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Perception and Valuation of Men and Children on Women Unpaid Carework in Nabdam: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Women's unpaid care work continues to be a major setback to the socio-economic development of women in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, this study sought to examine the Perception and valuation of men and children on women's Unpaid care work in Nabdam. The study adopted a quantitative research approach, and two hundred and sixty-nine (269) men and children were selected randomly from four communities, namely Palegu, Tindongo, Sakote, and Zeringu, in the Nabdam district of the Upper East region of Ghana. Self-prepared questionnaires, which were structured in both close-ended and open-ended format, were used to collect the data. The study then adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey as the main research design. The study found that most men and children agreed that women should be paid for their unpaid care work. The study also found that most of the men who indicated women should not be paid for the unpaid care work they performed primarily indicated that it was their basic responsibilities as wives. Finally, the study also found out that most respondents valued the women's unpaid care works to be \$39.22 or less per month, which ironically was higher than what the women valued their unpaid care works according to earlier studies.

INTRODUCTION

Unpaid women care works play an integral role in the general socio-economic development of individual life and the nation (Zachorowska-Mazurkiewicz, 2016). According to Razavi (2007), the need to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" is explicitly emphasized in SDG5 of the 2030 Agenda, which outlines the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A turning point in the acceptance and valuation of unpaid work occurred with the inclusion of "Unpaid Care Work and Domestic Work" as an aim (target 5.4) in the approved agenda. The target states recognize and reward unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection programs, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and family as nationally suitable (Razavi, 2017). According to the United Nations Women toolkit (2022), all unpaid labor performed by members of a household or community for the benefit of the other members, including domestic work and personal care. Cooking, cleaning, gathering water and firewood, and taking care of children, the elderly, and those who are ill or disabled are common examples. Unpaid care labor also includes volunteer work done in the community in areas like daycare or community kitchens that assist personal or household care. Unpaid care and household work fall disproportionately on women and girls. Internationally, they devote three times as much time to these tasks as do men and boys. One of the primary obstacles stopping women from advancing into paid employment and better-quality occupations is unpaid care duties (UN Women

Toolkit, 2022).

As noted by Maestre and Thorpe (2016), one of the numerous ways that gender inequality manifests itself and one of the reasons why it persists is the unfair weight of unpaid care duties. Women and girls in families and communities typically perform the majority of unpaid care tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, washing clothes and kitchenware, collecting water, managing fuel, caring for pets, and caring for the sick and aged. According to Esquivel (2013), many women find pleasure and fulfillment in providing care for others, but when this responsibility falls disproportionately on women, it becomes unfair and unseen, impairing their health and mobility and perpetuating women's inferior place in society. Studies have identified unpaid care labor as one of the four key areas other than education level, financial and digital inclusion, and legal protection where improvement would significantly lessen gender inequality (Woetzel, 2015).

A major worry is the underrepresentation of women in paid employment and decision-making roles as a result of unpaid caregiving obligations. A million or more women of working age decided against looking for paid employment due to the pressure of unpaid care work (ILO, 2018). Men and women perform unpaid care work at significantly different rates, especially in Africa. The data from UNDP (2016) show that women spend two to three hours more per day providing unpaid care than males do in South Africa and Mauritius. When we contrast women and men who live in urban centers with those who do so in rural areas, the inequality in the weight

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of unpaid care work between men and women in Africa is highlighted (UNDP, 2016).

Studies from the Ghana Statistical Service's (GSS, 2012) Ghana Time Use Survey (GTUS) reveal that men predominate in the world of paid labor while women predominate in the world of unpaid care. A pattern of engagement in both paid and unpaid employment has developed. According to the survey, men spend an average of five hours and nine minutes on paid employment, compared to four hours and six minutes for women. The majority of women in Ghana work a variety of low-wage jobs that have a significant negative financial impact, particularly in the Upper East region's Nabdram area. This claim has been supported by prior research by Kumi and Owusu (2023), who discovered that despite the women performing several unpaid caregiving duties, they receive no financial support. They further asserted that despite the contributions that women have made to economic progress, problems including occupational segregation, low educational attainment, market segregation, and gender-based wage disparities, among others, continue to work against them. The burden of unexplained and unappreciated unpaid care work inside and outside of households is especially painful for women in Ghana's five northern regions. This study therefore sought to examine the general perception of the men and children, with regard to the various unpaid careworks women undertake.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Unpaid Carework

Unpaid care work, according to Blackden and Wodon (2006), includes all tasks necessary for providing direct and conscious care for others, including gathering water and wood for cooking, preparing meals, washing and cleaning, and cultivating subsistence crops. Men and women who participate in paid labor and unpaid caregiving are mutually dependent on one another, with the two types of work having a variety of effects on one another. While some researchers have shown that paid work and child care are not mutually exclusive (e.g., Bianchi *et al.*, 2000; Craig, 2007), it is evident that paid work restricts the time available for unpaid care, and that providing care restricts the time available for paid work. Every non-paid job is referred to as "unpaid work," and it is acceptable to conclude that it is devoid of social acknowledgment. Age, gender, the kind of home structure, social class, geography, and the presence of children are only a few of the many variables that affect how much time is spent on paid and unpaid work overall. Younger people, those who have access to market options, those with fewer or no children, and non-single heads of families spend less time overall on unpaid work (Antonopoulos, 2009). Women continue to provide the majority of unpaid care globally, and many people still believe that this is their natural obligation as women (Benera 2003).

Men and Unpaid Carework

As indicated by Levto *et al.* (2015) men's contributions to caregiving and household duties have long been acknowledged. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo and the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing marked the beginning of widespread discussions about men and women's domestic duties. Both of these conferences expressed the view that fatherhood is a promising entry point for addressing unequal divisions in the paid and care economy, enhancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, and preventing violence against women and girls. They further stated that the clear-cut contributions that men make to gender equality and providing care, and these contributions have since been brought up again in numerous discussions and accords. Men are involved in giving unpaid care in many different ways and contexts. Some men provide a lot of care, while others provide only a little. Men do, however, devote much less time to unpaid care than do women on average. On the other hand, men spend much more time than women doing paid labor on average (Department of Labour, 2015).

Many influential women's rights advocates have stated over the years that a revolution in the lives of men and boys, especially in men's participation in domestic life, is necessary to achieve full social, cultural, political, and economic equality for women and girls (Levtov *et al.*, 2015). These worldwide ideas, despite historic traditions on the significance of men's roles as carers, have not materialized into noticeable societal changes. Even though they work only 1.5 hours less in the paid sector, women in the EECA region nevertheless spend an average of three more hours each day doing household duties than males (UNECE Statistical Database, 2023).

The lack of interest and willingness of the men to actively get involved in unpaid careworks could be attributed to several factors. Negative gender norms continuous to be one of the major factors which to some extent has contributed the lack of support from most men, in terms of participating in domestic care works. That is, many of the generally accepted notions and "rules" of society regarding what it means to be a man or a woman are the result of years of continuous socialization by families, schools, governments, media, social networks, workplaces, and other spheres of existence (Ilibezova, 2013). From a young age, both girls and boys learn that some sorts of work are valued while others are not, and this awareness follow them into adulthood. Therefore, the stigmatization of caring work may make many boys and men disinterested, underqualified, and unconfident in their duties as gender-equitable fathers, while making women and girls feel that they are primarily accountable for such tasks (Libanova, *et al.*, 2015).

For instance, most men and women in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Georgia concur that it is the mother's duty to change diapers, give children a bath, and feed them. In Georgia, 79.5% of men and 74.2% of women agree that women should be primarily

responsible for taking care of the home. The same way as society assigns women the tasks of nurturers and carers, men too have “high-value roles” that include protecting their homes, families, and countries. Such beliefs have been discovered to be a factor in the South Caucasus and some regions of South Eastern Europe’s frighteningly high levels of gender-biased sex selection (UNFPA, 2015).

Gender disparities in unpaid caregiving are also understandable in light of discriminatory social norms. Sociodemographic and economic characteristics such as wealth and educational attainment can help to explain some of these gender differences in time utilization. In contrast, half to two-thirds of the difference is still unaccounted for and are therefore viewed as acts of discrimination (Berniell and Sánchez-Páramo, 2011). Inequalities in caring obligations still exist in wealthy and educated households, where women dedicate more than 60% of the time to housework and childcare regardless of their employment, income, or educational background (Rizavi and Sofer, 2010).

The decisions, choices, and behaviors of organizations, communities, and individuals are shaped or constrained by social institutions such as official and informal laws, social norms, and practices (Jütting *et al.*, 2008). Social institutions shape gender roles by defining what behaviors are judged acceptable or unacceptable in a culture. For example, in most communities, paid work is seen as a responsibility for males, but unpaid caregiving is recognized as a woman’s role.

Measuring Unpaid Care Work

Researchers have sought to use several approaches to measure and value unpaid care works, and one of the methods they use is measuring the time used or spent in doing an unpaid care work. First, time usage surveys (TUSs) are based on both primary and secondary activities because their primary goal is to quantify explicit functions like meal preparation, housekeeping, or feeding a child. An answer to the inquiry “What were you doing?” is a primary action. In response to the query, “What else were you doing during the primary activity?” comes a secondary activity. Yet, neither query takes into consideration the supervisory care, or what might be called on-call time (Folbre, 2008). Time spent on an activity multiplied by the “price” or unit value of that activity per unit of time yields the activity’s overall economic value. The literature on time usage offers a few of approaches for achieving this because determining the appropriate unit value of unpaid care work is difficult. In particular, an input-based or output-based approach can be used to assess the value of uncompensated care work.

The output-based strategy inquires how much it would cost to buy an unpaid care service on the open market (for instance, an hour of center-provided day care). Hence, nonmarket goods and services are given a price tag equal to that of comparable market alternatives. The output of unpaid care work, like raising children, is difficult to define

using this paradigm for a variety of conceptual reasons. The inability to locate data that accurately reflects market values for commodities and services produced by unpaid care work that are equal in quality and quantity is another limitation of the output-based approach.

The measurement and value of labor inputs into unpaid care work are the main objectives of the input-based approach. Although labor is the most significant input, other inputs like capital and raw materials should also be assessed. Large-scale, nationally representative time diary surveys can provide accurate estimates of the amount of time spent on unpaid caregiving tasks in the home, such as child and elderly care. The time estimates are then valued using market compensation rates for workers who undertake comparable tasks in the labor market, following the third-person criterion.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative research approach and according to Gay *et al.* (2009), quantitative research uses numerical data gathering and analysis to describe, explain, forecast, or regulate relevant variables and events. They will furthermore remarked that, a fundamental principle of quantitative research is the philosophical conviction that our environment is comparatively homogeneous and stable, allowing us to measure, comprehend, and draw broad conclusions about it (Gay *et al.*, 2009).

The study made use of both primary and secondary sources of data; the primary data were collected with the use of self-prepared questionnaires, which were structured in both close-ended and open-ended format. This was done to enable the researchers have control over the type of information the respondents provided. The study further made used of simple random where rather than using randomization, thus participants were chosen based on their accessibility (Pamela, 2017).

Kumi and Owusu (2023), used similar technique in their study ‘Monetary Valuation of the Unpaid Care Works and Experiences of Some Women in the Upper East Region of Ghana’ that enabled the several communities under study to have an equal chance of being chosen. Every member of the men in communities had an equal chance ($1/N$) of being included in the sample, and it was done without replacement. The first person selected is the only one left in the stratum after that. Out of the remaining ($N - 1$) local community members, the second lady is chosen to ensure that every ($N - 1$) member of the stratum has an equal ($1/(N-1)$) probability of being included in the study. Until the n th member of the sample was selected with probability $1/(N-n+1)$, the process is repeated (Kumi and Owusu, 2023). The study then selected two hundred and sixty-nine (269) men and children from four communities namely Palegu, Tindongo, Sakote, and Zeringu, in the Nabdram district of the Upper East region of Ghana. The data was then analyzed using SPSS and several tests were conducted such as Chi-square test among others.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Men’s View on Paying Women

The main objective of the study was to examine the perception of men and children on the valuation of the women on unpaid carework. The study included the responses of some of the men on their views of whether women should be paid for their care works or not, and the estimated amount they would have paid their wives or other women to do the works their wives undertake for them and the household. Their ages were from 18 to 79 years old, with a mean age of 44.99 years. The results from the data analyzed indicated that majority (75%) of the respondents stated there was the need to pay the women and the remaining (25%) of them indicated there was no need to pay the women. Thus from the study, it could be asserted that most of the men even though were not paying their views, they still felt the need that they should be paid. Nevertheless, most of the men who stated women should not be paid for the unpaid care works gave reasons such as (a) it was their primary duties as wives and mothers (b) it was against the customs and traditions of the people (c) they do not have the financial ability to pay the women. This resonates with the earlier assertion made by Benera (2003) that women continue to provide the majority of unpaid care globally, and many people still believe that this is their natural obligation as women and they should not be paid (Benera 2003). Furthermore, the findings also supports the findings of Kumi and Owusu (2023), where they also found out that, some men agreed that women should be paid for the unpaid care they perform. The chart below is the summary of the findings

NUMBER OF MEN AND THEIR RESPONSE TO WHETHER WOMEN SHOULD BE PAID OR NOT FOR THEIR CARE WORKS

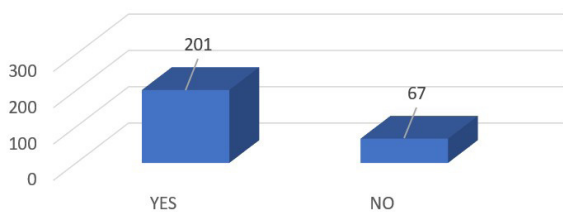


Figure 1: Mens’ view on paying women for their carework

Chi-Square goodness of fit test was used to test whether the responses above were just a random answer from the sample who participated or it what the general population of the Nabdram district would have given. See the test table below gives:

Table 1: Chi-Square Frequencies

Men View on Whether Wives Should Be Paid for Their Care Works or Not			
	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Yes	201	134.0	67.0
No	67	134.0	-67.0
Total	268		

Table 2: Chi-Square Test Statistics

Test Statistics	
	Men View on Whether Wives Should Be Paid for Their Care Works or Not
Chi-Square	67.000 ^a
Df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 134.0

From the significance test table above, the responses of the majority of the men are the same the general population would have given. Thus, most men would have paid their wives if they had the means. It could therefore be implied from the results that naturally, most of the men would have provided some financial motivation for the numerous unpaid care works. Nevertheless, due to lack of finances, they cannot. This was confirmed during the data collection, as through observation, the researcher found out that many of the men were poor and could hardly provide for themselves and by extension, pay compensation or monetary motivation to their wives. Most of the men were mainly peasant farmers who depended on the natural rainfall pattern. Interestingly, most of the households were polygamous and had huge family size. From the study, it was evident from the results that majority (64%) of the respondents had between 4-7 children and another (28%) had between 8-11 children. It further revealed that (4%) of the respondents had less than 3 children and the remaining (2%) had more than 11 children.

Men’s Reason Why Women Should be Paid for Care Work

To enable the researchers understand the perception of the men generally on the unpaid care work of the women, they were further asked to indicate why they thought women should be paid for the numerous unpaid care works. According to the results, the men gave varying reasons why women should be paid. From the results, it could be observed that majority of the men consider the unpaid care works of the women to be very hard.

Some however disagree to pay women. Their common reason being that it is the women’s basic responsibility. Those who consented that women should be paid held the reason that their work is very hard and that it would serve as an encouragement and motivation to them. The Chi-Square goodness of fit test below shows the views the general population hold at a significant P-Value of 0.000, and not just a chance response from participated sample under study.

A more graphical presentation of the reasons is shown below.

The men were further asked to value the unpaid care works the women perform for them and the family in monetary terms. The results indicated that most men 32.7%, reported they would pay their wives \$39.22 or less

Table 3: Chi-Square Frequencies

Men's reason for whether women should be paid or not for care works			
	Men's reason for whether women should be paid or not for care works		
	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Their basic responsibility	38	32.5	5.5
Their work is irreplaceable	16	32.5	-16.5
Their work is very hard	50	32.5	17.5
They do things we should have paid others to do	31	32.5	-1.5
They use lots of their time and energy	12	32.5	-20.5
To serve as encouragement and motivation	48	32.5	15.5
Total	195		

Table 4: Chi-Square Test Statistics

Test Statistics	
	Men's Reason for Whether Women Should Be Paid or Not for Care Works
Chi-Square	39.123 ^a
Df	5
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 32.5

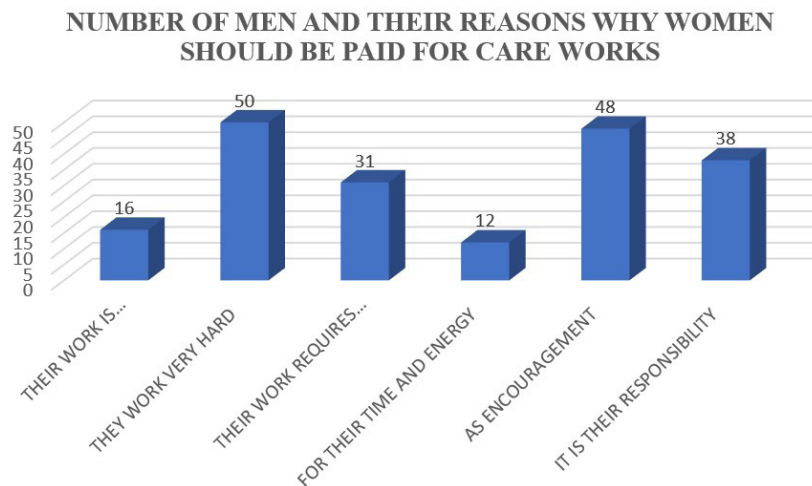


Figure 2: Reasons for Paying Women for Care Works

per month if they had the means. While the amount the men indicated they would pay the women for the various unpaid care work seem not to be enough considering the work they do. Interestingly, the amount the men valued the unpaid care works of the women is higher than how much the women themselves valued their unpaid care work. According to Kumi and Owusu (2023), most women in the Nabdum valued their unpaid works around \$1 per each month which is relatively lower than what the men indicated they will pay. It can therefore be argued from the results from the study that even though the men are not paying the women for their unpaid care work, they indeed valued the works that they were doing. See table 3 above.

Considering the current socio-economic lives of the women and the lack of any form of monetary

compensation for the care works they undertake, the men were finally tasked to suggest ways they deem best the life of women could be improved. It was an open-ended question. Here too, Chi-Square goodness of fit test was run on their suggestions to ascertain which one most are saying and whether the entire population are taking the same path. The results from the data could be summarized thematically as (a) providing them with education (b) easy accessibility to health care (c) creating equal job opportunities. Thus, the results agree with the observation that unpaid care labor as one of the four key areas other than educational level, financial and digital inclusion, and legal protection where improvement would significantly lessen gender inequality (Woetzel, 2015). Thus, at P-Value of 0.000, we can say significantly that

Table 5: Number of Men and Estimate Amount They Would Likely Pay Their Wives for Care Works

		Number Of Men and Estimate Amount They Would Likely Pay Their Wives for Care Works			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	GH¢500 and below	125	32.7	45.6	45.6
	600 - 900	93	24.3	33.9	79.6
	1000 and above	56	14.7	20.4	100.0
	Total	274	71.7	100.0	
Missing	System	108	28.3		
Total		382	100.0		

Table 6: Chi-Square Frequencies

Ways Men and Husbands Suggest Could be Used to Improve Women's Life			
	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Creation of job opportunities for them	12	12.6	-.6
Economic empowerment	33	12.6	20.4
Education for women and for younger girls	28	12.6	15.4
Equipment for farming	6	12.6	-6.6
Involve them in decision making	6	12.6	-6.6
Love and respect them	12	12.6	-.6
Provide proper health care	2	12.6	-10.6
Provision of basic needs	9	12.6	-3.6
Supporting them with house chores	10	12.6	-2.6
Vocational training programs	8	12.6	-4.6
Total	126		

Table 7: Chi-Square Test Statistics

Test Statistics	
	Ways men and husbands suggest could be used to improve women's life
Chi-Square	70.984 ^a
Df	9
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 12.6

most of the men in the local communities under study as well as the district would propose that economic empowerment is the best way women's life could be improved. This is closely followed by education for their women and younger girls.

Children's View on Paying Mothers

A total of 197 children and teenagers between the ages of 13 to 17, were randomly interviewed and the results indicated similar disparities in the general perception of the children on the unpaid care works done by their mothers. The results indicated that the majority of the respondents (90%) agrees mothers and women should be paid and gave various reasons in support of their stance. Dominant among the reasons the majority gave as to why their mothers should be paid included the following:

- To encourage mothers to be comforted to do their best

- Because they do a lot of good things for us
- She pays our school fees
- Mothers work very hard and their work is difficult
- Mothers need money to take care of us

The remaining (10%) of them do not agree women should be paid, saying it's their duty. They also gave some reasons why they think women, especially their mothers should not be paid for the various unpaid care works and notable among them are:

- It is the duty of the woman to perform their roles, and boys and men are not supposed to do those things (unpaid care work).
- My father married her so it is her responsibility
- My mother doesn't pay my father for working hard to bring money home so I don't think I have to pay my mother.

From the responses of those who remarked that women

should not be paid, one can clearly see an entrenched negative gender norms which seem to project negative masculinity of the women. Therefore, the stigmatization of caring work may make many boys and men disinterested, underqualified, and unconfident in their duties as gender-equitable fathers, while making women and girls feel that they are primarily accountable for such tasks. Thus, the findings support that assertion made

by Libanova, *et al*, (2015) that from a young age, both girls and boys learn that some sorts of work are valued while others are not, and these teachings follow them into adulthood. It further supports the assertion that many people still believe that it is that natural obligation as women to perform unpaid works (Benera 2003).

See graph below:

Finally, the children suggested ways they could help

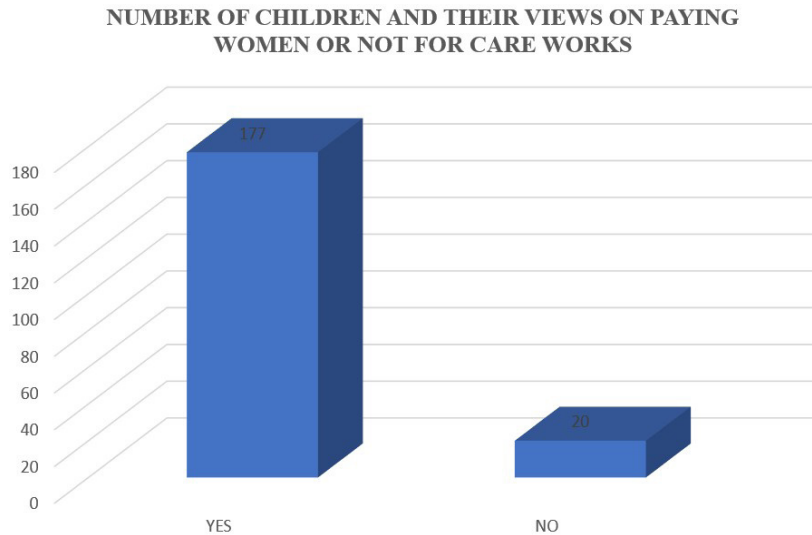


Figure 3: Children’s view on paying women for care works

Table 8: Children’s view on women empowerment

Ways Men and Husbands Suggest Could be Used to Improve Women's Life		
	Children’s view on women empowerment	
	Suggestions	Number Of Children
1	Proper education for mothers	5
2	Training programs	9
3	Taking good care of them and supporting them in doing house chores	24
4	Respecting, obeying and honoring mothers	13
5	Financial aids	31
6	Job opportunities	6
7	Farming equipment	2

improve their mothers’ life. The results from the children were similar to that of the men. See the frequency table below for their diverse suggestions and the number of children advocating them.

CONCLUSION

This work sought to critically examine the general perception of the men and children in the Nabdram district in the Upper East region of Ghana on the unpaid care works the women undertake. This was done by determining whether the men and children thought it necessary to put some monetary valuation on it. The results from the study have clearly indicated that majority of the men and children appreciate the unpaid care works the women perform and would have wished to pay them some monthly remuneration. Comparing the findings of this study to the earlier work by Kumi and Owusu (2023),

the study found out that most men valued the unpaid care works of the women in monetary terms higher than the women themselves did. Nevertheless, socio-economic challenges such as the lack of financial resources, huge family sizes resulting from polygamous marriages prevent them from performing that role.

Furthermore, the study has revealed that some entrenched religio-cultural influences, such as negative gender norms and male masculinity, prevent some of the men who are actively participating in the unpaid care work. The culture and religion to some extent makes it difficult for some of the men to even appreciate the unpaid care works.

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