head porters

In the past, government and some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) made attempts to empower Kayayei traders by engaging them in skills training or lifeline projects. The study wanted to find out from respondents if they are willing to change their line of work or willing to accept help to improve upon their situation.

Respondents were made to indicate what they think the government or the NGOs can help to support them. Respondents gave varying views and ideas they believe would help minimise the problem they go through. With some group of people given the view that having a place to stay and monthly allowance will enable them to learn a trade which after their training, will move back to their respective locality to help girls that have nothing doing and are also thinking of coming to the urban centres. Another group of people concluded that they are willing to do a different job such as cleaning or house girl as that job has less risk than being a kayayei. Also, it was indicated by the people that all what they need is money so a job that involves money will be fine by them. The responses giving was in line with some of the interventions given by respondents that however, could not achieve its target by the National youth employment program and the Bibir-Ghana (2009).

With a total of 110 respondents sampled for the study, it was found that majority of respondents are in search of a new form of venture than what they are presently in. Some were of the conviction that they are willing to get back in school to achieve their dream of becoming what they had hoped for. Surprisingly, 42.5 percent of the respondents were of the view that they are not in any way going to change their line of work as they prefer that to any other job available.

Table 5 Would you want to change job through learning a trade or going back to school

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Yes</i>	69	57.5
<i>No</i>	51	42.5
<i>Total</i>	120	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2017

With 69 respondents that indicated that they are willing to either be in school or learn a trade, they were further asked to indicate the kind of training they would want to engage in or the school they intend to go. It was found that most of the respondents were willing to learn dress making and hair dressing as they indicated would fetch them enough money to take care of their kids and their parents. With respect to those who want to be in school, some indicated they are willing to go as far as class one whiles some indicated that they have completed junior high school and would want to enter into senior high education.

5.1 Recommendation

They should be encouraged to provide vocational training and counseling services to the young kayayei by extending vocational services in schools for them. The suggestions by Agarwel et al, (1994) are supported here. The kayayei should be involved in adult literacy programmes. As part of this programme they could undergo training in business management to enable them better to manage their business and finances. The education programme must include health education, especially on the cause, incidence and prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and other health diseases.

5.2 Conclusion

With regards to demography of female head porters in Kumasi Aboabo, more of younger adult involve in kayeyei activity than older people. Education wise, it was concluded that majority of the female head porter had no educational background, with a few having their education at the basic level and junior high school level.

The findings of this study showed that some female porters were thriving despite the stressors they were exposed to. Some coping resources were identified as very important for thriving. The study further revealed that the majority of the head porters have contributed resources to rent single room apartments. The room occupancy rate of these single room apartments in the compound houses was five persons per room. Furthermore, few respondents slept in stores after close of work while some also lived in an abandoned.

The survey results depict that the common diseases suffered by the head porters were headaches malaria and body pains. They attributed these to the heavy loads they carry every day in order to cope with the economic demands of the cities. Other diseases such as typhoid, anemia, stress and skin rashes were reported by some of the head porters as health challenge.

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