THE EFFECT OF COLLECTIVISM ON FAMILY MEAL CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON FOOD COMPANIES IN SIERRA LEONE

Sheku Kakay

College of Business and Law, University of Salford, Manchester, United Kingdom

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to various people, including: my mother, Madam Haja Numuteneh Kakay, whose wisdom despite being illiterate ushered me through the preliminary phase of my education and for that I am grateful. It is also dedicated to my beloved wife, Neneh Adama Kakay, whose unflinching support, commitment and resilience for the past excruciating four years in meeting my needs at all times and accommodating my excesses during critical phases of my study deserves commendation, and lastly to my two children, Numuteneh and Mohamed Mansake Kakay, who despite giving them less attention and love during this critical period, were still understanding.

ABSTRACT

Sierra Leone is a multi-cultural and multi-faceted society with people from diverse backgrounds, who espoused different cultural behaviours at mealtimes and in their business dealings. The significance of this study is that it highlights the differences and similarities inherent among the families and businesses in the Sierra Leonean collectivist context, and Africa generally, which has been neglected by many researchers in the past. This study is the first of its kind in the African continent as it provides an opportunity for governments and businesses to see not only the cultural richness of Sierra Leone, but to learn and understand how to develop and respond to food products produced, consumed and sold in such markets.

The aim of this study is to critically review literature on collectivism and undertake data collection to evaluate the factors stakeholders perceived as influencing families' meal social interaction behaviour in a Sierra Leonean context, and apply the results on food retailers and producers to assess how they affect their behaviour when marketing their products to consumers.

This research adopted the constructionist approach as its epistemological perspective, which is reliably linked with the 'lived experiences of families and businesses as it is considered an appropriate way for determining how humans make sense of their surroundings. In the first phase of the study, 20 different Sierra Leonean families (husband and wife), with a sample size of 40, were interviewed using observations and one-to-one semi-structured interviews, whilst in the second phase of the study, 20 businesses (16 food retailing and 4 food manufacturing companies) were interviewed using a semi-structured interview approach. The research was conducted in the four provincial headquarter towns of Bo, Freetown, Kenema and Makeni. The data was collected using snowballing, experiential and convenience sampling techniques. The researcher used qualitative research in explaining the behaviours of families and businesses. The data was analysed qualitatively using an inductive approach.

The findings showed that a majority of Sierra Leonean families and businesses displayed collectivist behaviour when interacting socially and/or when marketing their food products to customers. The findings also showed that religion, ethnicity, conformity, reference groups and social class were the predominant determinants of the behaviours of a majority of families and businesses in Sierra Leone. In addition, the results of the findings implied that variation exists even between individuals of the same religion, between gender groups, and between food retailing and food producing companies, which affects the way they behave. The findings further revealed that there is a cultural divide between a majority of Muslims and Christians with regard the type of food considered appropriate for consumption at the dinner table, which equally affects the type of food products manufactured and sold by businesses. Despite this division, the findings showed that there are increased commonalities between a majority of the families and businesses as well as differences, which affects their behavioural patterns.

The key contributions of this study are that it provides an extension of our knowledge in identifying new concepts of collectivism in the Sierra Leonean context that influences families and businesses' behaviour, for example, family/customer's food ethics; gender differentiation; tribal sentiment; preferential treatment; communication style; education; etc. The study also highlights the concept of interactionalism, which posits that religion, ethnicity, conformity, reference groups and social class interact with each other in the form of a web in influencing the behaviour of Sierra Leonean families and businesses. Another contribution of this study is its presentation of the factors affecting families and businesses' behaviour in schematic diagrams.

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A dream can never be realised or actualised through wishful thinking. Rather it can be accomplished through hard work, dedication and commitment not only from one specific individual, but also from the support provided by a number of unsung heroes. In the process of actualising this dream, I have worked with a number of great minds and thinkers that need to be gratified, appreciated and thanked for their useful comments, criticisms and suggestions at various stages in order to make this thesis a formidable and complete piece.

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, that this thesis is my own original work, and reiterate that it has not been obtained from material previously published or written, nor material accepted for the award of degree or diploma, except where due acknowledgement or reverend is given to the author or publisher.

Name: Sheku Kakay

Signature:…………………………..

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It is apparent that there is a lack of evidence from academic literature on the relationship between collectivism and family meal consumption behaviour in the African context, especially Sierra Leone. A number of studies, for example, Bond (2014); Samovar et al (2014); and Uskul (2015) have highlighted the need for more research to be conducted on the culture and behaviour of consumers in the African continent, and reiterated that there is dearth of sufficient evidence in establishing a concrete relationship between culture and consumer behaviour as many of the literature are largely focused on Western and East-Asian cultures and consumers. This thesis, therefore, examines the relationship between collectivism and family meal social

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<center>**Chapter One**</center>

<center>**Introduction**</center>

1.0 Aim of the chapter

The aim of this chapter is to discuss a background of the research and the rationale for conducting the research. It also provides an in-depth understanding and clarity of the research aim and objectives, and the research questions the researcher seeks to find answers to. The chapter further aims to provide a brief justification and overview of the methods used to collect data. The chapter concludes by providing an outline of the structure of the study and discussed the context of the research; the contribution of the research to knowledge; and the constraints, limitations and assumptions confronted by the researcher in the field.

1.1 Background

Collectivism is a social pattern that consists of individuals who view themselves as an integral part of one or more collectives or in-groups (Chiu and Hong, 2013; Breinlinger and Kelly, 2014; and Jenkins, 2014). A number of studies, for example, Joyce et al (2013); Valchev et al (2013); and Kitayama and Markus (2014) have indicated that the African culture is collectivist. Drogendijk and Martin (2015); and Whitman and Liebenberg (2015) suggested that Sierra Leone is a collectivist society. Petrakis (2014); and Walker (2015) emphasised that in a collectivist culture, the majority of the people are collectivists, and as a result are collectively orientated in their values and behaviour on many occasions, and thus grow up closely together not just as parents and children, but members of an extended family. Ungar (2015) noted that these social patterns are expected to influence the family meal social interaction patterns of most households in Sierra Leone due to the way the society is structured, and this has promoted an increased dependency syndrome. This reduces self-identity, increases the responsiveness to in-group or family influences, and generates the need to suppress self-belief and confidence in order to satisfy group norms and values (Evans, 2015).

<center>1</center>

Sierra Leone has seen a significant transformation in the way households eat together as a family due to the social and economic changes that have occurred over the past two decades. Such changes have seen families gradually becoming more Americanised or Europeanised (Helman, 2014). Udenta et al (2014) re-affirm this argument in their study of Nigerian food consumption habits by suggesting that traditional foods composed of cereals or root crops with sauce from green leaves, oil and meat/fish depending on the economic situation of the household. They compared consumption in urban and rural settings and stated that in rural areas, people ate the same type of dishes based on traditional staple foods, whereas the urban population incorporates more modern foods into the diet and suggested that in most African countries the urban population are inclined to consume food outdoor, mostly on the streets or restaurants. The aim of this study is to identify and review critical factors, which stakeholders perceived as influencing family meal social interaction behaviour in a Sierra Leonean collectivist context, and assess their implications on food manufacturers and retailers. As a result, family meal consumption in this study was defined as the traditional evening meals shared or consumed together by households as family units, but excludes foods taken away from home by household members or those consumed in restaurants or on the streets. This is because most Sierra Leonean families are less inclined to eat together outdoors with their family as a socialisation practice.

Lawan and Zanna (2013); Shah (2013); and Ayoko and Muchiri (2014) pointed to the tendency of focusing on group preferences and group harmony in collectivist cultures, which leads to the opportunity of suppressing internal (personal) attributes in certain settings. This argument was buttressed by Abraham et al (2013) and Bolten (2014), who noted that Kinship networks are extremely important in the everyday matters of Sierra Leoneans, in that one is obliged to assist one's family members throughout life. Accordingly, most people in Sierra Leone abide by the collectivist cultures because of the limited opportunity that exists in terms of jobs and other social amenities and therefore drive the collectivist tendency upwards to enhance the survival of close families or in-groups. This collectivistic tendency is evident in almost all ethnic groups within Sierra Leone; except for a few people who are well educated and have attained certain social status in society employ the British or American individualistic orientations (Rothlauf, 2015).

The acquisition of high social status on a cumulative basis results in the employment of Western lifestyles or values (Abraham et al, 2013; and Le Billon, 2014). In Sierra Leone,

individualism is also eminent among the ethnic group referred to as creoles, who are freed slaves from the United States and/or the United Kingdom. They have more individualistic and British or American thinking than the average Sierra Leonean from other ethnic groups. This is because they are increasingly more independent, autonomous and self-reliant than the average Sierra Leonean from other traditional backgrounds (Abraham et al, 2013; and Le Billon, 2014). This view was also supported by Glennerster et al (2013); Little (2013); and McFerson (2013), who reiterated that creoles practiced more independence than the average Sierra Leonean, and concludes by stating that they are largely influenced by British and American cultures. In summary, upper income households, creoles and academics are more inclined to practice individualism, because of either their educational attainment or the influence of places they have travelled/visited and/or lived. In such cases, they are likely to imbibe the individualistic culture of places lived/visited. However, even within these groupings, irrespective of their social standings, some still embrace collectivism.

In Sierra Leone, whose culture is predominantly collectivist; the idea of accommodating extended family values is not uncommon - with one large joint family unit living together under the same roof with a single breadwinner. A number of theorists re-affirmed this argument and that the basic household structure of Sierra Leone is an extended family, organised for the majority of people around the farm and its rice production (Simons, 2013; Al-Krenawi, 2014; and Chinunda, 2014). Chinunda (2014) reiterated that many households are polygamous, where a husband may have more than one wife; the first or "senior" wife usually has some authority over "junior" wives, such as in training and organising them into a functional unit. However, Coulter (2015) also proclaimed that monogamy is also common, especially among urban and Christian families. Akin to this view, Sanchez-Sosa (2013); Amato (2014); and Segrin and Flora (2014) suggested that the extended family provides a very different type of environment for interaction among members as there are multiple sources of influences based on interaction and observation of others and the family members are considered as of greater importance than outsiders. This evidence is glaring in the Sierra Leonean culture, where most family members show a high degree of commitment and loyalty for people of the same descendants/in-groups. However, as the generational link expands beyond two generations, the level of commitment, loyalty and unity declines, which can be largely attributed to acculturation (Bonvalet et al, 2015; Telzer et al, 2015; and Waugh et al., 2015).

People learn the norms, attitudes and values from their families as part of their socialisation and the effect of the family on people's socialisation is termed intergenerational influence (Farid et al, 2014; and Priest et al, 2014). Of all cultural conventions that structure the daily life in the family meal social consumption domain, the most important is the eating habits (Allen and Sachs, 2013; Southerton, 2013; and Helman, 2014). Driver et al (2013) purported that food is a substance; providing both physical nourishment and a key form of communication that carries many kinds of meanings. There has been an increasing social and spatial polarisation in Sierra Leone between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', often found in economically poor areas or ghettos where segregation is based predominantly along the lines of class and ethnicity (Bell, 2013 and Young, 2013). Hilbrecht et al (2013) noted that consumption stands at the intersection of different spheres of everyday life – between private and public, the political and personal, the social and the individual, which is very evident in Sierra Leone.

The Sierra Leoneans are surrounded by lots of practices, which affects their food consumption behaviour, including: religious, ritualistic, racial, ethnicity, norms or traditions, which in one way or another convey meaning that are significant to them and which are interpreted based on their understanding. This view was supported by Horta et al (2013); Judd et al (2014); and De Backer et al (2015) , who stated that food tastes are shaped by childhood experiences or family norms and socialisation processes, emphasising that natural tastes are founded on social constructions which have been elaborated over generations. Koenig (2013); Beagan et al (2014); and Delaney and McCarthy (2014), on the other hand, attributed food taste of working class individuals to "a taste of necessity", arising from the lack of choice and enjoyment of the sensation of feeling full. Koenig (2013) suggested that the idea of taste itself is a middle-class concept since it presupposes freedom of choice, whereas the disadvantaged classes can only have a taste for what they are anyway condemned to . . . This argument is glaring in the Sierra Leonean collectivistic culture, where, as a result of limited choices, people of individualistic characteristics are frowned upon and viewed as self-centred with no concerns for the welfare and survival of others. Hence, the overwhelming drives for collectivism and interdependence.

Sierra Leone is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious country with a very peculiar and complicated history. A diversity of kingdoms and traditional practices, and ethnic groups such as the Mende, Temne, Limba and Fulani, were the early settlers, well before the arrival

of the Europeans (Akinsulure-Smith and Smith, 2014; Robinson, 2013; and Taylor, 2014). Sierra Leone has also known the ravages of slavery, wars, colonialism and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. After 1807, Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital, became an embarkation point for liberated slaves, who were either re-captured on the high seas by Britain's West African Fleet, or who emigrated from ''maroon'' communities in Nova Scotia and Jamaica (Abraham et al, 2013; and Lindsay, 2014). A new group, the ''Creoles,'' descended from these returnee free slaves, who eventually formed a relatively privileged, Western-assimilated group that has sometimes been resented by the indigenous groups because of their social standing in society and the opportunities they are exposed to (Akinsulure-Smith and Smith, 2014; Robinson, 2013; and Taylor, 2014).

There are over 18 different ethnic-cultural groups in Sierra Leone, mostly based on ethnicity, language, religion and traditional beliefs. Abraham et al (2013) and Taylor (2014) supported this argument by proclaiming that there are between fifteen and twenty ethnic groups in Sierra Leone, depending on one's linguistic tendency to "lump" or "split" groups of people speaking different dialects. Albeit the distinctness of each of these ethnic groups, the majority of them are incline to speak Creole. However, it is important to realise that irrespective of the collectivistic culture of Sierra Leoneans, the family meal consumption and social interaction behaviour of the various ethnic groups differs significantly. Cohen (2013) and Million (2013) also mentioned that sometimes villages, and sometimes families within villages, will have specific taboos or proscriptions against eating certain foods. Abraham et al (2013) claimed that these are usually attributed to a law handed down from ancestors or perhaps the founder of the village. Therefore, one can argue that the food consumption behaviour that is acceptable in certain areas by specific ethnic group may be regarded as taboo by others. What a certain ethnic group sees as a social way of life is seen as a taboo by others. Millan and Reynolds (2014); Parker and Grinter (2014); and Wien and Olsen (2014) suggested that there is limited knowledge of the implications of the interplay between cultural collectivism and family meal social interaction patterns. Fitzsimmons and Stamper (2014); and Muk et al (2014) noted that the interdependent self-concepts reflect internalisation of collectivist values and may therefore be a better predictor of consumption behaviour than are values measured at a cultural level.

Perry-Jenkins (2013); Gong et al (2014); and Perez (2014) conclude that there is little or no empirical evidence, models or frameworks to explain the relationship between collectivist

culture and the family meal social interaction behaviours. Therefore, this research attempts to bring empirical data that provides evidence on the conceptualisation of collectivistic culture and its corresponding effect on family social interaction patterns at mealtimes and businesses' behaviour in Sierra Leone. It is against the backdrop of the issues raised that the researcher seeks to determine the factors responsible for collectivism in the Sierra Leonean society. The research also seeks to investigate the association/interaction between the collectivist factors that influence family meal social interaction behaviour and apply the results on businesses to determine how it affects their behaviour. The researcher analysed the information and data obtained from the fieldwork to develop appropriate conclusions and recommendations.

1.2 Research context and rationale

1.2.1 Research context – Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is a small country, situated on the west coast of Africa, with an area of 71,740 sq. km (27,699 sq. mi), extending 338 km (210 mi) from north to south and 304 km (189 mi) from east to west (Abraham et al, 2013; and Akinsulure-Smith and Smith, 2014). Sierra Leone is bordered by Guinea on the north and northeast, Liberia on the south and southeast, and the Atlantic Ocean on the south and southwest (Taylor, 2014). A recent study by Akinsulure-Smith and Smith (2014) found that Sierra Leone has a population of approximately 5.2 million, which comprised of more than 18 different ethnic groups.

Sierra Leone has three provincial headquarter towns: Bo is located in the southern province, Kenema in the Eastern province, and Makeni in the North. These three provincial headquarter towns as depicted in the map were the main areas used for collecting the research data, including the capital, Freetown. Coincidentally, the three regions reflect the true picture of the country, as they comprise of people from different ethnic groups, culture, religion and social class. A map of the provincial headquarter towns, including the capital are depicted in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: The map of Sierra Leone depicting the three provincial headquarter towns and Freetown

Source: EBSCO, CIA World Fact Book

1.2.2 Rationale for this research

The rationale of this study is to highlight the cultural differences and similarities between Sierra Leone and the rest of the African continent, as well as those of other continents (Asia, Europe, and North and South America), since limited studies have been conducted on the culture and behaviours of people in Africa. A number of studies have pointed to the dearth in literature on culture, especially on families and businesses' behaviours in Africa (Bassnett, 2013; Bhabha, 2013; and Helman, 2014). Hence, the rationale of undertaking such a study is to put into perspective not only the cultural behaviours of Sierra Leonean families and businesses, but also help raise the awareness of the importance of the African culture to the rest of the world.

The importance of the meal cultural richness of any nation, especially in terms of its families' meal social interaction and businesses' behaviours cannot be overemphasised. A number of studies have pointed out that understanding the cultural meal behaviours of people in any

cultural settings, promotes easy accessibility and exploitation of that market (Milton, 2013; and Schechner, 2013). Food is very important in any cultural settings and linking that with the way families behave at mealtimes provides an opportunity for businesses and governments to see not only the cultural richness of Sierra Leone, but provide them with the opportunity to learn and understand how to develop and respond to such markets.

It has been suggested in several quarters that the African continent, particularly Sierra Leone, is riddled with diseases and other infections because of their food consumption behaviours (Garira, 2013; Worton and Tagoe, 2013; and Turshen, 2015). This study provides an insight into the social, cultural and economic behaviours of families and businesses, and their impacts on their livelihood. As a result, it opens up a corridor of hope and teaches the government how to address the social, cultural and economic needs of families and businesses in the long-term. Moreover, it helps eradicate most of the social ills suffered by Sierra Leonean families and businesses; as a thorough understanding of their eating and marketing behaviours and how that affects their development can be germane in helping the government address their survival in the long-term. Consequently, this research provides a benchmark for understanding the socio-cultural and economic impediments that limits the growth and development of not only Sierra Leonean families and businesses, but those of the other countries in Africa that share similar characteristics.

It can be argued that frequent family mealtimes teaches unity and oneness, and helps reign in the behaviours of children as the parents become acquainted with the issues affecting their children and understand the progress they are making developmentally. Consequently, reigning in inappropriate behaviours can help build honesty and trust, and enhance cordial relationship between family members as well as businesses and their customers. This, without doubt is significant to the government's attitudinal change drive, especially in reigning in corruption and nepotism that is endemic in Sierra Leone.

1.3 Research aim and Objectives

1.3.1 Research aim

The aim of this study is to identify and review critical factors, which stakeholders perceived as influencing family meal social interaction behaviour in a Sierra Leonean collectivist context, and assess their implications on food manufacturers and retailers.

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1.3.2 Research objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Critically evaluate the relevance of food ethics, affection, education and family cohesion as collectivist symbolic cultural values at family mealtimes
2. Critically analyse whether gender differentiation and adherence to hierarchy/authority at family mealtimes are affected by collectivism
3. Critically evaluate the importance of family religious values and meal participation at mealtimes
4. Confirm the similarities and differences between the arguments of previous studies in relation to the views presented by this study about the influence of collectivism
5. Propose conclusions in relation to the primary data and provide appropriate recommendations to key stakeholders, including: policy-makers; food retailers and producers based on those conclusions.

1.4 Research Questions

The objectives of the research prompt a number of intriguing research questions as outlined below:

- What is the influence of religion on family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- How does ethnicity influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- Why do reference groups influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- What is the influence of conformity on families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- How does social class influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- What are the association between the factors that influences families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

The thesis strengthens the cultural definition of the determinants of collectivism in order to identify the cultural factors that influence family meal social interaction and businesses' behaviour. As a result, five different parameters were used as the determinants of collectivism, which are thought to influence family meal social interaction and businesses' behaviours in a typical Sierra Leonean setting.

(i)   Social class: This involves the categorisation of people into different classes based on their income, occupation, wealth, and education in society

(ii)   Ethnicity: the grouping of people into tribes and languages spoken, and the region of origin

(iii) Reference groups: this may include family members and other affiliated groups that may have significant influence on the food consumption decisions of households

(iv)   Religion: This involves the classification of people based on spiritual beliefs, values and practices

(v)   Conformity: This involves the strength and degree of cohesiveness, harmony and loyalty exhibited by the individual to the in-group.

A number of studies have identified social class, ethnicity, reference groups, religion, and conformity as the main factors influencing collectivism in Africa (Locke and Bailey, 2013; Valchev, 2013; and Jamal and Shukor, 2014). Trieu (2014); and Carter (2015) emphasised that the study of the determinants of collectivism can help in examining behavioural differences among cultural groups and unravel individual differences within a singular cultural group. Beattie (2013); and Gaertner and Dovidio (2014) pointed out that a number of previous studies (primarily in social psychology) have made great strides in examining and measuring similarities and differences in social behaviour, but have achieved only limited success. Therefore, this study provided concrete evidence of the factors that are responsible for the similarities and differences inherent in different social groups in Sierra Leone and outline how families' and businesses' behaviours differs. It also assessed the implications of the factors influencing families' meal behaviour on businesses (food retailers and producers) to identify how they affect their operations.

A working definition of the determinants of collectivism in this research involves social class, ethnicity, reference groups, religion and conformity exhibited by a particular family in its social interaction behaviour at meal times and/or businesses' behaviour. By using this classification, the factors influencing families and businesses in behaving collectively was identified. As a consequence, families used as samples in investigating the factors that influence food consumption behaviour at mealtimes are considered as married couples. This is because married couples (husband and wife) are the most predominant form of families in Sierra Leone, and consequently, single parent families were not selected because they are predominantly not considered as a family within the Sierra Leonean context, as society generally abhors or frowns upon its existence (Bjälkander et al, 2013; and Cunningham, 2014). As a result, this research focuses primarily on married families as they are considered as the most popular form of family in Sierra Leone (Leone, 2013). Foster (2013) and Leone (2013) reiterated that family sizes vary from 4.3 in Freetown to 9.1 in Segbema, a small town of 6000 people. Leone (2013) emphasised that over 80% of the families in many towns are extended families, but warned that although family size is directly related to the presence of extended families (except for Freetown) , there seems to be little relationship between the size of a town or its urban functions and family composition. A family in this study was defined as married couples (usually husband and wife) with or without children as well as extended family members living and eating together under the same roof, and sharing the same resources. Due to the complexity in discerning between households and families in the Sierra Leonean context, they are used interchangeable and given the same meaning throughout the research. As a result, family meal social interaction behaviour in this research may be defined as the act, attitude, control, action, communication or practices exhibited by families at the dinner table, which tend to affect or take account of the subjective experiences of the self and others.

1.5 Methodology

This research is a qualitative study using an inductive approach. A qualitative study was used because the researcher wanted to get an insight into the 'lived experiences' of families when interacting socially at mealtimes and apply the results on food retailers and producers. This helped the researcher understand in-depth the socio-cultural and economic issues confronting families when eating together at the dinner table as well as businesses. The researcher believed that it is only by conducting semi-structured interviews that families and businesses

are free and willing to express their experiences in their natural settings and divulge some of the pertinent issues affecting their behaviours. Also, getting an in-depth outlook into families' meal social interaction and businesses' behaviours can be adequately achieved only by conducting an interview with a small sample size using cross-sectional study and therefore the researcher holds the opinion that getting the 'lived experiences' of people in their natural settings can only be achieved through the use of qualitative studies.

To ensure reliability, validity and generalisability of the research, the researcher used triangulation by obtaining data from multiple sources and subjecting the data to both internal and external audits. The following stages were involved in the data collection process:

Stage one: the researcher reviewed the literature to identify existing gaps and formulated a semi-structured interview questions and themes based on literature sources.

Stage two: this involved conducting one-to-one semi-structured face to face interview with 20 families from diverse groups across Sierra Leone to obtain in-depth and detailed information on their 'lived experiences' in their natural settings (i.e. respective family homes) and then applied the results on 20 businesses (16 food retailers and 4 food manufacturers) to assess how they affect their operations.

Stage three: this involved observation to help validate the research by bringing forth unexplained actions and attitudes of families at mealtimes and which are deemed important to enhance and strengthen the interview conducted in stage two.

1.6 Contribution to knowledge

This research contributes as a guide to multiple audiences, including: families/consumers; businesses; community leaders; religious groups and policy-makers to understand; and acknowledge the significant role family meal social interaction plays in the Sierra Leonean society.

1.6.1 Contribution to Government policy

This section discusses the contribution this study made in enhancing the policy position of government and other bodies in addressing many of the social ills experienced by families and businesses.

(i)   Vehicle for enhancing the development of Children socially, morally and ethically

This study clearly outlines its impact by emphasising the importance of cultural norms as a vehicle for enhancing the development of children and young adults in terms of growth, self-confidence and academic achievements, and highlights the importance of moral standards in families, group cohesiveness, and healthier society for all Sierra Leoneans. A number of theorists alluded to these facts and proclaimed that more frequent family meal social interactions are associated with better outcomes among children and adolescents (Woodruff and Kirby, 2013; Drotar, 2014; and Meier and Musick, 2014). The wider implications of this study are that it may have important effects on the practical, social, ethical, cultural orientation and development of the families by teaching them how to raise their children in a healthy environment and guide them in understanding the basic family norms and orient them in avoiding cultural stereotyping, which can be useful not only to Sierra Leoneans, but Africans as a whole. As a result, it contributes to guide policy-makers into engaging in the promotion of social interaction at meal times, which enhances the development of children and youth's conversational skills; teaches politeness, morals and acceptable language use; regulates behaviour and teaches ethics; and provide distinct cultural patterns and guidance that helps the transition of children and youths into adulthood discourse. These accumulated traits can eventually be translated to work settings, social gatherings and contribute significantly to the Sierra Leonean government's attitudinal change drive that is currently promoted throughout the country to reduce bribery, corruption and other social ills.

(ii)   Directs government policy towards addressing poverty alleviation and extended families

Another key contribution of this study is that it helps guide government's policy on poverty alleviation by educating them about the problems confronted by families in accessing not only adequate foods and/or variety, but also teaches them the symbolism of families' access to quality food or balanced diets. It also provides policy-makers with the requisite knowledge and understanding needed of how to address the dietary problems of families, especially those in the lower income group. A number of researchers, for example, Chebet

and Cherop (2015); Milne and Mahanty (2015); and Yimer (2015) have emphasised that a lack of food knowledge by policy-makers has contributed to the ruining of family lives, which undermines the socio-economic development and political stability of most developing countries. Consequently, this study can open the door by enlightening how to raise the standard of living of the populace and serve as a benchmark for future studies to be carried out by the government. It also directs government policy towards the impact extended families have on the sustainability and effective functioning of families by highlighting the socio-economic costs and benefits on the average family and determine whether they are the factors responsible for increased poverty in a typical Sierra Leonean family. Thus, the study will guide the government to plan in the long-term how provisions can be made for the less privileged, and improve the family structure and distribution of income in the country.

(iii)   Directs government policy towards the symbolism of work-life balance

An imminent contribution of this study is that it raises policy-makers' awareness of the significance of work-life balance by serving as a guide for the introduction of flexible working conditions for the average Sierra Leonean working family, especially women, who do not only work, but also prepare family meals and raise children. A number of studies, for example, Adeyemo et al (2015); and Martin et al (2015), have reiterated that families are confronted with the difficulty of combining the competing demands of work and family life, and balancing the two is critical for organisational growth and development. Therefore, this study would educate policy-makers, not just in Sierra Leone, but further afield as to the use of flexible working conditions to enhance the productivity and efficiency of every family in the long-term, which can contribute to their overall growth, especially those of Africa.

(iv)   Raises government's awareness about the symbolism of hygiene and trigger the need for establishing vocational institutes to train private food sector employees

A vital contribution of this study was that it raises the government and food companies' awareness of the need for hygiene safeguards in creating a healthier society for all Sierra Leoneans. The benefits of this are that it will help educate not only the general populace, but also food companies about the need for packaging food items sold to consumers by ensuring that they are fit and certified for consumption. This study also contributed in educating the government and food companies' about the need for establishing vocational institutes

countrywide that guarantees the establishment of 'learning organisations' that continually meet the training needs of their staff. The implications of this is that it will create the drive of ensuring continuous improvement not just in food production techniques, but creating food varieties that meets the food needs of the ever expanding population.

1.6.2 Academic contribution

This section discusses the contribution of this study to the academic domain and highlights its contribution to the literature of culture and consumer behaviour

(v) **Changes to Literature on family meal consumption behaviour as there is a dearth of literature on consumer behaviour in Africa**

A principal academic contribution of this thesis lies in its extension of our knowledge and understanding of consumer behaviour through an empirical examination of family and group social influences on family meal social interaction behaviours. A significant number of consumer theories, for example, De Mooij (2013); Furnham and Gunter (2013); and Anheier (2014) focuses on the behaviour of American, British or other European consumers with very limited studies directed to less developed countries, particularly countries located in the African continent. These facts were stressed and exemplified by a number of theorists that the goal of most consumer behaviour studies has only been used to explain how individual cognition, perception or traits influence individual behaviour, and that Western industrialised nations pay little attention to the phenomenon of community or less developed countries (Durrheim, 2014; Gergen, 2014; and Harper et al, 2014). Durrheim (2014) reiterated that the study of consumer behaviour in other non-developed countries (for example, Africa) is of immense social importance in consumer discipline in the post-modern era. As a consequence, theorists of culture and consumer behaviour need to reflect the changes made by this study. This is because they will assist those reviewing the behaviours of consumers due to cultural influences to appreciate different perspective and motive of families and businesses' behaviour. It is assumed that the main findings of this study will be published in journals, academic conferences and possibly as a textbook.

(vi)   Enlighten academic communities' awareness of the symbolism of families' food ethics at mealtimes

The study contributes to illuminating our understanding of the critical role family meal social interaction plays in enhancing our knowledge to use themes as a conversational resource for social interaction, ethnic and class variations in meal social interactions and make sense of social action. It also contributes in enhancing our knowledge of food ethics in families and the symbolism attached to affection, hierarchy and gender differentiation at mealtimes, which enhances our knowledge of their significance in family discourse behaviour. Africa generally and Sierra Leone in particular pays greater credence to reverence and respect for elders at all times whether it is at the dinner table or outside it, and most times children are discouraged from talking at the dinner table. A number of researchers have reiterated this claim and pointed out that, in some families and social groups, kids are projected to usually stay quiet; whereas grown-ups conversely are expected to talk and give orders at the table, which emphasises the notion of children are to be seen, but not to be heard (Brill and Pepper, 2013; McCaleb, 2013; and Sammut, 2014). As a consequence, this study shows how children's competence can be utilised in on-going social interaction at meal times. It also highlights the effects of food ethics, affection, gender differentiation, ethnic and class variations on families' meal social interaction behaviours. The benefits of this are that it outlines the role social interaction plays at meal times in contributing to the development of members of the family as a whole and challenge previous doctrines of children's restricted rights as conversationalists.

(vii)   Lack of empirical evidence/data to substantiate the concept of collectivism in the Sierra Leonean/African context

It is evident from literature that there is a lack of empirical evidence/data on the concept of culture, especially collectivism/individualism, as defined in the African context (Schäfer, 2014; and Katic and Morris, 2016). This is because most of the academic discourses are predominantly either on America, Britain, Canada and other European countries or on China, India, Japan, South Korean, and other East and South-East Asian countries. This argument was reinforced by Jon et al (2014); and Zhang et al (2014), who noted that most of the literatures on culture and family meal consumption behaviour are overwhelmingly focused on Western or East Asian countries, and that theorists

completely overlook their relevance on other non-developing/developing countries. As a consequence, this study opens up a new dimension of collectivism using the African context and provides a theoretical framework that addresses many of the existing gaps in literature. This implies that the current study provided new evidence and assertion on the concept of collectivism in the Sierra Leonean/African context that has been lacking over the years, and reviewed evidences provided by earlier theorists in a new way.

(viii)   Lack of empirical evidence/data on the relationship between collectivism and family meal consumption behaviour

It is apparent that there is a lack of evidence from academic literature on the relationship between collectivism and family meal consumption behaviour in the African context, especially Sierra Leone. A number of studies, for example, Bond (2014); Samovar et al (2014); and Uskul (2015) have highlighted the need for more research to be conducted on the culture and behaviour of consumers in the African continent, and reiterated that there is dearth of sufficient evidence in establishing a concrete relationship between culture and consumer behaviour as many of the literature are largely focused on Western and East-Asian cultures and consumers. This thesis, therefore, examines the relationship between collectivism and family meal social interaction behaviour using the Sierra Leonean context, and provided empirical evidences on the relationship between the two, which has been neglected by earlier theorists.

(ix)   Challenges previous universal doctrine of Africa being collectivist

The findings of this thesis challenges prior universally accepted doctrines (Hofstede, 2010; De Mooij, 2013; and Triandis, 2013) that Africa is a collectivist society, and helps advance the literature of the African culture by discerning between collectivist and individualist orientations, juxtapose it with theories proposed by other proponents and identify how the findings can be applied to other domains, especially on family meal social interaction and business' behaviour.

(x)   The findings can be compared and contrasted with other academic literature

This thesis is the first to employ the concept of collectivistic theories to analyse family meal social interaction behaviour in the context of Sierra Leone. Therefore, the findings can be compared and contrasted with those of other researchers and theorists, for example, John et al

(2013); Seifer et al (2014); and Zbenovich and Lerner (2013) on family meal social interaction behaviour, particularly studies conducted in developing collectivist countries. Consequently, the thesis has a strong value in justifying its influence in the research world vis-à-vis the implications of collectivistic culture on family meal social interaction and business' behaviour.

1.6.3 Other stakeholders

This section discusses the contributions of this study to other stakeholders in the Sierra Leonean society and further afield.

(xii) Identified the similarities and differences inherent in different social groups

Most research carried out on collectivism failed to identify the impact of religion on family meal social interaction behaviour and most of the theories are inclined to discuss only how religion influences collectivist behaviours without any recourse to its impact at the dinner table (Uskul, 2015). This study shows how religion contributes in shaping the behaviours of Sierra Leonean families during social intercourse at meal times, which guides families' socio-cultural and economic development in the long-term. A number of research studies conducted in North America, Europe, and East Asia, for example, Heelas et al (2013); Soosai-Nathan et al (2013); and Swanson (2014), have reiterated the role collectivistic religious cultural values plays in the social inter-connectedness of families and communities, which contributes to directing their social and economic development. Therefore, this research established the differences or similarities in family behaviour at mealtimes that are associated with religion among different social groups in Sierra Leone. The benefits of this are that food companies can learn and understand the various religious factors that affects families' meal behaviour, which will help them to properly refocus their marketing plans.

(xiii) The association between collectivist family decision-making and meal social interaction behaviour

Family meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table and the process of joint decision-making by families has been of keen interest to many theorists, for example, Xie et al (2013); and Segrin and Flora (2014). Nevertheless, no or very little research has been done to determine the association between collectivist family decision-making and meal social

interaction behaviour (Anilkumar, 2013; Xie et al, 2013; and Segrin and Flora, 2014). These facts were reiterated by Leiss (2013); Strong and Cohen (2013); and Van Bich (2013) that the past several decades have witnessed a substantial change in the family role structure and decision-making at the dinner table during social intercourse, which in turn, is reflected in the marketplace as most families are now inclined to make collective decisions in the purchase of their foodstuffs. Strong and Cohen (2013) suggested that the influence of family decision-making has been a much too neglected subject of inquiry. These changes in role structure have affected the decision-making of families, which helps to determine whether to purchase or not to purchase existing products and services. As a result, this study raises Marketers awareness of the impact of collectivist family meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table; it highlights the impact of the changing roles and structures of collectivist families, and it enables the discussion of these factors and their effects on family meal and other domestic purchasing behaviours. Thus, it also helps to guide marketers and other business enthusiasts in modifying not only their marketing and advertising strategies, but their investment approach; and tailor them to the cultural needs of typical collectivist families in not only Sierra Leone, but further afield.

(xiv)   Raises food companies' awareness of families' food choices and behaviours

Another major contribution of this study is that it would help food manufacturers and retailers have a broader knowledge and understanding of families' food culture and choices, behaviours and decision-making, which can help them plan their manufacturing and retailing strategies for the long-term and help them determine how to capture and develop markets, whose consumers bear similar characteristics and culture as those of Sierra Leone. A number of studies have pointed to this argument by emphasising that most manufacturing and retailing companies, especially multi-nationals, have very little knowledge of the food consumption behaviours and choices of families in the developing world, particularly Africa (Fuchs et al, 2015; Principato et al, 2015; and Tjärnemo and Södahl, 2015). Consequently, this inner knowledge and understanding of families' behaviour by manufacturers and retailers in a collectivist context can help them identify the usefulness and implications of such knowledge and teaches them how it can be implemented in the broader African context.

(xv)   Useful guide to international food charitable organisations across the World

An imminent contribution of this study is that it can also help the United Nations (World Food Programme, and Food and Agricultural Organisation) to know the types of food consumed by families and learn about their appropriateness to each family, including learning about the food requirements of families and work to meet them without interfering with their cultural and religious beliefs. A number of studies have pointed to the difficulty the United Nations faced in meeting the food requirements of families in different social settings across the World because of the variation of the food needs and consumption requirements of the different populations (Paarlberg, 2015; Puri et al, 2015; and Stock et al, 2015). Therefore, this study provides appropriate guidance to International Non-Governmental Organisations and the United Nations, including: FAO and WFP operating in Sierra Leone, which can help improve their food knowledge about the type of food consumed by different families. This can then be applied further afield. The implications of this are that international organisations operating in developing countries can now be able to comprehend the importance attached to the type of food consumed by families, which raises their awareness about the essence of satisfying and/or meeting the food needs of different categories of people.

1.7 Limitations, boundaries and Assumptions

1.7.1 Family meal social interaction behaviour – Phase I of the study

At the outset of the thesis, it was significant to succinctly outline the assumptions, boundaries and limitations that could inherently affect the outcome of the research. Despite the fact that family meal social interaction pattern was critical to every Sierra Leoneans way of life; this thesis is limited to the urban areas and major cities of the country and may not reflect the family meal social interaction patterns of rural households or villages as they might be inaccessible due to poor road network or lack of adequate transportation.

A potential limitation of this thesis is that the semi-structured interviews were written in English and only those that spoke English were included in the research, which limited access to respondents that were fluent in English. It was apparent that such exclusion may limit the outcome of the research to only those that were privileged to be schooled, while excluding the majority of those who were not exposed to such privileges. However, the researcher

thoroughly investigated the interviewees' background to ensure that these discrepancies did not in any way affect the true picture of the outcome of the research, as the characteristics espoused by urban and educated families are not too dissimilar to those that are less educated. Webbink et al (2015) noted that a majority of families that are educated and live in urban areas still live below the poverty line; sometimes come from rural households or families and sometimes demonstrate the same behaviour as those that are less educated and/or lived in rural settings. As a result, it has minimal effect on the validity and reliability of the research as it cuts across all social or ethnic groups. Moreover, almost all the families interviewed reflected not only the 'lived experiences' in their own families, but recalled incidences that happened when they were with their parents (traditional families), which is sometimes reflected in their current family eating behaviours. This actually made the data rich and detailed.

A semi-structured interview was designed as the main data collection instruments and involved a one-to-one interview held with the families coupled with observations. However, time constraint, human resource availability and the cost involved in the data collection process served as impediments due to the poor nature of the transportation system and road networks, which often leads to excessive waste of time and expenditure over-run. This, the researcher overcame by ensuring that he left for scheduled interviews at least two to three hours before the scheduled time and secured sufficient funds in the event of cost over-run. Prolonged time and excessive cost are the most critical in conducting primary research, and research with a sample size of between 30 and 50 is the most appropriate (Gray, 2013; Hulley et al, 2013; and Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) reiterated that qualitative samples should often be fewer than 50. This argument was also re-affirmed by Guest (2014), that the limited time frame for data collection, severe time constraints on participants and the need to minimise participant recall loss, necessitates the adoption of multi-variate approach.

Another imminent constraint was the transport system in Sierra Leone, which was very chaotic and commuting from one place to the other was a colossal task. Sometimes even with the availability of the requisite funds to commute from one place to the other, due to the paucity of cars, and other means of transportation normally takes longer than expected to conduct an average interview, as the researcher had to wait sometimes for two to three hours to secure a car/vehicle to conduct a scheduled interview. Sometimes, even commuting from one city to another was very difficult and chaotic, as the researcher had to board cramped

vehicles to reach requisite destinations. Consequently, the researcher had to sometimes hire cars or vehicles to meet up with scheduled appointments, which made the whole process expensive, time consuming and demanding. In addition, scheduling an interview with working families irrespective of their social class is extremely difficult due to the nature of their busy schedules and sometimes the tendency of cancelling a scheduled appointment was very high.

The geographic locations of most of the interviewees were extremely difficult to access due to the topography of the land. As a result, it was self-evident that conducting research in a developing country like Sierra Leone was extremely tough due to the nature of the rugged terrains and mountainous locations of most families. It was very exhausting and challenging for the researcher to conduct interviews in some of these terrains. Sometimes, it became more challenging for the researcher when scheduled interviews were cancelled because the families were not available to participate in the interviewing process. A repeat process of going through the mountainous and rugged terrain proved to be very challenging for the interviewer.

Owing to the fact that Sierra Leone is an open society with people operating almost on a free-range basis and with a polychromic time management approach, there were limited interruptions in the schedule, such as lateness in participating in scheduled interviews. Most significantly, many Sierra Leoneans do not keep diary of events or keep an agenda of activities, so sometimes there is even the problem of not being able to access families, who have already scheduled an appointment with the researcher, as their mobile phones were either switched off or might have forgotten about the scheduled interviews. As a result, the researcher had to look for alternative families willing to participate in the interview or re-scheduled with the same family for another date and time. Re-scheduling and agreeing alternative dates and times with the interviewees were always difficult and time consuming. Also, there was the problem of limited electricity to conduct interviews at night, which had minimal effect on the research as alternative sources such as generators were available. Funding was also another critical issue as the field research was self-funded and as a result, getting adequate funds for the fieldwork was extremely tough for the researcher.

1.7.2 Food Manufacturers and Retailers – Phase 2 of the research

A crucial limitation of this study is that most of the food manufacturers and retailers were uncomfortable or scared of sharing their companies' information with the interviewer, as many perceived him to be a government official, who is soliciting information from them for use by the government or monitoring their business activities. In addition, a number of the employees were also scared of participating in the interview for fear of losing their jobs if they divulge their companies' secret. This incident was particularly prevalent in foreign food manufacturing companies, who were reluctant to participate in the interview for fear of exposing their companies' internal secret because of tax purposes. For example, the Manager of an Indian company initially accepted the invitation letter and signed the consent form, but later declined to participate for fear of exposing company secret. As a result, a few accepted to participate in the interview initially, but later called the interviewer to decline their interest, advancing low business turnover and the length of time required for processing the interview as the main reason(s) for the cancellation. However, the researcher was able to obtain the required number of interviewees needed for the field study on time and with limited constraints.

Furthermore, though most food retailers were enthusiastic participants, they were very polychromic with time, and the reverse was true for the food manufacturers, who were more monochromic. In addition, the interviewer experienced limited distractions from customers during the course of the interviewing process.

1.8 Outline of the thesis

The description of the research outline, excluding the introductory chapter can be categorised into six distinct chapters. The flow of the research and the basic structure of the thesis are depicted in Figure 1.2, followed by a systematic discussion of each of the chapter of the research.

Figure 1.2: Flow diagram of the research

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│      Chapter 2 - Literature Review – Cultural concepts │
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│      Chapter 3 – Literature review – Family meal behaviour │
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│              Chapter 4 – Methodology                  │
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│           Chapter 5–Analysis of results               │
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│              Chapter 6–Discussions                    │
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│      Chapter 7–Conclusions and Recommendations        │
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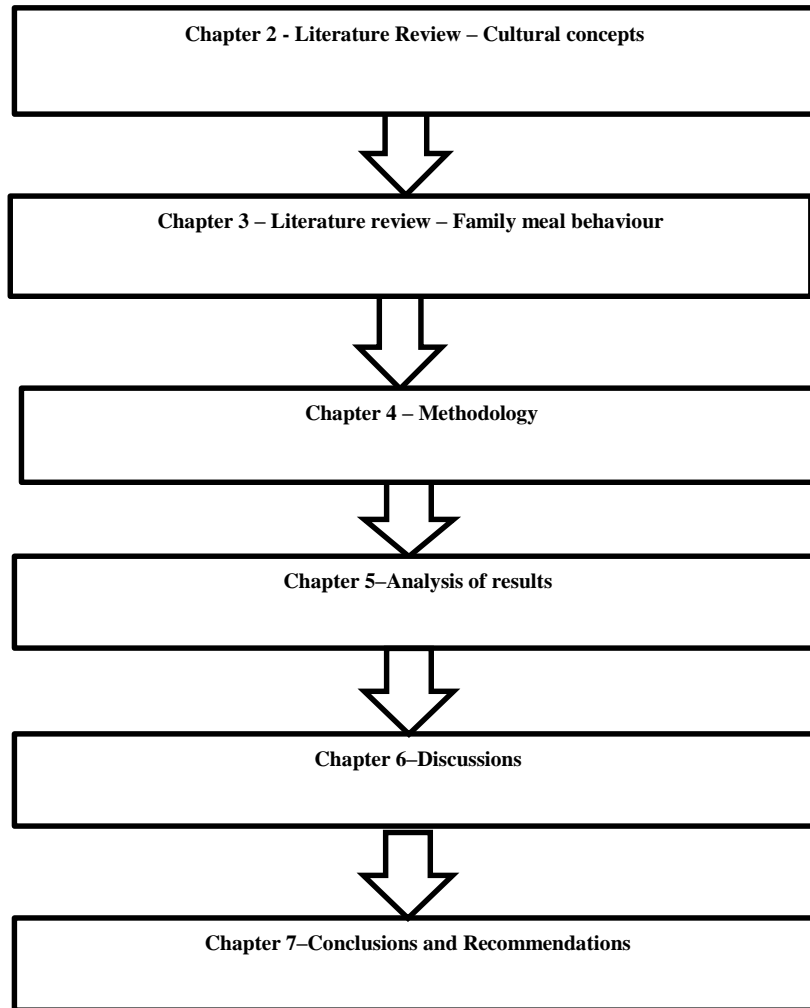
Chapter two: Literature review – cultural concepts

The chapter discusses a comprehensive review of the broad concept and definition of culture; the factors affecting culture; the models or dimensions of culture; the concepts of collectivism/individualism vis-à-vis in-groups and out-groups; the implications of the factors on the study; and a summary of the chapter.

Chapter three: Literature review: Family meal consumption behaviour

This chapter evaluates the importance of family meals; the symbolism of family meal as a socialisation tool; the effect of communication on family meal social discourse behaviour; the importance of family decision-making at mealtimes; the importance of family norms at meal times; the importance of meal sharing in families and social relations; the importance of

family meal social interaction behaviour; the implications of the review on the study; and a summary of the chapter.

Chapter four: Methodology of the research

This chapter discusses and justifies the research philosophy; the research methods and the methods of data analysis; the implications of the research methodology and summary of the chapter.

Chapter five: Analysis of the results

This chapter discusses the analysis and findings of the data obtained from the fieldwork, including the use of semi-structured interviews and observations.

Chapter six: Discussion of the results

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the results and analysis of the data obtained from the fieldwork by comparing and contrasting them with the literature review to establish a comparative analysis between the primary data findings and those from other theorists (mainly from literature sources).

Chapter seven: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter discusses the how and why the data were collected and analysed, and it justifies the outcomes of the research findings by linking them with the research aim, objectives and research questions. It also discusses how the conclusions and implications affect theory, practice, limitations and originality of the research, and provides recommendations for areas deemed culpable for further research.

1.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter has discussed the background, the context and the rationale for conducting the research. It has also provided an in-depth understanding and clarity of the research aim and objectives, and the research questions. It also provided synopsis of the research methodology

and gave a detailed outline of the study, including contents of the chapters: on the literature reviews; the methodology of the research; the analysis and interpretation of results and findings; the discussion of the results and findings; and conclusion and recommendations. It further discussed the contribution of the research to knowledge, and the constraints, limitations and assumptions confronted by the researcher in the field. The next chapter of the research reviews the concepts and dimensions of culture

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Cultural Concepts

2.0 Aim of the Chapter

The chapter aims to review the factors affecting culture such as acculturation, religion, ethnicity, conformity, reference group and social status. It critically reviews the effects of each of these factors on the maintenance and sustainability of the cultures within a society, outlining how they affect the effective functioning of its people. It also aims to review the dimensions of culture proposed by Hofstede (1980, 2001), clearly outlining the criticisms brought forth by various theorists. It reviewed the context of Hofstede's collectivism/individualism and power distance scores of four different countries (Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Egypt) by comparing and contrasting the behaviours of people in each of the countries and identifying their implications for the research. Hofstede's dimensions of culture were compared with other cultural dimensions that have been identified by other theorists.

2.1 Definitions of Culture

The answers to these questions vary dramatically from individual to individual as there is no universally accepted definition of culture and it is unlikely that we will be able to progress towards one soon (Hanson, 2013). Culture has been defined in so many ways over the years, but none has been sacrosanct. Usunier and Lee (2009); Du Gay et al (2013) argued that culture is the transmission, creation and patterns of values, beliefs, ideas and symbols that shape human behaviour and the artefacts produced through those behaviours. De Mooij (2013, p. 26) defined "culture as the glue that binds groups together, emphasising that without cultural patterns (organised systems of significant symbols) people would have difficulty living together". Hofstede (2001, p. 9) in an earlier study defined culture as "…the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one human group from another". In line with this definition, De Mooij (2013) reiterated that culture is what defines a human community, its individuals and social organisations, which is a set of controlled mechanisms (plans, recipes, rules, instructions, i.e. what computer engineers' call

"programmes") for the governing of behaviour. Presenting a similar argument, Helliwell et al., (2014) defined culture as the shared learned behaviour, which is transmitted from one generation to another for purposes of individual and societal growth, adjustment, and adaptation. He suggested that culture is represented externally as artefacts, roles and institutions, and it is represented internally as values, beliefs, attitudes, epistemology, consciousness, and biological functioning. Individuals therefore can be clustered into cultural groupings based on a number of shared constructs and experiences including schemas (for example, a collectivistic orientation), beliefs (for example, attitudes toward mental health), socialisation practices (for example, controlling parenting), immigration, and language among others (De Mooij, 2013). From these definitions, it is clear that the various theorists (Hofstede, 2001; De Mooij, 2013; and Helliwell et al, 2014) views culture in a similar way, as not only the characteristic of individuals, but rather as one that encompasses a number of people who have been conditioned by the same education and life experience. Hence, they believed that people are conditioned by their socio-cultural environment to act in a certain manner (De Mooij, 2013), and that culture cannot be separated from the individual. They emphasised that culture is learned and reflects what is in the mind of the individual. Consequently, they distinguished two types of cultures – those that are visible such as symbols, rituals and heroes, on the one hand, and classified values as the invisible aspect of culture, and therefore view culture as specific to a particular group, which falls in line with the 'emic' perspective.

Supporting this view, Goodenough (1971) defined culture as a set of beliefs or standards, shared by a group of people, which help the individual decide what is, what can be, how to feel, what to do and how to go about doing it. In addition, Côté and Levine (2014) posited that culture is composed of psychological structures which individuals or groups of individuals use to guide their behaviour; and reiterated that culture consists of whatever it is that one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members. In a similar manner, Gerson (2013); and Herman (2014) defined culture as controlled human behaviours, suggesting that the totality of human activities, and of their accumulated products is subsumed under culture; noting that artefacts, intangibles such as language, norms and values, rituals, literature, music, science, as well as social and political institutions may be largely culture-oriented. From the perspectives of Goodenough (1971); Gerson (2013); Côté and Levine (2014); and Herman (2014), it is evident they believe that there is no reason for culture to be equated with the whole of one particular society. Goodenough (1971) posited

that people switch into the culture that is operational within a given group, which assumes that the individual can choose the culture in which to interact at any given moment or in any given situation, subject to the overriding condition that the culture has been correctly internalised from past experiences, and therefore view culture from the 'etic' (universal) perspective.

The primary demand of what culture means for this research is to view it from the perspective of a nation as an indication of cultural orientation. The justification for this is that citizens of a nation may be subjected to the same political, social and economic systems, which govern their lives and daily existence. This can be reflected in the common history shared by them. Consequently, the primary goal of this research is to view culture from the behavioural practices of Sierra Leonean families to help determine the critical issues they see as their values, beliefs, norms, spirituality and the taken for granted issues that are not explicitly explained, but are considered important within their culture. In epitome, the research will evaluate culture from three perspectives as emphasised by Schutte and Ciarlante (1998) and from the internal and external perspectives posited by Hofstede (2001) and De Mooij (2013): behavioural family practices at meal times; the values, beliefs, preferences and norms espoused by these families at the dinner table; and the assumptions that are deeply rooted in their existence as a family before, during and after dinner.

The definition of culture, from the various arguments presented, appears to exist on a continuum, where at one extreme the scale depicts culture as one professing values (Hofstede, 2010; Rosenbaum, 2010; Schwartz et al, 2013), the mid-point of the scale sees culture as an extended set of mental processes, including values and beliefs (Hofstede, 2003; Abdullah, 2011; and De Mooij, 2013) and at the other extreme, the scale depicts culture as absolutely everything the individual thinks, does and personalise as his/her own (Moran et al, 2014). It is evident that irrespective of where culture falls on the continuum, it plays a critical role in the decision-making; attitudes and choices individuals and groups make and therefore it largely shapes their behaviour.

Schutte and Ciarlante (1998) stated that the interpretation of culture is too simplistic and parochial as there are many deep-rooted issues that affect people's lives and ways of doing things that are not visible and many times are taken for granted. In his cultural research, Utami (2014) supported this view by identifying a third element (assumption) as the most critical issue that is neglected by many researchers. He noted that the behavioural practices

are only a tip of the iceberg, emphasising that to gain a better understanding of the cultural argument, it is vital to venture below the surface to examine not only society's declared values and beliefs, but also the basic assumptions taken for granted by that society's members. Hence, the categorisation of the cultural elements into three different levels: 1. Behavioural practices, 2. Values, beliefs, preferences and norms, and 3. Basic assumptions (Schutte and Ciarlante, 1998; Marshall et al, 2011; and Utami, 2014). These three different levels are comprehensively discussed and depicted in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: The three levels of culture
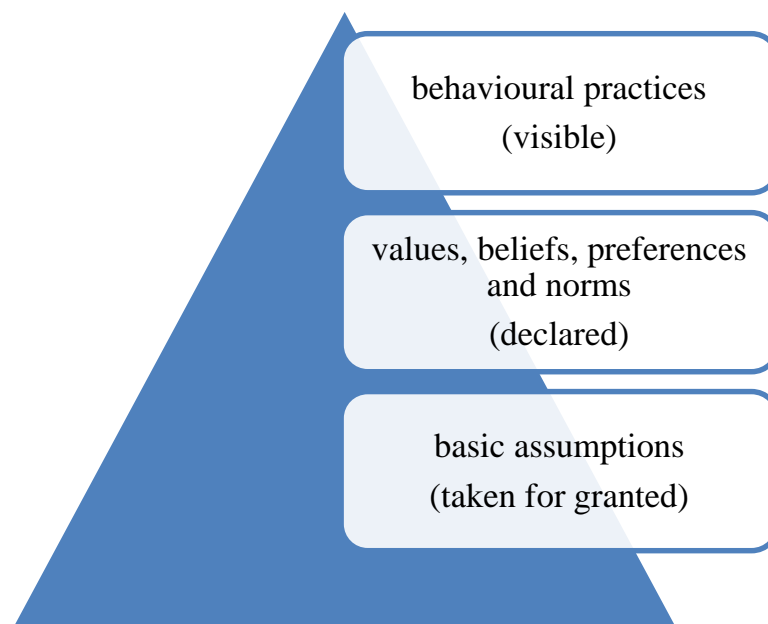
Source: Adapted from Schutte and Ciarlante, 1998; p. 7

Behavioural practices across cultures or societies vary from one to another and are mostly defined by the specific cultural settings to which people belong, which is largely visible to the public. De Mooij (2013) affirmed this view by positing that the way people behave varies from culture to culture, which he noted could lead to considerable misunderstanding between members of different societies. Hansen (2013) gave an example of the behaviour of Sioux Indians of South Dakota, who regard answering a question in the presence of the ignorant others as incorrect. Proclaiming that such behaviour would be regarded by others as boastful and arrogant, and signals undermining the confidence of others by shaming them. He identified an additional trait of the Sioux Indians, who consider it offensive to provide a wrong answer to a question, except when absolutely sure of the correct answers. He also

suggested that when the Sioux Indian children were faced with a white American teacher, who was unaware of their culture in a classroom, the teacher may interpret the Sioux Indians children's behaviour as a reflection of ignorance, stupidity or hostility.

Durkheim (2014) suggested that values, beliefs, preferences and norms are declared guidelines that are essential for the proper maintenance and functioning of any human society, emphasising that they are part of the cognitive sub-cultures that guide the moral and ethical codes of behaviour. These declared guidelines are enshrined and emphasised in the definition of Hofstede (2003) and De Mooij (2013), who proposed that norms are guidelines that direct a conduct in particular situation, while values are broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs to others. Schwartz (2013) provided a perfect fit by defining value as the concepts or beliefs that act as standards of what is most desirable when evaluating events, behaviours and persons. Several studies have demonstrated the importance that belief plays in influencing people's feelings (Becker et al, 2013; Mitchell, 2013; and Brown, 2014). Giddens (2013) further supports the view that people's beliefs about situations and events affect their interpretations of how they felt about certain situations; that their general social beliefs affects the way they perceive and respond to others (Tamir et al, 2007); that beliefs shared by most members of a culture differ from one culture to another (Hashimoto et al, 2011), and that culturally shared beliefs affect behaviour through internalised values and preferences, which prompt people to think and behave in a culturally relished way. They noted that personal values and preferences are in consonance with culturally shared beliefs and values. However, the relationship between values and beliefs has been challenged by recent findings that an individual's personal values and preferences are not necessarily consistent with their perceptions about values and preferences endorsed by other members of a culture (Kurman and Ronen-Eilon, 2009; Wan et al, 2010; and Zhang and Min, 2013). For example, Zou et al (2009) demonstrated that at least some cultural differences in cognition and behaviour were more strongly affected by perceptions of broader societal or cultural consensus – what people think others would think and do – than individuals' personal norms, beliefs, values and preferences.

Many cultural assumptions are deep-rooted beliefs that generate basic values, which guide our daily behaviour indirectly and are mostly subconscious as they shape our conduct and interaction with others, but are usually taken for granted. This view was buttressed by De Mooij (2013) that culture determines how members of society think and feel - which direct

their actions and define their outlook on life. He emphasised how members of a given society usually take their culture for granted because it has become so much part of them that they are often unaware of its existence. Nash (2014) gave an example of two individuals, one from South America and the other from North America, who were conversing in a hall 40 feet long. He emphasised that the two individuals began at one end of the hall and finished at the other end with the North American steadily retreating, while the South American relentless advancing with each trying to establish the accustomed communication distance defined by his culture. He pointed out that the North American was uneasy when his South American counterpart comes too close for comfort, whereas the South American was uncomfortable conversing at a distance. This shows individuals cannot clearly define their cultures until they are confronted with a meeting like this, which reveals the pervasive nature of culturally determined behaviour. It is apparent, however, that Nash's example despite its element of truth, it is blurred by perception as it is largely based on subjective view with no empirical data to support the claim as the United States is a melting pot consisting of people from various continents such as Asia, Africa, Europe and even South America, who may have similar cultural orientation with the South American and therefore more comfortable with the South American.

Akin to the argument advanced by Schutte and Ciarlante (1998) about the three key layers of culture depicted in a triangle (see Figure 2.1), a recent study conducted by Hofstede (2001) and Zakaria (2014) also highlighted and presented a useful analysis of culture using an "onion" model to describe the different layers of culture. In their diagram (see Figure 2.2) Hofstede (2001); and Zakaria (2014) proclaimed that culture in itself is a difficult topic to research due to the lack of measurability both objectively and subjectively as it is difficult to unravel what is embedded in human behaviours, whether overt or tacit. The model illustrates the different layers of culture, with the degree of complexity increasing as one move from the outer layer to the core of the inner layer. Hofstede (2001); and Zakaria (2015) noted that the outer layer depicts what people have or own is manifested in artefacts or material objects; and that the middle layer depicts what people think as reflected in their beliefs, attitudes, and values; and that the innermost layer or core depicts what people do as the key determinant of their normative patterns of behaviours and assumptions.

Figure 2.2: The onion diagram: The manifestation of culture at different levels
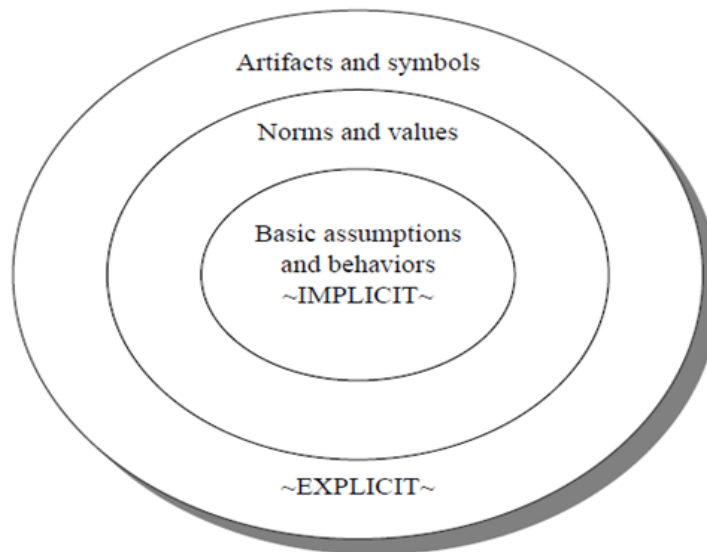
Source: Adapted from Hofstede (2001); Zakaria (2015)

Renteln (2013) noted that norms are prescriptive principles to which members of a culture increasingly subscribe to. He emphasised that the underlying premise of cultural value's is that people from different cultures differ normatively in their value orientations, which may ultimately cause differences in their overt or covert behaviours most of the time. Brown (2014) suggested that values are "a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others; while De Mooij (2013) elaborately defined value as desirable states, objects, goals, or behaviours, transcending specific situations and applied as normative standards to judge and to choose among alternative modes of behaviour. Jirachiefpattana (2014) supported this assertion and stressed that values are in large part culturally driven. From the propositions, it is justified to say cultural values drive a person's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours.

The analysis provided by Hofstede (2001); and Zakaria (2015) about the innermost layer provides an in-depth understanding and clarity into the issues responsible for the differences and similarities of values between cultures and even within the same culture. Cawelti (2014) reiterated that basic assumptions are the implicit or hidden aspects of culture, which spring from needs at the core of human existence. Cooper and Cefai (2013) emphasised that basic assumptions are behavioural rules that regulate actions and guide people to practical ways of managing their relationships with their environment (external adaptation); as well as with other people (internal integration). Cooper and Cefai (2013) pointed out that in the core layer, behaviours often have unconscious motivations because basic assumptions are not articulated

and are taken for granted. Other scholars contributed additional models to the cultural argument: for example, Hall (1976) was primarily concerned about time, space, and context; Hofstede (2001) focused on work-related values; whilst Trompenaars (1993) centres his argument on business values. It is evident that Hofstede's basic assumptions enhance comprehension of the complications of culture, which is vital for families who need to cooperate and collaborate during their social interaction at meal times as a unit to find solutions to their shared problems.

2.1.1 The effect of acculturation on culture

Lopez-Class et al (2011); and Schwartz et al (2010) defined acculturation as a multidimensional process that includes the identification, values, and practices that change through: contact with a new culture; or that are shaped through growing up in another family and/or community; or by immigrating to another country. Kuo (2014) defined acculturation as the ''phenomena which results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups. The use of such a notion of acculturation considers the heritage and receptiveness of cultures separately (Des Rosiers et al., 2013). Marsiglia (2014) brought a new dimension to the definition by looking at acculturation as the orientations towards heritage and receiving cultural contexts and practices among immigrants and their descendants. In comparison, Allen et al. (2014) viewed the acculturation construct in terms of cultural behaviours, for example, language use, food preferences, and family and friend relationship styles. Schwartz et al. (2013) pointed out that irrespective of the fact that acculturation includes cultural values and identifications as well as practices, it is important to consider other relevant dimensions such as ethnic identity. Schwartz et al (2013); and Umaña-Taylor et al. (2014) reiterated that ethnic identity is the subjective experience of heritage-culture retention; and the extent to which individuals view their ethnic identity group positively. However, Umaña-Taylor et al. (2014) noted that ethnic identity is an aspect of the entire acculturation process that can be distinguished from other aspects by virtue of its focus on subjective feelings about one's ethnicity. Schwartz et al. (2010) specifically referenced the acculturation orientations of Hispanic and American cultural practices and concluded that heterogeneity in acculturation orientations among Hispanic emerging adults was related to a number of cultural variables such as acculturative stress, collectivist values, familism, and discrimination.

Ho and Johnson (2013) argued that unless the influence of acculturation is measured, inappropriate conclusions may be drawn regarding cultural variation. Sauer (2015) also pointed to the importance of understanding an individual's level of acculturation, or the process of change in people's activities, thinking patterns, values, and self-identification before acculturation can be properly discerned. Han and Pong (2015) suggested that this is important in order to measure the psychological, behavioural, and attitudinal changes that occur when individuals and groups from different cultures come into continuous contact with each other. To increase the level of clarity on a complex issue like culture, Rebhun (2014) proposed two models of acculturation - The linear model assumes that as individuals develop strong mainstream ties, their ethnic ties are weakened, which might weaken ethnic identity; and the two-dimensional model, on the other hand, where they do not assume such a trade-off, but pointed out that individuals can have strong or weak identifications with their ethnic culture and with the mainstream culture, and that the influence of acculturation may vary between individuals and may even have a differential effect on their values, beliefs, assumptions and behaviours (Fischer-Neumann, 2014). The models proposed by Ho and Johnson (2013); and Sauer (2015) that acculturation cannot be firmly ascertained unless it is measured, may have some elements of truth, as Dinnerstein and Reimers (2013) suggested that people change their ethnicity at all times either as a result of immigration, emigration or as a result of the influence of being brought up in a certain society. As a result, Tal (2013) argued that due to acculturation, people's ethnicity is never stagnant and is dependent on the sternness, degree of flexibility and values of the individual, family or group.

Moran et al. (2014) suggested that the effects of acculturation can be viewed in terms of the holistic well-being of a person as part of a broader system related to the environment which he or she is part of – the interactions between people and the contexts in which time is spent (ecologically valid assessment). The predication of this argument can be based on the idea that people's well-being will be better when they are living in contexts in which they feel there is a good fit (Abubakar et al, 2014). Abubakar et al. (2014) referenced youth as a typical case, emphasising that if they are happy when in the context of family, they are likely to benefit from that socialisation, than if they were in conflict with their parents on a regular basis. Therefore, if there is congruence between spending time with friends and the level of acculturation, it can be posited that acculturation brings a positive impact relative to other contexts in which young people spends time (Stuart and Ward, 2015).

Parra-Cardona et al. (2014) pointed to the importance of family, in the acculturation debate, as a perceived source of support for different Hispanic sub-groups (for example, Mexicans, Cubans and Central Americans), but found it to display different effects on Anglo and American cultures (Segev et al, 2014). Marsiglia et al. (2014) suggested that family cohesion has been found to be a protective factor against young people acting outside it (for example, conduct problems, aggressive behaviours, and rule breaking). They stressed that children who follow family rules and retain aspects of the native culture are believed to enjoy closer family bonds in a collective and respectful orientation. They also concluded that acculturating Hispanic youth may offend their elders, if they internalise the U.S. norms, which emphasises the individual's rights and autonomy. The acculturation debate raised by Marsiglia et al. (2014) is similar to the Sierra Leone context; where elders are revered and deviation from the family's cultural norms can have an adverse effect on the interaction between parents and their children (Jandt, 2015) .

Cheng et al. (2014) pointed out that time in the United States is typically associated with second-culture acquisition. Kuo (2014) suggested that this could be part of a complex and stressful process. For Hispanic youth, acculturation often occurs in a context influenced by hostile environments that are not easy to navigate. Arguably, the multifaceted process of acculturation can add to the already tumultuous emotions experienced in adolescence and may impact self-esteem. As a result, immigrant youth acculturate in different ways, influenced largely by the contexts in which they interact (Rogers-Sirin et al., 2014). The contextual changes that young immigrants face in the normal course of their lives may vary widely and if these contexts are culturally distant from one another, the cultural norms between them can be difficult to reconcile. Rogers-Sirin et al. (2014) suggested that a young person who has little mastery of the English language may not have a positive sense of self when in the company of more acculturated peers or classmates. In those cases, they may feel closer to their families with whom they are likely to be more culturally matched (e.g., how they value the importance of family) despite the generational differences.

Perez (2011) highlighted a typical problem of acculturation of young family members outpacing their parents or older people by learning the language of the host society more rapidly, something that facilitates their access to societal institutions and acceptance. Farrelly et al. (2013); and Guha (2013) noted that asymmetrical acculturation of this nature can create a gap with a potential of family discord, and increased intergenerational conflict. The gaps in

acculturation among Hispanic families have been found to be inversely associated with familial obligation (Lawton and Gerdes, 2014); and family cohesion (Ai et al., 2014). It is evident as in most societies that when young people assimilate and acculturate faster than their parents, conflict is bound to occur in the family, creating additional stresses for its members (Van Kerckem et al., 2014).

Perez (2011); and Segev et al. (2014) suggested that acculturation is a multi-dimensional and dynamic process of the cultural changes that take place when two dissimilar cultural groups come together. Perez (2011) pointed out that social cognition, motivation, and self-identity in a social context and related perceived stigmas are all influential aspects of acculturation, as contact between members of different cultural groups is important. In comparison, Kaslow (2014) found out that adolescents in the United States allocate more time to their friends than to families; pointing out that they enjoyed time spent with friends more than that spent with their families. Moran et al. (2014) noted that although this is a normative behaviour in younger people, it is often of concern because it may interfere with receiving sanctions from parents, which he claimed is a necessary part of the socialisation process. Hean et al. (2013) found out that peers can play a positive role in the lives of young people, which is an important source of self-esteem, but affects interaction with the family. Thus, the existing literature though does not focus on understanding peer influence, but the interaction of families, especially of children as conversationalists. This theme will be explored in this study in terms of socialisation at family mealtimes. The next section 2.3 evaluates the factors affecting culture, including: religion; ethnicity; reference group; conformity; and social class.

2.2 Factors Affecting Culture

The factors affecting the culture of the people of any nation have been under investigation by many researchers (for example, Hofstede, 2001; and De Mooij, 2013); particularly the links between culture and the factors affecting it, which has resulted in the behavioural changes of individuals' overtime. In a typical collectivist society such as Sierra Leone, a number of factors do influence an individual's cultural thinking – from being extremely traditional to being moderately traditional and in some cases, it is not uncommon to find persons ignoring their cultural backgrounds completely: i.e. the cultural values from their upbringing (Röpke, 2014). The aim of the following section is to critically analyse these factors and to find out if

factors such as: acculturation; religion; ethnicity; conformity; social class; education; and reference groups affect people's behaviours overtime. Religion has been principally advanced by many theorists, for example, Cohen and Varnum (2016); and Kassim and Zain (2016), as one of the key influencers of collectivism, as most individuals in such societies are heavily reliant on others or their community in shaping their own identity. Rozman (2014) argued that religion is promulgated in most collectivist societies to foster interdependence and promote group-orientation, which can be used to strengthen new and existing bond between and among people. Ji et al (2016) concluded that religion is one of the most important factors of collectivism, as it can be used to pacify and build harmonious relationship between and among individuals. As a consequence, religion has been selected in this study because it is considered as one of the key influencers of Sierra Leonean families' food consumption behaviour.

2.2.1 The effect of religion on culture

Religion is a difficult concept to define (Ferré, 2013; Firth, 2013; and Wulff, 2014), which has resulted in many definitions (McLeod, 2013; and Timothy, 2013). Nevertheless, many researchers described religion as the external or outward expression of the inward spiritual system (Dobratz, 2013; Ivtzan, 2013; and Pompper, 2014). Johnson (2014) provided a contrary perspective to the argument by suggesting that religion is concerned with addressing the crises of human existence. He argues that religion is integral to humanity, as it addresses essential dimensions of life and its circumstances, offering resolutions that will always be in excess of any other rationalistic orientation. Kapferer et al (2009) defined religion as the construct worlds for life that are to be lived in and conditioned by ontological-cosmological ground.

In collectivistic cultures (for example, Hindu India and several East Asian countries), certain religious cultures view social connectivity as an integral part of religious life, and group affiliations are seen as important as they define religious identity (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2014). In addition, they noted that in collectivistic religious cultures, people are seen as fundamentally connected with each other and their communities, and pointed out that under such circumstances, people's religious and spiritual behaviour are tightly regulated through ritual and spirituality. Jiang et al (2015) defined rituals as the verbal language that confers identity, with emphasis placed on how communities are created. Arsel and Thompson (2011)

reiterated that the identity of individuals depend in large measure on their feeling of belonging, highlighting that the social experiences of everyday life in the distinctive values of a particular group and in the process, a group acquires a distinctive identity, separate from others. The emphasis placed on rituals, set religion as an obligatory instrument among groups of collectivist religious cultures. This argument was also reinforced by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2013) that collectivism is often seen as relying on obligation and on overcoming one's internal desires for the good of the collective. Paine (2013) referenced the Jewish religion as one that emphasises the performance of religious duties even when the individual is not intrinsically motivated as it is often seen as praiseworthy to place the religious requirement above one's own private desire. Cleveland et al (2015) offered a political dimension to the argument by purporting that the Singaporean Government's approach towards religion is pragmatic, where religious values are seen mainly as instruments to promote national unity and maintain national identity. The view that religion is set as an obligatory instrument among certain social groups is very much opinionated as people's commitment to religion is dying very fast in most societies and a number of people from certain social groups/settings are hardly ardent followers of religion and/or religious practices, let alone promote ritualistic tendencies (Niebuhr, 2013). Therefore, these professed claims by the various theorists, for example, Paine (2013); and Wald and Calhoun-Brown (2014) needs a critical review to make the argument concrete and convincing as there are no empirical data to substantiate their proposition.

Reeve et al (2004); and Cohen and Hill (2007) developed a theoretical framework that distinguishes intrinsic and extrinsic religious values in collectivist cultures and defined 'intrinsic religion' as one that is matured, while referring to 'extrinsic religion' as immature. They further stressed that the use of extrinsic religion as one designed for instrumental purposes, including social integration. Jenkins et al (2013) noted that groups of people that share religious identity can be meaningfully viewed as sharing cultural values. This view was also purported by Han et al (2013); and Miller et al (2014) that the core element of collectivism is the assumption that groups bind and mutually obligate individuals. With so many domains of collectivism, Cohen and Hill (2007) admonished that it is vital to discern in which sense the discussion of collectivism can be viewed as they have tremendous impact on religious and spiritual identity, and motivation. Cleveland et al (2015) referenced a case of two Chinese non-Muslim youths who were convicted in court for posting inflammatory

remarks against Muslims and claimed that the two men were jailed for spewing vulgarities at the Muslim Malay community. Tan emphasised that the incident led to the introduction of the Religious Harmony Declaration to remind all people of their religious obligation and reiterated that harmony is vital for peace, progress and prosperity. This indicates that religion alone cannot be used as an instrument to integrate people (Chang et al, 2013), and therefore undertaking a study that reviews the collectivist religious integration perspective is germane. Furthermore, the notion that people sharing the same religious beliefs have similar cultural values is parochial as most people in collectivist societies share similar religious beliefs, but have different cultural orientations or values (Moran, 2014).

Pirutinsky (2009) stated that the influence of religion on the functioning of humans is not monolithic and tends to fluctuate depending on the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours promoted by the belief of the individual. A number of theorists, for example, Cohen (2009); and Moran et al (2014) suggest that religion is best understood as a source of cultural influence with a diverse and varied impact on the way family interact with each other and with society, and it is therefore important to examine the importance of religion in the meal social interaction behaviours of certain groups or families, since generalisation may prove inaccurate. On the other hand, it is evident as noted by Cohen (2009); and Moran et al (2014) that even within the broader religious categories such as Muslims, Christians and Jews, there may be within group differences in terms of belief and culture that might alter the importance of religion in the way collectivist families interact at the dinner table. Barrett (2013) noted that it is not all types of religious groups appear to be equally adaptive. For example, Protestants and Catholics place emphasis on different intrinsic and extrinsic religious values, particularly on social aspects of religious motivation (Cohen, 2009).

Cohen and Hill (2007); and Ferraro and Brody (2015)suggested that collectivistic cultures such as those of the Hindu Indians and several East Asian Countries, place greater emphasis on religious cultural values and social connectedness as an integral element of religious life, and proclaimed that under such circumstances group affiliations are seen as important in defining parts of religious identity. This argument was further reinforced by Johnson and Cohen (2013), who concluded that collectivistic religious cultures pay greater credence to connectedness among people and communities. Kitayama and Markus (2014) noted that in a collectivist religious setting individuals are more likely to see themselves as part of an encompassing social network and to act in accordance with what one perceives to be the

feelings, thoughts, and actions of the others. Hofstede (2003); and Collar (2013) stressed that schisms within religious communities in collectivist societies are not encouraged, but if they do occur, they are absorbed within the context of the larger religious community. Hofstede (2003) reiterated that human beings' images of God or the gods reflect the values of human society, and professed that polytheist religions are symptomatic of collectivist societies. A number of research studies, for example, Hayton and Cacciotti (2014); Posthuma and Guerrero (2013); and Thornhill and Fincher (2014) conclude that traditional religiosity is positively associated with types of values characteristic of collectivism. It may be that because collectivism emphasises the relation to the in-group, the collectivist person would find more value in benefiting someone closer to her or him. The notion of the theorists, for example, Hofstede (2003); and Collar (2013), that schisms is not encouraged in religion can be viewed as too extreme as people of the same faith/belief may belong to different religious sects, which in itself breeds conflict and antagonism and most times a source of religious tensions (Krishnamurti, 2013).

Wald and Calboun (2014) referenced the distinction between Orthodox (i.e. the premise of acceptance of a divinely originated Torah (Hebrew bible) and adherence to the 613 biblical commandments, as interpreted in the "Talmud" and applied to all aspects of daily life) and non-Orthodox Judaism (which does not require strict adherence to laws and beliefs, but instead emphasises interpersonal ethics and social action and communal participation). Cohen and Hill (2007); and Kvande (2014) argued that non-orthodox Judaism represents a collectivist religion, which focuses on the expression of religiosity through social interrelation. Pirutinsky (2009); and Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi (2014) reiterated that the Orthodox Jewish doctrine and culture are explicitly centred on religious mental states such as belief in an afterlife; and a personal relationship with God founded upon faith and trust (Rosmarin et al, 2009; and Barrett, 2013). In family social interaction at meal times, most religions view the provision of the food for the family as God given, which can lead to spiritual and religious growth (Burton and Clements, 2013). Rosmarin et al (2009); and Feinson and Meir (2014) posited that despite the paucity of research on Orthodox Jews, religious mental states such as belief in God's benevolence and the utilisation of religious coping strategies are strongly linked with a better mental state, whilst research on non-Orthodox Jews found no relationship between religion, belief and mental health (Feinson and Meir, 2014).

A number of studies, for example, Sussman et al (2013); and Scales et al. (2014), have pointed to the mediating pathways through which intrinsic religiosity exerts these effects, indicating that the mechanisms are not fully known and vary across religious affiliations. A key possibility noted by Bhushan (2014) is that intrinsic religiosity acts as psychological resource that encourages protective mental states. Other researchers have suggested that beyond these mental processes, religious individuals have better social contacts (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 2013; and Pargament and Lomax, 2013). Giddens (2013); and Figley and Kiser (2013) suggested that social support serves as a protection against the way families interact at the dinner table. Consequently, intrinsic religiosity may help to unify the family and influence their degree of closeness through increased social support (Wang et al., 2014). Hovey et al. (2014) posited that although extrinsic religiosity provides increased social contact, intrinsic religiosity provides a more effective social support. This implies that religion is used for instrumental purposes such as social integration as well as for community affiliation, social relationship, tradition and rituals (Cohen, 2009). Ai et al (2014); and Ledbetter and Beck (2014) supported this argument by stating that relationships formed in the context of a shared religious worldview are particularly accessible and protective when families are interacting socially at the dinner table. Consequently, there are chances of potential variation in the spiritual effects of religious beliefs across religious groups or sects and the paucity of research on the impact of religion on family meal interaction behaviour justifies the essence of conducting research on such a topical issue (Koenig, 2013; and Pressman et al, 2014).

2.2.2 The effect of Reference groups on culture

De Mooij (2013); and Ozuem and Tan (2014) defined a reference group as an actual or imaginary institution, individual or group conceived of having significant relevance upon an individual's evaluations, aspirations, or behaviour. Families exhibit differing levels of susceptibility to reference group influences, depending on their age, gender, ethnic background, and social relations (Bhanot et al, 2014; Jamal and Shukor, 2014; and Segev et al, 2014). Ozuem and Tan (2014) drew comparison between the United States and Thai consumers and concluded that, the brand attitudes of Thai consumers tend to depend more on their familial groups (parents, uncles, and aunts) than peer groups (co-workers, friends, and neighbours). Mastro et al (2014) in their study of Hispanic consumers' in the United States

reiterated that their perceptions of reference group influence may vary according to the extent of their ethnic identification. It is apparent that the study conducted by Mastro et al. (2014) contradicts those of Bhanot et al (2014); Jamal and Shukor (2014); and Segev et al. (2014) as they were not emphatic or certain of the degree of influence of the reference group, but reiterated that it varies depending on ethnic identity. However, the proposition by Ozuem and Tan (2014) that consumers are dependent on the familial groups as the primary decision-making units has an element of truth because of the way the groups are structured. Thus, under such circumstances most of the decisions though influenced by family members, but in an extended family home, members of the extended family are also required to contribute (Perry-Jenkins et al., 2013). Therefore, this study will provide clarity to the arguments raised by the theorists.

Families' social interaction behaviour reflects not only individual attitudes but also their social relationships and obligations, such that they behave not only as an individual but also as a member of families, communities, and social networks (Clinard and Meier, 2015; Scott et al., 2015; and Telzer et al., 2015). De Mooij (2013) and Sammon and Kwon (2015) identified reference group influence as being informational, utilitarian, and value-expressive. De Mooij (2013) suggested that informational influence are obtained from groups or association of professionals or experts, friends and neighbours, whereas utilitarian influence are obtained from preferences of family members or other people the individual socialise with. The value-expressive influence relates to the image others will have of the individual upon purchase or use of a product or brand. Individuals are expected to associate themselves with positive referents or dissociate themselves from negative ones. Each type of influence pressures consumers to either strengthen or lessen their pro-environmental consumption (Biswas and Roy, 2015). The notion by the theorists, for example, Clinard and Meier (2015); Scott et al (2015); and Telzer et al (2015) that individuals are expected to behave as part of a family, community and social network is reflective of the Sierra Leonean society as that is the only way acceptance is gained in the broader society.

De Mooij (2013) and Moran et al. (2014) defined aspirational group as one to which a person wishes to belong such as occupation, ethnic group, gender group, certain age groups, or even nationality groups. If a social group is considered aspirational by most people of the society, the group is likely to become a societal referent, represented by many things, including brands (Srinivasan et al., 2014; Næsborg and Spork, 2014). Roberts (2014) suggested that

people are selective in their choice of comparison with people outside their family, and they tend to compare their families with other acquaintances to form attitudes toward brands that offer images that are congruent with different social groups. Social identity theory further suggests that family bias should be stronger toward similar rather than dissimilar social groups (Hindriks et al., 2014; Yilmaz and Peña, 2014). This argument rhymes with the Sierra Leonean families' cultural norms that encourages individuals to consume products or foodstuffs recommended by their family members, usually parents (Haselby, 2015). The notion that people aspire to belong to certain social group is dependent on the individual and his/her drive, but many are inclined to stick to their family group and limit their aspirations to such a group.

Feng (2015) classified reference groups into two, normative referents and comparative referents and defined normative referents as people such as parents, teachers, and peers, who provide the individual with norms, attitudes, and values through direct interaction. He defined comparative referents as people whose standards of achievement provide the individual with aspiration and are relatively further removed from the individual; thus, the individual is only able to observe the behaviour of the referent and does not directly interact with him or her such as sports heroes and entertainment figures. In comparison, this definition is similar to the one proposed by Lin et al. (2015), who discerned between socially proximal referents as people who operate in the individual's immediate social network, and socially distant referents as those who operate in the periphery of the individual's social domain. Choi et al (2015); and Sherif (2015) observed that this comparison is essential, as the display of influence requires the opportunity for social interaction or public scrutiny of behaviour. He noted that socially proximal reference groups allow for a significant amount of interaction while socially distant referents allow for relatively little or no direct interaction, but suggested that they do provide significant opportunities for scrutiny of public behaviour. Consequently, different types of referents likely exert differing degrees of influence depending on the extent to which the meal social interaction behaviour of families is observable (Caudell et al, 2015). A better distinction from proximal reference groups can be made between familial and peer groups (Kreager et al, 2015). This distinction is particularly appropriate in discerning the degree of influence of various groups on families' meal social interaction behaviour.

Cultural theories suggest that cultural orientation shapes self-concepts, which then guide people's behaviour (Hofstede, 2001; Chirkov, 2015). Lynch (2014); and Morris et al (2014) noted that an emerging emphasis on research into reference group influences considers individualism and collectivism, or independent and interdependent self-construals, rather than self-concepts in general. Maheswaran and Shavitt (2014) tries to discern a typical collectivist culture and referenced China as a country in which the consumers' image of 'self' tend to be shaped more by in-groups than other factors. The 'self' in the Chinese culture reflects social relationships and roles (Saad et al., 2014); and generally such a conforming and harmonious society tends to be highly susceptible to social influence (Samaha et al., 2014). The notion that consumers' self is largely dominated by immediate family members can be true to some extent, but generalising it can defeat the purpose of the argument, as many social groups in collectivist societies may not respond to families in the same way. A thorough research into the influences of family members' influence on individual's decision-making is essential to unravel the truth.

A number of researchers have used social identity theory to explain reference group influences on self-brand connections. For example, Lam et al., (2010); Bian and Forsythe (2012); and Choi and Rifon (2012) noted that reference groups have direct impacts on brand attitude and choices. This argument was also raised in a recent study conducted by Michel and Donthu (2014) that when a consumer "endorses" a brand by using it during interactions with reference groups, that person signals a desire to be associated with the kind of other people whom he or she perceives as also consuming that brand. Legorburu and McColl (2014) suggested that if the portrayal of an athletic shoe in an advertisement shows its wearer receiving accolades from significant others or relevant reference groups, perceptions of potential external positive reinforcement should drive consumers to purchase that shoe. As a result, it is indicative that reference group provides an important source of brand meaning to consumers, including a sense of how other people may view them, which influences their brand evaluations (Lovett et al, 2013). The notion that accolade goes with aspiration to use something is very benign as many times people can join the bandwagon, but symbolically within, they might not be in-tuned with the choice made.

2.2.3 The effect of Ethnicity on culture

Brice (2012); and Blaydes and Grimmer (2013) defined ethnicity as the sets of values, beliefs and norms which are largely shared within ethnic groups with defined boundaries, and that national culture is that culture which is more or less bounded by a country's political borders. Vargas and Kemmelmeier (2013) stated that it is commonly assumed that culture is always ethnic based and collectivism encourages tight ties between individuals, who are members of in-groups. A number of theorists have undoubtedly found evidence that values, beliefs and norms result in behavioural differences between cultures (Halpern, 2013; Moran et al., 2014; Serenari et al, 2013). Ethnic groups go through a process of cultural and psychological change when exposed to a different culture (Kuczynski and Knafo, 2013; Lorenzo-Blanco and Cortina, 2013), which may lead to increases in individual differences within the ethnic groups (as individuals assimilate at different paces). Moran et al. (2014) found that ethnically diverse groups with people from collectivist cultural traditions tended to be more cooperative and largely influenced by their immediate family members. The notion that ethnic groups go through cultural and psychological process is too simplistic and parochial as some people are so ethnocentric that even after migrating to other places they still keep their cultural values and become very resistant to change, but rather will work to influence the new culture to their advantage (Inkeles, 2013).

Sauer (2015) suggests that the complex construct of ethnicity, as one important factor of self-identity, needs to be broken down into the different variables of which it is comprised, and in his study of ethnic groups, he recommended that researchers should measure the specific cultural values of an ethnic group in order to determine the relevant differences, assess differences within the group, and evaluate how the values inherent in them can predict behaviours or attitudes. Hence, he suggested that it is imperative to understand why societies or communities differ ethnically. Researchers and theorists should measure individual family cultural values rather than characterising ethnicity based on generic assumptions as measuring individual values provides not only a reflection of the differences between groups of families, but also the differences that exists between the families of the same ethnic group (Gaines, 2014; Kozhevnikov et al, 2014). As this is the only way to measure and identify the differences and similarities between one ethnic group/family and the other with a modicum of justification.

Smith et al (2013); and Walls and Triandis (2014) suggests that the values of collectivism or the extent to which interdependence is favoured in a culture, appears to be one of the main fundamentals required for distinguishing ethnic groups. Collectivist societies stress group solidarity, duties and obligations, stable friendships, and particularism (Lu et al, 2013; Misztal, 2013). Families with strong collectivistic values tend to favour group solidarity, obligations, security, obedience, duty, and personalized relationships (Alesina and Giuliano, 2013; Trovão, 2014). In addition, Häuberer and Tatarko (2014) noted that individuals with a strong collectivistic orientation tend to belong to a select few in-groups such as families and friendship circles. Due to the stability of these in-groups, collectivists generally discriminate against out-group members and favour in-group members (Hildebrand et al., 2013). Chang (2014) in his study of Hispanics in the USA found out that Hispanics are characterised as having collectivist values with the family perceived as the primary in-group. Guerrero and Posthuma (2014) concluded that Hispanics were more competitive than Anglo-Americans when working in a group in which the majority was from another ethnicity (i.e., a group potentially perceived as an out-group). Earlier studies conducted by Aboud and Spears (2013); and Goar et al (2013) found a similar outcome and stated that ethnically diverse groups were more cooperative than the Anglo groups (in a prisoner's dilemma that simulates a work environment). They found in their studies that all groups responded in a predominantly competitive manner, and suggested that this could be due to the level of acculturation of the minorities within the ethnically diverse groups. Though the impact of acculturation on specific ethnic group has not been studied extensively, a number of researchers such as Cohen (2013); and Bornstein and Bradley (2014), agree that it is an important variable that must be considered when studying ethnic groups and their values.

Stayman and Despande (1989) used an empirical study to illustrate that ethnicity may even be situation dependent, and defined it as "situational ethnicity". They justified this because bicultural members of minority cultural groups may respond using norm sets from two different cultural backgrounds and that contextual cues may dictate which norm set is operative in a given situation. As such, that particular context may determine which of a person's communal identities or loyalties are appropriate at a point in time. Okamura et al (2010); and Fiske and Taylor (2013) added that the cognitive aspect of situational ethnicity is critical and that individuals' perceptions and interpretations of the signs and symbols of a

situation determine their behavioural options. It is now generally accepted that ethnicity is best understood as a complex multidimensional construct rather than a categorical variable based on self-described group membership (Vargas, 2013; Bartkowski and Shah, 2014; Schlenker, 2014). These views that suggest ethnicity is situation dependent, is confusing and self-defeating as people's cultural orientation are difficult to change overnight, though it is not uncommon for people to acculturate, but still import part of their old culture and use it as a mixture with the new unknowingly (Diller, 2014).

Zeiders et al (2013); and Peštek and Činjarević (2014) noted that certain components/dimensions of ethnicity are of particular relevance in explaining its impacts, including but are not limited to, ethnic identity, culture, the experience of discrimination and adherence to the group. Peštek and Činjarević (2014) stressed that in most instances, the effects that appear to be related to differences in ethnic group membership are best explained by variation across one of these component variables. Biziouras (2014); Oh et al (2014) in their study of Latinos discovered that, they report significantly more auditory hallucinations than European Americans, but however warned that these differences of ethnicity are primarily attributable to religious differences, and emphasised that participation in religious activities is a cultural variable that is a subcomponent of ethnic identity. Oh et al (2014) noted that once the effects of religion were controlled, there were no differences between Latino and European American reports of auditory hallucinations. Thus, the use of a multidimensional understanding of ethnicity makes it possible to identify the specific mechanism through which ethnicity operates on psychologically important outcomes. The exploration of the relations among key components of ethnicity has recently become a focus of attention (for example, Back, 2013; Neal et al., 2013; Rampton, 2014). Hence, undertaken a study to unravel the different components of ethnicity that influences families' meal social interaction behaviour is important.

Activities that have been used to study the effect of ethnicity on culture over the years include: language; choice of friendship; religious affiliation and practice; political ideology and activity; region of origin; participation in structured ethnic social groups; and miscellaneous ethnic/cultural activities and attitudes (Rampton, 2014). The exact nature and relative importance of each of the above activities will vary from one group to the other. For example, Qin et al. (2014) pointed out that the role of ethnic language proficiency; in-group

peer social interaction and parental cultural maintenance are predictors of ethnic identity in adolescents. In addition, Gaertner and Dovidio (2014); and Miller and Ali (2014) noted that the components of ethnic identity may combine differently for different individuals and evidenced that individuals may identify strongly with their ethnic group, feel a strong sense of belonging, have positive attitudes toward the group, and yet fail to share in any behaviours or attitudes that differentiate this group from others. Gaertner and Dovidio (2014) reiterated that individuals who fit into this category are thought to have symbolic ethnicity or ethnic loyalty and that the particular way these dimensions of ethnic identity combine for different individuals may influence the type of ethnicity. Bejanyan et al. (2014); and Devos and Vu (2014) stated that ethnic traditionalists are held together primarily by emotional ties as a result of long history and that their children are socialised to internalise these cultural values. They emphasised that these groups are not interested in social and economic interests, but are concerned about the maintenance of their culture, and identify strongly with the ethnic group to which they belong. The pessimism expressed by the theorists in terms of behavioural or attitudinal difference shared by people of similar ethnic group has some element of truth, especially if the orientation and upbringing of the individual is different from those of the others, but it is important to reiterate that most people are emotionally bonded as a result of blood ties and history, and the children are socially internalised to uphold the same cultural values.

2.2.4 The effect of conformity on culture

Conformity is defined as the movement on the part of the discrepant person towards the group norm as a function of explicit or implicit social pressure from group members, which can have an effect on the person's cultural integration (Cloward and Ohlin, 2014; Smith et al, 2014). Livi et al. (2014) reiterated that conformity occurs when individuals within a group influenced by the pressure for uniformity, change their perceptions or behaviours to become closer to the group norm. Asch (1956); and Oh (2013) provided a useful reference of social conformity by asking groups of individuals to estimate which of three comparison lines with different lengths was equal to a fourth standard line. In each group, there was only one genuine participant in the study and the other members were confederates. In about two-thirds of the trials, the confederates intentionally agreed upon a clearly wrong choice. Despite the obviously erroneous judgment of the other group members, about 76% of the participants

conformed to at least one of the clearly wrong group judgments. He deduced that most participants still thought that the group choice did not look correct even after they had conformed to the wrong group judgment. This indicates that irrespective of people's counter feelings about group influence, they sometimes conform to the group norm in order to satisfy the group.

Hofstede (2001); and Triandis (2013) have long thought of the concept of conformity as largely a product of culture, which influences group behaviour. Hofstede (2001) and Triandis (2013) specifically found that people from collectivist cultures are more responsive to the preferences of others and people from individualistic cultures are more assertive and independent. However, although compelling evidence for differences in conformity has been provided by Smith et al (2013) in their meta-analysis as well as by other researchers (for example, Petrova et al, 2007; Tully and Winer, 2014; Braver et al, 2014), these findings are limited because only one type of conformity (that is compliance) was considered.

Oh (2013, p.2) stated that "conformity in a social context can be derived from two conceptually distinct processes of influence, which includes normative and informational". He defined normative influence as the "influence to conform to the positive expectations of another" and stressed that the fulfilment of positive expectations produces positive feelings toward, and in harmony with, the other. In comparison, Cialdini and Goldstein (2004); and Parker (2013) noted that normative influence operates through the process of compliance and reiterated that, conformity that is derived from normative influence reflects an individual's superficial submission to a group norm rather than a change of judgment. Flanagin and Metzger (2013) defined informational influence as the influence to accept information obtained from another as evidence about reality. In comparison, Oh's (2013) emphasis of informational conformity motivation is based on the desire to conform to an accurate interpretation of reality and behave correctly. These two views (Flanagin and Metzger, 2013; and Oh, 2013) of informational influence are contrary to that of Hung (2014), who suggested that informational influence largely tends to induce internalisation, a long-lasting attitudinal change. In line with Hung's argument, Bohner and Dickel (2011); Comber and Thieme (2013) emphasised that informational influence through persuasiveness is another powerful force contributing to attitudinal change in most collectivist societies; and pointed to the Asian and African collectivist cultures as one tending towards holistic thinking, in which attention

is paid to the entire field rather than just the object; and Samovar et al (2014) suggested dialectic reasoning rather than formal logic employed. Therefore, explanations and arguments with a holistic point of view may be more persuasive and appealing for collectivist cultures. The argument by Hung (2014); Bohner and Dickel (2011); and Comber and Thieme (2013), that informational influence leads to a long-lasting attitudinal change is presumptuous as the character and cultural upbringing of people are different and what influences their behaviour or attitude cannot be easily deduced or determined without valid empirical evidence.

Nasir and Turner (2014) suggested that failure of individuals to conform to the stated group norms results in social sanctions and that conflict with the immediate family is strenuously avoided to maintain social order and harmony. Wallace (2013); and Radcliffe-Brown and Forde (2015) emphasised that struggling to avoid such conflicts results in the institution of discipline and conformity, and children are expected to respect and obey their elders. Oh (2013); and Merchant et al (2014) posited that collectivistic society accentuates the psychological need for validation and similarity with the social group, leading to conforming behaviour. The Confucian 'Doctrine of the Mean' urges the individual to avoid competition and conflict, adopt a non-assertive approach to conflict resolution (Fu, 2014); and maintain inner harmony (Tan, 2014). Conforming to group norms and values for fear of ostracisation as proclaimed by the theorists, for example, (Oh, 2013); and Merchant et al. (2014) has some element of truth as people from collectivist cultures are more concerned about the judgement passed by their social groups than those of their own. However, as people grow-up the social leather, they become more individualistic and become increasing worried about their own success and achievement.

Khapoya (2015) pointed out that social harmony in Chinese society is achieved through the key values of *Ren* (human heartedness) and *Li* (propriety), and classified *Filial piety, Ren and Li* as the most desirable as they foster social harmony. He suggested that the principle of *Ren* promotes interdependence and contributes to collective orientation, while *Li* informs people how to behave appropriately according to the hierarchical position people hold. Empirical evidence from a number of studies provides some support for these generalisations (Ho, 2013; and Chow, 2014). Liu et al (2014) identified relationship (*guanxi*), reciprocity (*bao*) and humanised obligation (*renqing*) as the fourth most important attributes of the Chinese culture, proclaiming that in business, relationships (*guanxi*) are important as contracts are often not strictly specified in legal terms but rely on trust between the parties, and that

relationship (Guanxi) cannot be sustained between two parties if there is no need of reciprocity or *bao*. Oh (2013) pointed out that just saving face is critical in many collectivist cultures. Liu et al (2014) suggested that the principle of reciprocity is universal but stressed that in the Chinese culture, the concept has particular salience; and 'humanised obligation' (*renqing*), is the art of relationship management; a blend of social cost, quality and relationships, and that the repayment of a 'humanised obligation (*renqing*) debt can be more difficult than the repayment of a financial debt. Looking at the arguments posited by the various theorists, for example, Liu et al (2014); and Khapoya (2015), it can be expected that Chinese individuals in the workplace or other social settings would prefer to avoid conflict, not challenge assumptions, and stay within governing rules and norms. However, generalising such a claim is tantamount to suggesting that every individual is a conformist and loyalist, which can be questioned as human characters either by nature or nurturance, does differ even within the same culture. Many collectivist cultures such as those of Africans, it is not uncommon for people to become non-conformist and fail to follow social and/or cultural norms at the dinner table, especially when they have become successful in life or sometimes as a result of buying into the modern (western) culture.

2.2.5 The effect of social class on culture

Peacock et al (2014, p. 26) pointed out that "social class is the evidence of economic, symbolic and cultural inequality. He emphasised that it is the means by which people become judged as morally worthwhile, or as having the right kind of knowledge or 'caste' ... a dynamic system of inequality which is continually being remade in large ... scale processes of social life ... but also through claims for entitlement {and of non-entitlement), through symbols and representations, and in the emotional and affective dimensions of life". Social class to a greater or lesser degree is a distinctive source of culture, depending on the country (Usunier and Lee, 2009; Brierley-Jones et al., 2014). Usunier and Lee (2009) emphasised age as one of the dominant cultural orientation of social class, which defines family role in collectivist society. They stated that in nuclear family with a weak structure, the parental authority as well as the wisdom and advice provided by the aged tends to be fading. Despite this aberration, Usunier and Lee (2009) proclaimed that the extended family in collectivist societies, place greater emphasis on age as a source of competence, guidance and wisdom for the community and as a result older people are more highly valued. Ghosh and Galczynski (2014) argued that all societies place people in strata and emphasised that in economically

conscious societies, people are classified into the 'haves' and 'have-nots', but also pointed to education or birth as another justification for stratification, especially in societies where wealth is absent. However, despite the significance of age as a source of wisdom and experience in collectivist societies as professed by the various theorists, it is important to note that age alone does not serve as an arbiter for authority in collectivist cultures (Usunier and Lee, 2009; Brierley-Jones et al., 2014). The symbol of authority in many collectivist societies today is dependent on the ability of the family head to cater for the children or other extended family members, otherwise age authority becomes insignificant. Also, the arguments highlighted by Peacock et al. (2014); and Ghosh and Galczynski (2014) seem to contradict that of Usunier and Lee (2009); Brierley-Jones et al. (2014) as they were more emphatic about the economic and social perspective, while Usunier and Lee (2009), and Brierley-Jones et al. (2014) placed a greater emphasis on age as a key determinant of social class. This implies that there is a huge discrepancy in advancing a definitive argument for the factors that actually defines people's social class. As a result, undertaking a study that will succinctly identify the factors that defines people's social class is essential to unravel the unexplained speck that still blurs the argument.

Face, in terms of self-respect, is considered status earned in a social network and therefore the gain or loss of face corresponds to a gain or loss in social status (Oh, 2013). In referencing China, Oh (2013) stressed that his definition corresponds to *mianzi,* which is face achieved through social status, rather than *lian,* which is face achieved through society's confidence in one's moral character. He posited that social class is one such variable accounting for within-culture variety in these developmental pathways. Vernon (2014) asserted that in all societies and cultures the upper social classes are likely to be more individualistic than the lower social classes. This argument was supported by a study conducted in Australia by Stevens and Dworkin (2014), who suggested that upper social status parents encourage individualism more than lower social class parents, but Mehregan (2014) concluded that greater emphasis on obedience and conformity to family norms was associated with lower social classes in Italy, Japan, Poland, and the United States, whereas the upper social classes attributed more importance to creativity, self-reliance, self-direction, and independence from the in-group. He concluded that, generally: there is socialisation for obedience and duty, which emphasises fitting in and promoting others' goals in lower social settings; and in upper social settings, there is socialisation for independence and self-reliance, which emphasises being unique, expressing self, realising inner attributes, and promoting

one's own goals. Similar findings were reported in Turkey in terms of values and self-descriptions, where Kashima et al. (2014) found that in the socialisation practices of lower social classes, Turkish parents were found to be more conducive to raising related and collectivistic persons, whereas upper social class parents tended to promote individualistic traits. Whilst, all parents favoured emotional bonds, the lower social class parents also favoured obedience, loyalty, and feeling gratitude to parents, whereas the upper social class parents favoured more autonomy for personal growth. This partitioning and strict classification of the people's behaviour using social classes and proclaiming the upper class to be independent and self-reliant while positing the lower class to be harmonious and obedient is very questionable and requires a thorough investigation into the claims made by the various proponents (Chiu and Hong, 2013).

Yildirim et al (2014) demonstrated in his study that, with increasing education, Turkish adults tended to attribute less importance to conservative values of tradition–religiousness and normative patterning and more to universal values of benevolence and individuality. Congruent with these findings, an earlier study conducted by Karakitapoǧlu-Aygün (2004) concluded that self-descriptions among Turkish University students and adults from middle-upper social class backgrounds are individualistic, and that relational self-descriptions were more descriptive of the self than collective, and emphasised that the preference for individualism seems to exist with feelings of relatedness in the Turkish culture. It was also evidenced by various theorists (Nehring et al, 2014; and Weeks, 2014) that increasing education and urbanization, particularly among the upper social class, appears to establish strong trends toward individuation and autonomy without a significant decline in relatedness. The claims made by the theorists such as Nehring et al (2014) and Weeks (2014), that the resultant effect of urbanisation and education leads to individualism in all upper social classes have some elements of truth, but the generalisation needs to be thoroughly investigated as certain societies irrespective of their level of economic and social advancements (financial, education and urbanisation) still conform to the profound doctrine of collectivism.

Bales and Parsons (2014) assert that the family in collectivist societies has been taken as a unit of stratification, and that the family's class can be derived from the occupation of the family head. Fuwa (2014); and Rowlingson and McKay (2014) supported this argument by stating that social and economic rewards of women in collectivist societies are largely

determined by their marital status and family relationship, and particularly by the status of the male breadwinner. In other words, they are less concerned about the sexual status compared to the inequalities of class status. A number of theorists such as Davidoff and Hall (2013); and Padfield and Procter (2014), maintained that a woman's social class should still be determined with reference to the occupation of her husband, emphasising that it is man's occupational circumstances rather than the woman that set the essential circumstances of life for most families. The notion by the theorists that a woman's social class is determined by her marital status and the occupation of the husband is still not uncommon in Sierra Leone. However, most families are experiencing stronger female voice today than ever before.

Lau and Young (2013) indicated that hierarchical social order is prevalent among South and South-East Asian families featuring a series of superior and subordinate individuals. Lau and Young pointed out that in most families, the father is considered to be the head of the family and the decision-maker, while the mother is the emotionally devoted, nurturant parental figure who feeds the children and takes care of the household, emphasising that the family extends both horizontally and vertically with greater value attached to each relationship, and respect is given to each family member. Carpenter (2013); and Kelley and Trepper (2014), noted that grandparents have a high status in the family, and are respected and cared for by other family members, emphasising that it is not uncommon to see grandparents caring for children when the need arises. Klein (2013) stated that the care provided by parents to children in collectivist societies is mandatory, but that children are obliged to reciprocate when the parents are old and weak to fend for themselves. Anderson (2013) supported this claim and suggested that older people in collectivist societies are seen as a source of wisdom, knowledge and support in times of crisis, proclaiming that younger siblings are expected to respect older siblings and look up to them for guidance and support. He further reiterated that apart from the respect accorded to family hierarchy, authority in collectivist societies are given greater respect, and that age and official positions are respected sources of social status. The argument raised by the theorists might be true of most collectivist societies, though there are aberrations as a number of family members (mostly children), are becoming more individualistic and independent as a result of social and economic advancement (education, urbanisation and financial success) (Nehring et al, 2014; Weeks, 2014). This suggestion is especially true when children leave the family homes to either live on their own, travel abroad or get married into another family. The new family overtime tends to exert a lot of

influence on the character and thinking of the individual and his/her behavioural pattern (Arthur, 2013).

2.3 Evaluating Cultural models/Values/Dimensions

This section of the review provides a comprehensive analysis of the individualism/collectivism vis-à-vis power distance dimensions of ten theorists as posited in various studies, and also provided a critical argument for and against Hofstede's individualism/collectivism and power distance dimensions.

2.3.1 Analysis of ten theorists' cultural dimensions of individualism/collectivism and power distance

To provide better and useful insights into the dimensions of culture, it is prudent to compare and contrast the various cultural dimensions posited by theorists over the past several years (more than 50 years) to clearly see their contributions in defining societies' cultures. Table 2.1 provides a useful comparison of the various cultural studies, specifically focusing on the issues of power distance and collectivism/individualism. The table portrays individualism/collectivism and power distance based on the perspective of ten different theorists at different times in the study of cultural history. It shows a summary of the two cultural dimensions of individualism/collectivism and power distance and their definitions as posited by ten different theorists. The Individualism/Collectivism dimensions look at self and others and the level of interaction between them. It is a reflection of how society regards the 'individual' as a significant part of its existence and the degree of acceptance of his/her satisfaction within the groups. Collectivistic cultures are more inclined towards the group than the individual. For example, countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, and Egypt can be classified as collectivists whilst a country like South Africa can be seen as individualist. The individualism/collectivism dimension of Hofstede (1980) to some extent overlaps with the dimensions of Trompenaars'(1993) communitarianism/individualism value orientation, Rosinki's (2003) individualism/collectivism, Schwartz's (2013) embeddedness and autonomy value orientation, the Globe (2013) study of Individualism/collectivism, and Durkheim's (2014) mechanical/organic solidarity, all of which in one way or another describes the dimension of individualism/collectivism as they tend to define the boundaries between the

self and the group. However, they might differ in a number of theoretical and empirical aspects (Schwartz, 2013) as societies are never the same, changes may happen overtime and the individuals within them may behave differently. As a result of this overarching weakness in the definition of individualism/collectivism, as pointed out by Schwartz (2013), the dimension of Project Globe advances a more up-to-date argument as it defines collectivism as "the extent to which people are autonomous individuals or embedded in their groups … with the recognition of individuals as being interdependent and as having duties and obligation to other group members" (House et al., 2013, pp. 438-440). The GLOBE project undertaken by House et al. (2013) can be considered as one of the most sophisticated pieces of research undertaken to date because it assembles over 150 studies in 62 countries incorporating 30 years of cumulative experience after Hofstede's landmark study of cultural orientation (Schwartz, 2013). The 10-year research project conducted by "GLOBE" (Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness research programme) used "a worldwide, multiphase, multi-method … programmatic research effort designed to explore the fascinating and complex effects of culture on leadership, organisational effectiveness, economic competitiveness of societies, and the human condition of members of the societies studied" (House et al., 2013, pp. 10-11). These issues were addressed by undertaking an extensive quantitative and qualitative study based on responses obtained from the distribution of 735 questionnaires among 17,370 managers from 951 organisations. It can be accentuated that despite the thoroughness of the Globe dimension, the theoretical perspective of embeddedness vis-à-vis autonomy posited by Schwartz (2013) share some similarities as well as Hofstede's (1980) dimension of individualism/collectivism as it deals with the nature of the relations and boundaries between the person and the group. In autonomous cultures, individuals are encouraged to think, feel, behave, and act as unique individuals. Schwartz (2013) differentiated the value system into intellectual autonomy, where people use their own ideas and thinking in an innovative way; and affective autonomy, where people attempt to positively affect conditions in order to satisfy pleasure and excitement; while the embeddedness value orientation emphasises the integration in a social entity with shared goals and ways of living, where the interests of the in-group takes precedence over those of individuals.

Table 2. 1: Comparison of individualism/collectivism and power distance dimensions from the perspective of ten different theorists

The theoretical underpinnings of the two Cultural dimensions of collectivism/individualism and power distance		
Theorist	**Dimensions**	**Description**
Hofstede (2003)	Individualism/collectivism	It is degree of relationship that exists between the individual and the collective that prevails in a given society
	Power distance	It is the degree of inequality in power between and among people that the society views as normal, which varies from relatively equal to extremely unequal
Trompenaars (1993)	Individualism/communitarianism	The degree of supremacy between individual and group rights
	Achievement/ascription	The degree to which individuals are accorded status in society
Schutte and Ciarlante (1998)	Interpersonal relationships	The degree to which people in a country promote collective welfare and harmony, resulting in psychological collectivism.
	Roles and corresponding status	The degree to which society is characterised by rigid hierarchical structures: social order and harmony
Schwartz (2013)	Embeddedness/autonomy	The degree to which society deals with the issue of defining the nature of the relations and boundaries between the individual and the group
	Egalitarianism/hierarchy	It is the degree to which society promotes the equality of human beings in terms social justice and mutual responsibility as opposed to an unequal distribution of power within a society with a certain number of people being superior while others are comparatively subordinate
Kluckhohn and Strodbeck (1961)	Relationship orientation	The degree to which individuals are responsible for themselves and their immediate family or larger extended group of family or society
	Hierarchy and authority	Power and responsibility are naturally unequally distributed throughout society; those higher in the hierarchy have power over and responsibility for those lower
Hall (1990)	High context/low context culture	The degree to which information is made implicit or explicit in a society
	Distance and relative placement	The degree to power and status is defined in terms of how near or far away one individual may be from another
Fiske and	Communal Sharing Relationships	The degree to which people in a country see

Taylor (2013)		the members of a particular group as equivalent and undifferentiated. Group members favour their own group, and can be highly hostile to those outside that group
	Authority Ranking Relationships	Degree to which people in a country involve a linear ordering of relations, with people high in rank having not only prestige, privileges and decision-making rights, but also possibly some responsibility for those lower down the hierarchy(this concept has an overlap with Hofstede's notion of power distance).
Rosinski (2003)	Individualism/collectivism	Emphasises individual attributes or affiliation with a group
	Hierarchy/equality	The degree to which society is stratified to function properly or individuals are treated equally even with different role functions
Globe (House et al, 2013)	Individualism/collectivism	The degree to which people are autonomous individuals or embedded in their groups
	Power distance	reflects the degree to which a community accepts and endorsed authority, power differences, and status privileges"
Durkheim (2014)	Mechanic/organic solidarity	The degree to which individual do the same work in conformity with others or the tendency for tolerance to differentiation
	The division of labour in society	The characterisation of simple and industrial societies into different solidarity groupings

Adapted by the author: Kakay, S. (2015)

Kluckhohn and Strodbeck (1961) called individualism/collectivism relational orientation, Schutte and Ciarlante (1998) called it interpersonal relationship, and Fiske and Taylor (2013) referred to it as communal sharing relationships due to the emphasis placed on the value of families and other relations based on how people relate to each other and their relational units. It is justifiable to say that the different terminologies by the different proponents are almost the same with limited differences. Kluckhohn and Strodbeck (1961), however, identified the lineal dimension as one that emphasises hierarchy and tradition as the basis of authority. Fiske and Taylor's (2013) communal sharing relationship can also be likened with Kluckhohn and Strodbeck (1961) interpersonal relationship, Hofstede's (1980) collectivism/individualism dimension, though their emphasis is mostly on group sharing, social harmony, social cohesion and social sensitisation.

Hall's (1990) distinction of culture on the basis of communication using high-context and low-context cultures can also be tied with the individualism/collectivism argument of

Hofstede (1980), Rosinski (2003) and the Globe (2013) project. He emphasised that high-context communication implies that little needs to be said or written as most of the information is either in the physical environment or already internalised by the individual with just an infinitesimal part coded as an explicit part of the message, while the reverse is true for a low-context communication. Saad et al (2014) posited that Hall's distinction of high and low-context cultures can be considered as an aspect of individualism/collectivism. They emphasised that the high-context communication fits the collectivist society, while the low-context communication is essentially individualistic.

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) relationship orientation and its pedigrees have influenced the selection of individualism/collectivism dimension as stressed above and are most commonly used in today's discourse; therefore, some overlap with the views of other theorist is apparent. This is evident in parts of the relationship orientation as echoed in Hofstede's (1980) individualism and power distance concepts; Trompenaars'(1993) individualism/communitarianism, and achievement/ascription dimensions; (Schwartz, 2013) embeddedness/autonomy and egalitarian/hierarchy; Schutte and Ciarlante (1998) interpersonal relationships and roles and corresponding statuses.

On the power distance perspective, Hofstede's (1980) dimension measures the extent to which a society tolerates inequality of power in organisations and society. This definition is largely similar to the Project Globe, which posits power distance as "the extent to which a community accepts and endorsed authority, power differences, and status privileges" (House et al., 2013, p. 513), and/or the extent to which members of a culture expect and agree that power should be shared unequally and disproportionately. The Globe (2013) study suggested that power distance relates to decision-making styles of hierarchical structures, their ability to influence, the opportunity to have independent thought and express opinions, reverend to authority, the use of artefacts as titles, ranks, and status versus equal treatment based on someone's self-worth and their contributions to the society and the sharing of information. From the two definitions (Hofstede, 1980; and Project Globe, 2013), it is clear that Project Globe's definition is more extensive and advanced as it transcends society and emphasises cultural acceptance of status differences and the reward gained for attaining such statuses. In a high power distance society, hierarchy is strong and power is centralised at the top with the power holders granted greater favour, status, privileges, and/or material rewards, and therefore individuals in such societies are conscious of ranks and a clear distinction between

superior and subordinate exists. For example: Nigeria, Kenya, and Egypt, whilst in a low power distance society, there is relatively close relationship between and among members of the organisation and a great sense of equality prevails - for example: South Africa.

Trompenaars (1993) achievement/ascription and equality/hierarchy value orientation of how status is accorded and leadership authority can be likened to Hofstede's power distance, if one assumes that status is accorded by nature rather than achievement, which reflects a significant proclivity to accept power distances. However, it is apparent that the two dimensions are not a complete match as Hofstede's power distance does not only look at the way status is accorded, but how it is accepted within society, an area neglected by Trompenaars (1993).

Schwartz 's (2013) dimension of egalitarian/hierarchy can be closely linked with Kluckhohn and Strodbeck's (1961) hierarchy and authority, and Rosinski's (2003) hierarchy/equality as all defined how power should be distributed using a bureaucratic structure. However, they differ in terms of how such powers should be distributed as Schwartz (2013) and Rosinski (2003) placed emphasis on equal distribution of power and authority, while Kluckhohn and Strodbeck's (1961) emphasis was more on power and authority differential. On the other hand, Schutte and Ciarlante's (1998) dimension of roles and corresponding statuses is similar to that of the 'Project Globe' as both emphasises role and status distribution, but differs in how it should be implemented as Schutte and Ciarlante were more interested in the use of hierarchy and status to maintain social order and harmony in society. Durkheim's (2014) division of labour can be closely linked with Hall's (1990) distance and relative placement as both emphasise two levels of social structure: collective relationships called a 'substratum' and collective representation called the 'superstructure' erected on top of it. As such, they suggested that social life has its roots in the material process, which organises human labour as the basis of social relations. The two dimensions differ in that Hall's (1990) emphasis was more on space as the definition of position and status, and therefore distinguishes four kinds of normal distance (intimacy, personal, social, and public) and he defined the role of space in work accomplishment. Durkheim's (2014), in comparison emphasised how work should be divided into smaller component parts to allow workers to carry out their tasks effectively and efficiently.

2.3.2 Analysis of Hofstede's individualism/collectivism and power distance dimensions of culture

Hofstede's (2003) cultural research has been meaningful in social, anthropological and management researches as it has been able to capture societal differences with a great degree of robustness. Berger et al (2014); De Mooij and Hofstede (2010); and Polonsky (2014) confirmed that Hofstede's (2003) model has been able to provide a comprehensive meaning to the demographic, geographic, economic and political relationships that exists in various societies. The empirical studies of Hofstede's (1980) work were undertaken between 1967 and 1973 within International Business machines (IBM) Corporation, a large multinational company, in 66 of its national subsidiaries, (Hofstede, 2001; 2003; Babatunde and Pheng, 2015). Hofstede (2001) classified society along five distinct dimensional lines: power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long/short term orientation. The classification of society along dimensional lines as interpreted by Hofstede is described in table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Hofstede's amended dimension of cultural values

Type of dimension	Definition
Power Distance	The extent to which different societies handles and weighs inequality
Uncertainty Avoidance	The lack of tolerance for abstruseness and the importance placed on formal rules or explains whether tense and vague situations are tolerated or avoided and to what extent
Individualism Vs. Collectivism	Individualism is more personal-oriented and individual goal driven while collectivism is group-oriented and group goal driven
Masculinity Vs. Femininity	Masculinity emphasises assertiveness and status goal while Femininity emphasises personal goals and nurturance
Long-term Vs. Short-term Orientation	Long-term orientation see people as more adaptable, take account of circumstances and thrifty in their spending habits while in short-term oriented societies, people seek instant gratification and are more concerned about respect for tradition than with circumstances

Source: Adapted from Hofstede, 2003, p. 79 - 370

The model is given a scale of 0 to 100 covering about 70 different countries (71 including the United States) with about 88,000 respondents and 117000 questionnaires for each dimension (Hofstede, 1991, 2001 and 2003), and each country has a position on each scale relative to other countries. It is essential to note that Hofstede's fifth dimension (Long-term versus short-term) was initially discovered by Bond in 1981 and he referred to it then as the "Confucian dynamism" (Venaik et al., 2013).

It needs to be emphasised that despite the significant ground breaking contributions of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, it has been criticised by theorists and academic researchers, including criticism for his classification of countries in each of the dimensions he purported (Usunier and Lee, 2009; Adkisson, 2014; and Brown et al, 2014). Most of the criticisms have focused on methodology issues (generalisability, sampling approach, level of analysis, cultural boundedness, subjectivity and the method of data collection) and theoretical perspectives (construction of dimensions, conceptualisation of culture, and its recent applications) (McSweeney, 2002; De Jong, 2013; and Vaiman and Brewster, 2014). Also, due to the fact that there have been significant cultural changes in most societies since Hofstede's discovery, many scholars argue that the research is obsolete (McSweeney, 2002; Wu, 2013; Adkisson, 2014). Hofstede's use of IBM as a single corporation to interpret his dimensions on a country basis is parochial, simplistic and very limited and therefore, mirroring it with national cultures that are complex with many deep-rooted issues that cannot be seen on the surface makes the whole theory questionable (Schutte and Ciarlante, 1998; and Yahyagil, 2015). Sivakumar and Nakata (2001); and Cummings and Worley (2014), however, countered that despite significant changes in societies since Hofstede's research, they claimed that the changes are slow and that cultural values are still persistent.

Another area of Hofstede's (1980) dimensions which has been criticised was the process of identifying the dimensions as it is mostly based on empirical findings with very limited theoretical underpinnings. This criticism was supported by Hayton and Cacciotti (2014), who concluded that most of Hofstede's dimensions are built around empirical arguments with limited theoretical basis; and the legitimacy of the dimensions has been criticised as one based on chance (Harcourt et al, 2013). Hassan (2014) noted that the exhaustiveness of the dimensions can also be questioned, as it is mostly based on a subjective view.

It is apparent that irrespective of the successes scored by Hofstede (1980) in unravelling national cultures, it is difficult for him to fully understand the behaviour of people in other cultures without growing up in that culture and conducting a short-term study may not reflect the true societal values of a country. These facts were stressed by Chaing (2005); De Mooij (2013) who criticised Hofstede for being bounded by his own background. Also, Hofstede's original career as a marketer in IBM might have affected the result of his study in that it reflects only specific sub-cultures within the organisation rather than the organisation as a whole (McSweeney, 2002; and Puia and Ofori-Dankwa, 2013), and that most of the

respondents sampled were mostly male, which might have affected the outcome of the study (McSweeney, 2002; and Chipulu et al, 2014).

Another aspect of Hofstede's dimension, that has been criticised, is his use of a questionnaire as a singular data collection method, which might make the result largely skewed as undertaking research on a complex issue like culture requires multi-variate approach in order to cover all aspects. This argument was also suggested by Larsen and Krumov (2013); and Sun et al (2014), who proposed the use of multi-method research design to overcome the shortfalls, and commented that Hofstede's dimensions are narrow and limited only to the study of work-related values, which are not the same as the national ones. Hayton and Cacciotti (2014) referenced Confucian dynamism, which reflects the same underlying cultural values as individualism and for this reason they should be treated as independent. Also the dimensions only covered the cultures of countries where IBM was operating and largely ignored a significant number of countries whose cultures might have altered the framework.

Although it is clear that Hofstede's study might have inherent weaknesses, it is still considered one of the best cultural studies and ignoring it is unconscionable (Gupta et al, 2014; Holmes-Eber, 2014). In addition, Hofstede's framework is an integrated cultural framework that can fit into studies in a simple, practical, and usable way for cultural studies (Soares et al, 2007). As a result, this study intends to use Hofstede's cultural argument of collectivism/individualism and power distance of Nigeria and compare it with the Sierra Leonean situation as they are very close culturally, so as to bring out the similarities and differences that are inherent in their cultural values and practices, particularly in relation to collectivism and power distance in families' social interaction at mealtimes. The reason for selecting the four countries in Table 2.3 is to provide a paradigm of the cultural outlook of individualism/collectivism and power distance in different parts of the African continent. As a result, Table 2.3 below illustrates Hofstede's (2003) scores for the four different countries, including: Nigeria; Kenya; Egypt; and South Africa, along the two dimensional lines: individualism/collectivism and power distance.

Table 2.3: Individualism/collectivism and power distance for four different countries (Representation from South, East, West and North Africa)

	Individualism/collectivism	Power distance
Nigeria (West Africa)	20	77
South Africa	65	49
Kenya (East Africa)	27	64
Egypt (North Africa)	38	80

Source: Adapted from Hofstede, 2003, p. 87-356

The Table 2.3 portrays the similarities and differences that exist between four different countries selected from East, West, South and North Africa in their orientation to Hofstede's dimensions of individualism/collectivism and power distance. It shows that among the four countries, the country index values range from 80 for North African countries (Egypt) with the largest power distance to 49 for South Africa (smallest power distance), which indicates that North Africans (Egyptians) are less inclined to question the decisions made by their superiors and therefore are more likely to be submissive and reticent than in South Africa where subordinates are inclined to question the decisions made by their superiors and are more open and pragmatic. Hofstede (2003); and McNeill (2013) re-affirmed this argument by suggesting that in a highly stratified society where all the power is concentrated in the hands of the superior, the subordinate knows that it is dangerous to question the decision of the superior, and suggested that under such circumstances people are more submissive in their behaviours. The power distance index score in Table 2.3 can be depicted on a continuum with countries such as North Africa (Egypt) topping the list followed by West Africa (Nigeria) and East Africa (Kenya) with a power distance 77 and 64 respectively. In the African context, South Africa can be depicted as a country with the lowest power distance (49) when compared with the others in the sample. This could be largely due to the influence of European settlers, whose cultural orientation has shaped the behaviour of most South Africans, and hence significantly reduced the power distance that exists between those in higher positions and those at the lower echelon of society. Thus, countries with high power distance on the continuum see those above them as superiors and under such circumstances; the values of inequality are essentially tied with the exercise of power, and therefore needs less legitimisation than countries on the lower end of the continuum (for example, South Africa). Hofstede (2003) proclaimed that more coercive and referent power are used in

countries like Egypt, Kenya, and Nigeria, whilst reward, legitimate and expert powers are used in countries like South Africa. He therefore suggested that in a high power distance country (West Africa, North Africa, and East Africa) there is a latent feud between the powerful and powerless, a basic mistrust that might never explode, but it is always present. In comparison, in a low power distance country (for example, South Africa) there is high degree of trust and harmony between the powerful and powerless, which might as well be latent, but it is more pragmatic than fundamental. He concludes that high power distance countries express respect and fear for their elders or older people, while in low power distance countries the relationship is perceived as normal. He posits that the value dimension of power distance helps not only in understanding differences in thinking, feeling and behaving among leaders and those led, but it also helps to appreciate the theories adopted in those countries to explain thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Hofstede's argument of people in high power distance countries being reticent can be flawed as one looks at the recent "Arab spring uprising" that visited the corridors of most North African countries such as Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt in the last couple of years, where people were pragmatic and forward in expressing their anger and frustration with their governments.

The Table 2.3 also depicts that among the four countries, West Africa (Nigeria), East Africa (Kenya), and North Africa (Egypt) with the smallest individualism-collectivism index scores of 20, 27, and 38 respectively are more collectivist than countries like South Africa with the largest individualism-collectivism index scores of 65 and therefore is considered more individualistic in its behaviour than the other African countries. This indicates that individualistic countries (for example, South Africa) with the smallest individualism-collectivism scores are highly individualistic societies, where the interest of the individual supersedes the interest of the group. In comparison, other countries (for example, West Africa (Nigeria), East Africa (Kenya), and North Africa (Egypt)) on the other hand, are highly collectivist and the in-group is the major source of identity and viewed as the only secured protection against the vagaries of life. Therefore, one owes lifelong loyalty to such an in-group, and obliterating this loyalty is considered improper. Under such tendencies, a psychological relationship of quilt toward the in-group develops, which perpetuate dependence and the vicious cycle continues, whereas in individualist countries as identified above, the interest of the individual prevails over that of the group, and classifications are based not on group membership, but on individual characteristics.

It is apparent from Hofstede's (2003) analysis that countries such as Nigeria, Kenya and Egypt exhibit more dominance as collectivists and large power distance countries while a country like South Africa imperatively scores higher as individualists and small power distance countries. Despite the classification of South Africa in Table 2.2 as individualistic with a low power distance, it demonstrates the need for strict hierarchical superiorities, but at the same time stresses personal independence from any collectivism. Therefore, it can be classified as dependent individualists or what Kluckhohn and Strodbeck (1961) called the lineal dimension. The identification and analysis of society along such cultural dimensional lines could mostly be based on subjective judgement as some societies are likely to portray dominance in a different way than highlighted by Hofstede. However, the analysis outlined in Table 2.3 provides a significant turning point in cultural research by comparing the collectivism/individualism and power distance dimensions of four different nations from every region of the continent - a perspective that has never been or that has very narrowly been thought of before (Sinha, 2014). Thus, it is glaring that Hofstede's framework, irrespective of its pitfalls, is wide-ranging and intellectually grounded in theory.

2.4 Individualistic/collectivistic and In-Group/Out-Group dimensions of cultural values

2.4.1 Individualistic/collectivistic

Martin and Manns (2014); and Yolles and Fink (2014) suggest that individualism-collectivism should be theorised along a cultural continuum rather than establishing a cultural divide as there is a tendency for both to exist in the same culture. In an earlier study, Chui and Kwok (2008) concluded that more life insurance policies are sold in individualistic cultures than in collectivistic ones, emphasising that in the former, should one die, one cannot rely on family members to support the dependents. Lu et al (2013); and Roberts (2014)noted that people with strong individualistic values emphasise autonomy, independence, and individual initiative; and the right to privacy, pleasure seeking, financial security, the need for specific friendships, and universalism, whereas individuals with strong collectivistic values tend to favour group solidarity, obligations, security, obedience, duty and personalised relationship; and promotes collective identity, emotional independence, sharing, need for stable and predetermined friendships, group decisions and particularism (Yassine-Hamdan and Pearson, 2014). The individualism-collectivism literature mainly focuses on the

differences between the Western cultural values, the Middle Eastern cultural values or the Far Eastern cultural values (De Mooij, 2013; Naor et al, 2013; and Vaiman and Brewster, 2014), and it is assumed that African cultures are also collectivist (Greenfield and Cocking, 2014), which signifies that the African continent has been neglected over the years with no meaningful research conducted to verify the assertions of collectivism (McEwan, 2015). Therefore, the notion that collectivist cultures promote collective identity, stability, obligations and group decisions is questionable as there is evidence of the inability of families to hold things together when having social discourse at the dinner table; and Roopnarine and Hossain (2013) noted that a number of homes in Africa are built on nuclear orientation rather than extended families. Also, most collectivist homes in Africa, decisions are not made in collective rather the head of the family is the decision-maker (Kavanaugh et al, 2014).

Oh et al (2014); and Pandey and Joseph (2014) suggested that concern for belongingness leads to a tendency towards collectivism, which is expressed by an individual's identification with the collective goal of his or her group; and Parks et al (2013) recommended that priority should be given to the group as a whole, and referenced the Chinese cultural values as one that gives credence, importance and continuity to the kinship group (Berger et al, 2014). Slater and Tonkiss (2013); Zhao (2014); and Lim and Lijin (2015) buttressed this argument by commenting that the primary concern of the majority of Chinese was how to protect and enhance their private kinship interests; and that individual sacrifices may be required in order to gain the benefits that accrue to the group. The concept of collectivism has also been shown to have significant impact on creativity and innovativeness as it has been shown to extinguish the creative spark necessary for innovation (Usunier and Lee, 2009; Anderson, 2014; Kumar, 2014). The concern for belongingness should not be seen as the primary arbiter for collectivism as most family members in Africa are afraid of being ostracised by their kinship network and as a result drives them to embrace collectivistic tendencies (Gaines, 2014). Therefore, such generalisation of collectivism needs to be re-examined in order to determine whether there are discrepancies in the argument purported by the various theorists.

Variation across individualist and collectivist cultures has been recognised as one that portrays hierarchical relationship leading to horizontal (equality) and vertical (hierarchy) dimensions of individualism and collectivism (Usunier and Lee, 2009; Parker and Grinter, 2014; Schommer-Aikins and Easter, 2014). Abbott (2014) stated that a rigid hierarchical

social structure leads naturally to a heightened sensitivity towards status. In a previous study, Reykowski (2012) distinguished the individualistic value from the collectivist by referencing authority as originating from a relationship between individuals either from common agreement or from differences in strength, while collectivists view power as an attribute of a group, and the group's will can be expressed either by majority vote, by opinion of elders or by a charismatic leader. It is apparent that distinguishing individualism and collectivism using vertical and horizontal relationship in a group or family structure is much complex than professed by the theorists as there are several underlying factors such as group dynamic, degree of closeness, contribution to the in-group, etc. that needs to be considered before one can justify the claims. However, it is important to note that authority in most African families is based on hierarchical structures, which revolves around the head of the family as the decision-maker.

In his study, Chen (2013) distinguished the two types of individualism, by claiming that in a vertical individualist societies, people are inclined to separate themselves from others; while in horizontal individualist societies, they express uniqueness and self-reliance. Contrarily, Schapper (2013) professed that individualistic societies lack not only horizontal, but also vertical integration; and stressed that adolescent children leave the homes of their parents and do not necessarily maintain contact after their departure with the rest of the family and the memories of deceased ancestors quickly fade away. In his review of collectivist societies, Yuan (2013) distinguished between vertical and horizontal collectivism by defining the former as one that enhances cohesion and status of in-group and promotes compliance with authorities and defined the later as more socialistic and interdependent. This view supports a previous study conducted by Hofstede (2003, p. 231) that "collectivist cultures usually have ways of creating family-like ties with persons who are not biological relatives, but who are socially integrated into one's in-group", and referenced Latin America as an institution of '*compadres and comadres*', who treat individuals as relatives even though they are not. This sentiment was also expressed by Yamaguchi (2013), who noted that in the Japanese society, social relations are facilitated by vertical relationships that help to avoid uncertainty and riskiness in dealing with others. The manifestations of the theorists (Hofstede, 2003; Yamaguchi, 2013; and Yuan, 2013) can be reflective of the Sierra Leonean society, where socialistic tendencies and interdependency is prominent in most families, who sometimes accommodate non-blood relations as part of their in-groups (Letseka, 2013), and equally fend and provide for their needs just as those of their biological relations.

The cultural value of responsibility towards the in-group in collectivist society leads individuals to take less time off from work than individualist societies (Reinecke et al, 2013). Reykowski (2012); and De Mooij (2013) supported this view by reiterating that individualist cultures place responsibility in the hands of the individual, who determines his/her own destiny, while collectivists place common responsibility of well-being and moral quality of each member squarely on the shoulders of the group, and therefore values cooperation, sharing, helping each other and close relations. Adamopoulos (2013) noted that the exchange of particularistic resources in professional life requires more energy and time than the exchange of universalistic resources in the West. In the dispensation of resources, Reykowski (2012) states that a person's share in individualistic cultures is determine by the extent of his/her effort/contribution and therefore place greater emphasis on the equitable distribution of resources, while collectivists base the distribution of resources on the common good of the group (collective). The notion that resources in collectivist cultures are distributed for the common good of the group/collective though factual, but can be contrary to what is obtained in most families as the head of the home, who is the breadwinner is given preference when resources are shared irrespective of the group goal (Strong and Cohen, 2013). Hence, a review of the arguments raised by the theorists is germane.

Cotterrell (2013) stated that in individualistic cultures, an individual tends to belong to many in-groups, regards social interactions with each as restricted to a calculated and particular purpose and time, and experiences little difficulty in moving freely among groups on the basis of their ability to satisfy the individual's goals. Wang et al (2014) suggested that the utilitarian (calculative) philosophy of western societies promotes individuals to base their decisions on cost-benefit analysis, where the decision alternatives are assessed from the individual's perspective. He further argued that collectivist societies, on the other hand, produce exchange relationships among individuals in groups based on long-term moral obligations. Côté and Levine (2014) cited a study which found that children in individualist cultures could readily and quickly shift their relations with others from cooperation to competition with the stimulus of a reward change, while children in collectivist cultures could not. Comaroff (2013); and Smelser (2013) argued that contractual relations only regulate predictable exchanges among individuals and emphasised that they are inadequate to control conflicts that often arise as individuals interact socially. The notions professed by the various studies are parochial and questionable as they are mostly based on subjective views and also on the upbringing or cultural environment of the individual. Therefore, the characterisation of

people's commitment to relationships/families using such dimensions without empirical evidence is difficult to accept at hindsight as many collectivist families in Africa are fraught with competition rather cooperation for food and other resources (Namisi et al, 2015) , especially in the face of scarcity.

In collectivist cultures, individual's identification with the collective goal of the group typifies the significance of belongingness (Greenfield and Quiroz, 2013; Smith et al, 2013; Peterka-Benton and Benton, 2014). As a result, priority is given to the success of the group as a whole (Greenfield and Quiroz, 2013). Zhang and Zhao (2013) emphasised that the primary concern of the majority of Chinese was how to protect and enhance their private kinship interests. Black (2013) supported that argument by stating that Chinese learn to "swallow anger" and to tolerate the intolerable because they do not see how they can live outside their family of origin or marriage. Black concluded his argument by referencing Chinese parents' punishment of intolerable behaviour with reprimands, striking and isolation. Beh and Kennan (2013); Herzfeld (2014); and Kwek et al. (2014) also referenced China as a country where a number of cultural norms have been established among groups to achieve social harmony and guide day to day behaviour. Beh and Kennan (2013) argued that the principle of *'li'* (rite) guides the individual in his/her social interactions with others by spelling out the proper way to behave in various social settings and toward various individuals with whom he/she has interpersonal relationships. Herzfeld (2014) emphasised that the principle of *'li'* requires the individual to behave according to his desires or for self-centred reasons, but to follow what is prescribed by ritual, constantly monitoring his/her own behaviour to ensure that it is socially acceptable to the collective (group). Black's argument of punishing individuals to correct the behaviour of individuals and the persistent monitoring of group behaviours, especially those of children mirrors what is obtained in the social interactions of most families in Sierra Leone.

Individualistic cultures place enormous emphasis on an individual's independence, autonomy and their right to make decisions without consultation. This argument has been supported by many theorists, who claim that individualism places much value in teaching one's children to be independent and self-sufficient (Hofstede, 2003; Hopman, 2013; Özmen and Pekince, 2013). Apparently in such societies, a point is established at which the child can live autonomously, during which period he/she is considered to have reached adulthood, while in collectivist cultures, autonomy is not the goal. Firth (2013, p. 50) backed this claim by

referencing China as a country that judge maturity as "a movement towards integration into the social fabric of the family, the clan or village" He emphasised that it is the family and kinship group, rather than financial independence, freedom and self-reliance that is essential to a sense of security and belonging. He concluded by reiterating that without one's relationship, one is nothing at all and that a Chinese is expected to assist family and friends with the expectation of reciprocity. In a recent study, Smith (2014) also pointed to this claim by suggesting that a clan as a mechanical solidarity or community structure and emphasised that under such circumstances, members of the clan would function together based on common bonds and obligation in order to attain the group's objectives. Durkheim (2014) contradicted this argument using individualistic societies as examples in defining an organic solidarity that reflects emerging bonds resulting from specialised labour, which hold together interdependent group members and prescribe member interactions to achieve personal goals. It can be argued that whilst family's mechanistic structure is still prominent in most families in Africa, there is a wave of emergence of organic structure as many families due to overseas travel, experience of other nation's cultures, urbanisation and the gradual assimilation and acculturation of host countries' values into their way of life, makes it difficult to stick to the long standing traditional cultures of group solidarity when they return.

2.4.2 In-Group/Out-Group dimensions of cultural values

In-groups are groups of individuals whose welfare a person is concerned about or preferably with whom that person is willing to cooperate with demanding equitable reciprocal returns, and separation from which leads to untold anxiety and anxiousness (Triandis, 2014). De Mooij (2013) reiterated that members of collectivistic cultures are born as part of a group, which shapes and defines their identity. He emphasised that in-group behaviour can be discerned from that of an out-group. In his study, De Mooij referenced the Japanese culture as one that ensures division in their lives between the inner and outer circles, each with its defined standard of behaviour. He concluded that, in the inner segment, the person is automatically accepted with a high degree of interdependence and warmth, affection and love, which may not exist with the outer circle. Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (2014) noted that members of collectivist culture willingly join and embrace many in-groups. Consequently, the in-groups in collectivistic cultures espoused strong cultural ties than those of individualistic cultures. The proclamation of theorists such as Triandis (2014); and De

Mooij (2013) of people's identity being defined from birth and the notion that there is a division between in-group and out-group orientation in collectivist societies is very generic as people from collectivistic cultures can acculturate and become accustomed with or comfortable in the company of the out-group than in the in-group (Packer and Lynch, 2014). An investigative evaluation of this argument is essential to determine whether acculturation has an influence on families' behaviour at mealtimes.

In-groups usually display features that are similar among their group members, with a sense of pursuance of common destiny and goal (Cloward and Ohlin, 2013). Cloward and Ohlin (2013) emphasised that the fact that the in-group has an open communal system where individuals can get involved in the affairs of others, and classified out-groups as one that displays distinct value attributes completely different from those of the in-groups as a result of the variation in backgrounds and culture. In collectivist cultures, De Mooij (2013) stressed that there are marked distinctions between in-group and out-group than those of individualist cultures. Rudy et al. (2014); and Schneider and Engelen (2014) supported that argument, indicating that there is a high degree of deep interaction and positive association with in-groups members than those of individualist cultures. In-groups of collectivist cultures display mutual influence, unity, in-group favouritism and tighter bonds than individualist cultures (Weinberg, 2013). Despite the fact that there is truth in the argument advanced by Cloward and Ohlin (2013); and De Mooij (2013), but generalising in-group behaviours as the same across collectivist cultures is parochial as families of the same in-group may espouse behaviours that are contrary to the group norms (Livi et al., 2014). Therefore, implicitly or explicitly, some in-group members of some families abhor interference into their personal affairs.

De Mooij (2013) conducted a study on Japanese and Hong Kong students and posited that they spend more time with their in-group members than those of the out-group. He further conducted another study in the United States, which showed that European Americans spend equal proportion of time with both in-group and out-group with great leverage in deciding which group they intend to spend more time with than Asian Americans. Saad et al (2014) suggested that members of in-groups in collectivist cultures are goal and need oriented and that the social norms of the in-group supersedes those of individual pleasure and shared in-groups beliefs over unique individual ones. Hurn and Tomalin (2013) pointed out that in high uncertainty avoidance societies, people view the unknown as threatening, and that behaviour

towards strangers are more ritualistic and polite. The notion by the theorist that group goals supersedes individual goal is questionable as it is evident in a number of studies that as individuals gain advancement in economic and social status, the drive for individual goal supersedes the group goals (Saad et al., 2014; and Simons, 2013).

Billing et al. (2013); Samaha et al (2014); and Thomas and Peterson (2014) suggested that in-groups of collectivist cultures vary in importance in terms of the order of rank from the extended family (whether unitary or joint households, with neighbours and school friends absorbed within it) to the occupational unit. De Mooij (2013) emphasised that in-group relationship in collectivist cultures are usually limited to three groups, including sister and brother as family group, co-worker and colleague as company group, and classmate as university in-group. De Mooij suggested that due to modernisation, the Japanese see the occupational unit as more important than the kinship relationship. House et al. (2013) provided a stern distinction between in-group and institutional collectivism and argued that in-group collectivism can be associated with the Individualism-Collectivism dimension at the level of family integrity, and defined how individuals relate to an in-group as an autonomous unit and how they attend to responsibilities concerning their in-group. This they said is reflected in their pride as members of the group, which promotes a strong sense of group identity, and affective identification towards the family, group, or community, and concluded that strong in-group collectivistic societies places greater emphasis on collaboration, cohesiveness, and harmony; while institutional Collectivism is related to the non-kin components of the dimension, which is not primarily personal-relational driven, but reflects the inducements and rewards for collective behaviour and norms, rather than incentives and rewards for the enactment of individual freedom and autonomy. Schwartz (2013, p. 165) suggested that, in such circumstances, "Personal independence has low priority in institutionally oriented collective societies, and that the notion of autonomous individuals, living free of society while living in that society, is contrary to the norms of societies that embrace institutional collectivism; but that societies characterised by lower institutional collectivism tend to embrace a preoccupation with self-reliance and independent personality". The proclamation by the theorists, for example, Billing et al (2013); Samaha et al (2014); and Thomas and Peterson (2014) that collectivist cultures attached varying importance to in-groups is questionable as people from different social groups or families espoused different attitudes or behaviours to other family members, whether biological relations or otherwise (Campbell and Smith, 2013).

2.5 Implication for the primary data stage of this study

This section of the research discusses the implications of the literature review on the factors that influences culture on the study, including: the implications of the effects of acculturation, religion, ethnicity, reference groups, conformity and social class on the behaviour of a typical Sierra Leonean family

2.5.1 Acculturation: The arguments advanced by earlier theorists have significant implications on the findings of this study in terms of influencing families to deviate from their routine traditional practices or beliefs, including the institution of discipline at the dinner table to a more modern and flexible approach, which has the potential of changing their food culture. It also implies from the findings of this study that as people migrate from one region of the country to another, particularly from rural to urban settings, there is a greater tendency for them to shed their family's cultural practices when interacting socially at the dinner table. This significantly influence them in embracing western or modern culture in order to fit-in into their new settings and eventually gain acceptance as inhabitants. As a result, this drive for acceptance can create a wedge between parents and children, and potentially widen the gap between them. Another implication of this on the findings of the study is that under such circumstances, children born by migrant parents may eventually rescind the old traditional practices of their parents and whole-heartedly accept the new culture, and/or embrace a mixture of both or stay completely ethnocentric.

2.5.2 Religion: Religion is viewed by most families as a significant factor that influences their orientation and goals in life, which they believe contributes to their everyday functioning as a family when having social discourse at the dinner table. From the findings obtained from the field, this implies that religion can be viewed as a sacred ornament in most families. This is because most family members believe that adherence to religious practices at the dinner table, continually guarantees God's provision. This further implies that religion is built in the orientation or mental fabric of families, in order to unify and encourage the building of harmonious relationship between and among individuals at meal times.

2.5.3 Reference Groups: The implications for the study is that reference groups such as aunts, uncles, cousins and sometimes colleagues/friends can have a huge influence on the way families interact socially at the dinner table. In the study, reference groups were identified as extended families (cousins, uncles, aunts, and grandparents) and associates (family friends, colleagues, and neighbours) as they were suggested by the interviewees as

the reference groups that influences their families' social interaction at mealtimes. Sometimes, reference groups (as out-groups) can be a significant influence on the decisions made by the family (as an in-group) as people in collectivist culture tend to revered their elders, which may have implications on how their families are run. Saad et al (2014) noted that the concept of self reflects social relationships and roles, while Samaha et al (2014) reiterated that any society tailored towards conformity and harmony tends to be highly susceptible to social influence.

2.5.4 Ethnicity: The propagation of ethnicity promotes the inclination of families to uphold their families' cultural values when they are having social discourse at the dinner table so as to make them acceptable within the broader ethnic/social group. From the findings obtained from the field, this implies that parents are obliged to teach their children these values to enable them internalise them as they grow-up. It is a natural orientation of these parents that, teaching the children at meal times these ethnic cultural values strengthens the emotional ties with the rest of the family. Therefore, from the findings obtained from the study, ethnicity was seen as the tribe of the families, the region they come from, their families' cultural beliefs, the practices they take for granted, and the identity of the individual within the family. These classifications were seen by many interviewees as significant in defining their ethnicity. Qin et al (2014) pointed to the same argument by reiterating that in-group peer social interaction and parental cultural maintenance are predictors of ethnic identity in adolescents.

2.5.5 Conformity: It is imperative that families expect immediate family members, especially the children to conform to the traditional and cultural norms when they are having social discourse at the dinner table as a mark of respect. This also suggests based on the findings that people are expected to behave appropriately at the dinner table and recognising the hierarchical positions people hold either in terms of age or contributions to the family. Nasir and Turner (2014) pointed to punitive measures given to individuals for failing to conform to the stated group norms, including the use of social sanctions and that conflict with the in-group is strenuously avoided to maintain social order and harmony. This suggests that in collectivist societies deviation from group norms and goals is seriously reprimanded. Consequently, the study classified conformity into family togetherness, obedience at the dinner table, the norms each member of the family is expected to follow, and the acceptance

to share meal with others at the dinner table. This implies that deviation from these conformities can lead to serious reprimand from the senior member of the family.

2.5.6 Social Status: Social stratification and individuation in collectivist societies is not uncommon, which suggests that economic success and educational achievement are symbolic in changing the culture of people. Social status from the study is based on families' income/wealth, the type of job they do, their level of education, the authority the will in the family, the type of family they come from, and the religious position they occupy in society. The implications for the study are that, it shows clearly how families in collectivist societies can be influenced by economic and education successes to such an extent that they become revered in society and eventually embrace independence and self-initiative, which can be drivers of social stratification. This argument was evidenced by Nehring et al (2014); and Weeks (2014) that increasing education and urbanization, particularly among the upper social class in collectivist societies, appears to establish strong trends toward individuation and autonomy without a significant decline in relatedness. However, it is important to point out that collectivist families still give greater credence to age in social stratifications as it is viewed as the source of knowledge, wisdom and experience, while at the same time determines the position one holds in the family.

2.6 The implications of the ten dimensions of the various theorists on the study

The implication of such tabular descriptions of the various dimensions of culture for the study is that it provides clarity in relation to the variations that have occurred over the years in cultural history such as the impact of urban migration on the lives and livelihoods of families and the ramifications that have impacted on society. It is symbolic to note that despite the huge cultural changes that have taken place over the years, there are certain issues or sentiments that still persist such as some families still staying close to their inherited cultural practices. Therefore, this table helps the researcher to clearly see the role of the relevant determinants of collectivism in families' meal social interaction behaviour and demonstrates how authority is displayed by families at the dinner table, and how that affects people's lives, especially families as they interact at the dinner table.

The implications of the above argument on the primary data of this study is that it provides useful insights into the similarities and differences inherent in various cultures, which provide the researcher with the opportunity to identify cultural dimensions that would be used as parameters for measurement. It can also be suggested that it provides a useful guide to the conceptualisation (practices and values) of culture by clearly demonstrating the practices of families and their values at mealtimes.

It is imperative that the individualism/collectivism and power distance arguments as presented by various theorists is questionable and subjective as there are no empirical data to support their claims and the justifications provided by them for their dimensions can no longer hold as societies, particularly families and family structures in Africa and across the world have undergone drastic and dramatic changes over the years. It is evident that what was tenable ten years ago, can no longer be concretely subscribe to as migration and other social changes as well as the advent of globalisation have caused overwhelming transformation in Africa, particularly Sierra Leone. Therefore, this study will provide a better, most recent and clearer cultural argument, especially on family meal social interaction behaviour by using the lived experiences of families to show the new normer, which will help to remove some of the unexplained aspects surrounding the power distance and individualism/collectivism controversy.

2.7 Implications of Hofstede's dimension on the study

The implication of Hofstede's dimension (cultural values) for the primary data collection in this study is that though some of his findings might not be applicable in a Sierra Leonean context, but it is evident that his study provides a useful focus of how culture affects the lives of people in different societies. Soares et al (2007) also pointed to the same argument that Hofstede's framework is an integrated cultural framework that can fit into studies in a simple, practical, and usable way for cultural studies. Therefore, it will serve as a formidable bench-mark in understanding the various elements of collectivism and serves as a guide in identifying the effects of collectivism on the families' meal social discourse behaviours at the dinner table as it determines whether families' social behaviour at meal times is collectivist and highlight the power distance inherent in them.

The implications of the analysis in Table 2.2 is that it highlights clearly the strength of power distance and collectivism in West African countries, which can serve as a useful guide for the researcher when analysing the data obtained from the field. For example, it will serve as a guide in comparing behaviours of individuals in a country such as Nigeria to social behaviours of Sierra Leonean families at mealtimes. Consequently, it will also be able to provide a guide as to how power is distributed in Sierra Leonean families. Furthermore, analysing the social behaviours of families at the dinner table is complex and fraught with a lot of complications, but this analysis gives the researcher an insight of how families behave using the societal perspective of power distance and collectivism, and identify how that plays in the homes of families.

2.8 Implication of individualism/collectivism and power distance on the study

The implications for the study is that though most of the arguments raised by the theorists might be true in their own cultural settings, what is obtained in a typical Sierra Leonean family may not be reflective of what is obtained in other societies studied by the various theorists. However, the literature on individualism and collectivism can serve as a useful trigger point for the researcher and provides a useful direction and focus to the whole research by providing clarity and understanding to the whole concept. The cultural values inherent in each country differ from one to another, and as a result, the researcher will try to identify areas of similarities and show case areas of dissimilarities.

2.9 Summary of the chapter

The chapter has reviewed the definitions of culture, and outlined the various layers of culture. It has also reviewed the factors that affects culture in different settings, identify the various dimensions of culture, including the concepts of individualism-collectivism. The next chapter of the literature review focuses on the importance of family meals, the symbolism of family meal as a socialisation tool, the effect of communication on family meal social discourse behaviour, the importance of family decision-making at mealtimes, the importance of family norms at meal times, the importance of meal sharing in families and social relations, and the importance of family meal social interaction behaviour.

<div align="center">**Chapter Three – Literature review**</div>

<div align="center">**Family Meal consumption behaviour**</div>

3.0 Aim of the chapter

The aim of this chapter is to evaluate literature on the importance of family meal as a prime force behind social connectivity of the family, and to critically review the symbolism of family meal as a socialisation instrument that helps bring the family together and reduce the influence of anti-social behaviours, especially in children. The chapter also aims to review the effect of communication on family meal social discourse behaviour and analyse its impact on the family in terms of control and adherence to family norms. This is essential in bringing to light the differences in the families' attitudes and behaviours in relation to the meal consumed in order to understand why families behave the way they do; and further review the family decision-making process and the factors that influence their decision-making and how it impacts on the family in terms of the definition of roles and responsibilities. A review of the importance of family norms and the extent of their impact on the family is also discussed. An evaluative review of the literature on the importance of meal sharing is crucial in anchoring the behaviours of families across different social groups and the impact these may have on their livelihood. The chapter concluded with a comprehensive summary of the issues discussed.

3.1 The importance of family meals

Family meals are the foundational activities that have the potential of playing a critical role of socialising children into a family (Sigalow and Fox, 2014). Sigalow and Fox reiterated that family meals involve activity such as shopping, meal preparation and conversation, and they provide the opportunity for parents to model healthy eating behaviours and ensure that healthy food is available to the family. Larson et al (2013) defined a family meal as the number of times most or all family members shared a meal together. Hanson and Olson (2013) view family meals as the material content of the meal, and items eaten by the family and other participants, which is combined with the patterns of regularity exhibited in the

preparation and consumption of the meal and the perceived importance of the meal to the family members.

The importance of family meals has garnered considerable attention in recent years as several researchers have pointed to its significance (Baxter, 2013; Collins et al, 2013; and Nestle, 2013). A number of researchers have consistently shown that there is a wide range of psychological and physical health benefits associated with the number of times families have meal together (Buunk et al, 2013; and Helman, 2014). Irrespective of the importance of family meals posited by many theorists, there has been a considerable decline in the number of times families eat together at the dinner table (Baxter, 2013; Collins et al, 2013; and Nestle, 2013). A number of studies, for example, Fulkerson et al (2013); and Berge et al (2014) suggested that the prime factors responsible for such a decline can be linked to parents' work, which limits families having meals together. Cho and Allen (2013); and Hill et al (2013) referenced greater occupational time demands and perceptions of work-to-family conflict, which negatively affects the frequency of family dinners. Although a number of researchers, for example, Cho and Allen (2013); and Gram (2014) have emphasised that parents play a crucial role as gatekeepers of the family meal, little is known about the extent to which it affects individual families and most of the studies are limited to the United States.

A number of researchers, for example, Christian et al (2013); and Larson et al (2013) have suggested that regular family meals are important for promoting healthy dietary behaviour of the family. Berge et al (2014) indicated that family meals are associated with increased fruits and vegetable intakes, lower levels of extreme weight control behaviours, and better psychological health. Family meals have also been shown to contribute to increased discussion and knowledge of nutrition and other related topics among family members (Fulkerson et al, 2014). Marotz (2014) suggested that family meals can enhance language development, emotional stability, and healthy eating and may play a role in preventing much of the high-risk behaviour in children, emphasising that family meal education can be viewed as a protective fence to prevent families and children from falling off the proverbial cliff. Despite the narrative of the importance of family meals by the various theorists very limited research have pointed to the link between family meal and nutritional benefits as purported by the theorists (Christian et al, 2013; Berge et al, 2014; Marotz, 2014).

A study conducted recently suggests that factors within the home environment, including parenting style and family cohesiveness can be linked to family meal patterns (Berge et al,

2013). The study found that conversation at family meal times helped 80 percent of pre-school children to build a better vocabulary, which enhanced their listening and reading skills. Other studies, for example, Forbes and Gutiérrez (2013); and Kotecki (2013), demonstrated that irrespective of the composition of the family, family meals are positively related to academic achievement, a more healthy diet, delayed sexual intercourse, and the promotion of strong sense of self-identity and self-responsibility. This argument was supported by Conroy et al (2014), who concluded that the frequency of meal sharing and better developmental outcomes could have the resultant effect of ensuring better mental health in children. Ramsden (2013) supported this view by stating that better-adjusted children are more fun to be with, which can cause the family to eat together frequently, or rather the fact of not being poor is responsible for both the frequency of family meals and better developmental outcomes of the children. Berge et al (2014); and Bott and Spillius (2014) emphasised that there is no clarity of the impact of meal on family social interaction, and recommended that further studies need to be conducted to determine the effect of family meal on their socialisation behaviours.

Figley and Kiser (2013); and Young and Wilmott (2013) reiterated that despite the critical role played by family meals in enhancing family cohesion, he warned that certain family dinners come with a cost, especially when the family comprises of multiple young children, eating the same food at the same time around the same table can be a huge ordeal. Cairns et al (2013) suggested that parents sitting together with their children to have dinner require a lot more effort and organisation than "free range" feeding. Cairns et al emphasised that as children's schedules are filled with activities, parents' become consumed by the evening meeting in their jobs, children working on home-work and the impact of technology as a seductive element, makes it difficult for the families to commune and eat together. The fact that the study of Figley and Kiser (2013); and Young and Wilmott (2013) were critical of the important role family meals play in enhancing cohesion, shows that the study is yet to be anchored and therefore warrants further investigation to provide clarity to the argument.

Berge et al (2013) suggested that family meals are associated with family closeness and the emotional well-being of all family members, which are often viewed as the very glue of a society, and serves as the basis of "food memories" that form early in childhood and continue throughout lifetime. The argument was further reinforced by Bollas (2013) that the family meal experiences provide opportunities to touch all of our senses, including: taste; smell;

touch; sight; and hearing/listening to conversation. Bollas pointed out that the smell of a particular food can trigger a food memory that lasts a lifetime, and reiterated that traditions and rituals promote unity, stability, and routine, and that the family meal is central to forming family rituals and traditions. Fiese et al. (2013); and Cutuli and Herbers (2014) recommended that family meal routines tend to have a protective value when compared with the risks associated with single-parent families.

Figley and Kiser (2013); and Bott and Spillius (2014) noted that a critical importance of family meal is the fact that younger children profit from the routine, which creates a sense of belonging and emotional security, and build the knowledge of the children about their family history through family discussions and other social interactions. In another study, Thoits (2013) emphasised that children that foster closer relationships with family members develop higher self-esteem, and a greater sense of control over their lives. Regular family meals are connected with positive values in children, including dedication to learning, social skills, and self-worth (Johnson et al, 2014; Kostelnik et al, 2014; and Kumpfer, 2014). Kumpfer (2014) suggested that children who partake in five or more meals per week experienced less stress and tension in their families and are strongly influenced to go to their parents whenever they encounter a serious problem. A number of studies, for example, Soclof (2013); and Worsley (2015) have been critical of Figley and Kiser's proposal that family meals contribute to the building of self-confidence and emotional security in children, arguing that it is difficult to link family meal routines to children's self-esteem and self-control, and therefore they requested for the conduction of further research.

Family meals play an important role with the wellbeing of parents (Mallan et al, 2013). A number of studies (for example, Murry et al, 2013; and Raskin, 2013) have identified that parents whose employment affected family mealtimes showed greater dissatisfaction with their job and their professional future, and displayed lower perception of success at work when work schedules disrupted dinnertime. Raskin (2013) stressed that parents who had jobs that did not interfere with family mealtime reported a stronger relationship with their children and spouse. Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) alluded to this view and concluded that the quality of the time with least distractions during family meal is important, and that children with infrequent family meals are more likely to be distracted at the dinner table either by talking on phone, texting, laptops, or video − games. Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik noted that children with infrequent and distracted meals are three times more likely to use marijuana and

tobacco and are two and a half times more likely to use alcohol, and warned that it is important for parents and children to make every effort to turn off every possible distraction. The notion that parents whose employment affected their participation at family mealtimes are dissatisfied with their jobs have been questioned by many theorists, pointing out that there are no empirical evidence to justify the claim (Perry-Jenkins et al, 2013; Strong and Cohen, 2013; and Garner and Paterson, 2014).

Webster-Stratton (2014) indicated that family dinner provides the forum for parents to talk to their children on a regular basis, emphasising that talking, connecting and sharing is a crucial aspect in sustaining the family just as is the foods they consume, and reiterated that during a family dinner both occur simultaneously. Bylund et al (2013) noted that family dinners, overtime, allow every member of the family to be involved in each other's life – to know what is important, enjoyable, difficult or annoying for other members of the family. Bylund et al stressed that children develop the ability to express their opinions, listen to the opinions of other people in the family, to solicit advice, and to take pride in explaining to the rest of the family their achievements and accomplishments. De Carvalho (2014) indicated that regular family meals provide the opportunity for parents to inculcate the cultural values and model supportive interactions. A number of studies, including: Noddings (2013); Punch (2013); and Spigel (2013) have proposed further studies be conducted on the importance of family meal before any concrete argument can be made.

3.2 The symbolism of family meal as a socialisation tool

Shweder (2013) suggested that food is highly symbolic in any social groups just as in the same sense that members permeate particular kinds and qualities of food with sentimental, moral, religious, and health-related meanings. Cohen (2013) purported that families (nuclear and extended) can also use food as a symbol of communal identity over historical time as well as to affirm or diminish affection and social bonds. The development of the family as a unit is dependent on the kind of food they eat and their level of socialisation, which helps to integrate and enhance the acceptance of children in specific settings (Branca, 2013). A study conducted by Read (2013) demonstrated that in Papua New Guinea, Kaluli parents keep children away from taboo foods that are thought to interfere with their mobility and social and language development. A number of studies have commented about the symbolism of

family meal among different social groups, but warned that less attention has been devoted to the symbolism of family meal in various societies in different socio-cultural settings, especially in Africa (Cohen, 2013; Giddens, 2013; and Helman, 2014).

Most families at mealtimes may accentuate the need for the consumption of different kinds of food in different social groups (Chapman, 2013). A comparative study conducted in the United States by Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) on Americans and Italian families' dinnertime socialisation found that U.S. parents urged children to eat their meal, emphasising that it is nutritious and part of a social contract, which yields a reward, namely, dessert; while Italian parents' emphasised food as a pleasure over the above three attributes in conversing with children about the meal. Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik suggested that the U.S. parental emphasis on food as nutrition and eating as a social and moral obligation led to protracted food negotiations and tensions at the dinner table. Under the narrative as specified by Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013), it is evident that the children's compliance with eating their meals is a dominant concern at mealtime interaction, which influences their participation in mealtime discussions (Black, 2013; Leung et al, 2014; and Peters, 2014). This without doubt would limit their exposure to family and community frameworks for interpreting past and future events and therefore investigating the impact of these aberrations is essential.

A study conducted by Keller et al (2015) showed that Italian families used mealtimes to give praise both to the food and the person who prepared or purchased it. He emphasised that a child is usually encouraged to augment the word *pezzo* (piece) with the diminutive, affect-loaded suffixes *etto* (nice little) and *ino* (little) to form the word *pezzettino* in requesting a piece of meat. Ralph (2013) noted that apart from commending the food and its preparer or purchaser, parents at Italian family dinners would also recount their own positive childhood memories of particular dishes at the dinner table. Ralph reiterated that, in this manner, family meals were not only imbued with positive sentiments but also served to link family members across generations, and in some cases to bring family members no longer alive into family members' consciousness. The study of Keller et al (2015) is similar to what is obtained in Sierra Leone, but requires empirical evidence to assert the truth.

Turner (2013); McAnany (2014); and Shaver and Sosis (2014) noted that invoking spirits of ancestors in the consumption of family meal is common across many societies, where all family members are ordered to partake in the family meal as a means of reinforcing the continuity of the family. Hart (2013) proclaimed that the emphasis on continuity of traditional

foods contradicts the practices of many families in the United States and the United Kingdom, where new foods are constantly introduced to children during mealtimes, but very much mirrors family meal social discourse behaviour of families in Sierra Leone. Fabian (2013); and Schank and Abelson (2013); and Cohen (2015), posited that such novelty introduces stress at meals for the parents due to the expression of uncertainty over whether their children will eat the food they have prepared or purchased and/or whether the children will indeed refuse to try something new. Therefore, undertaking a study that addresses these contradictions and posit the true picture of what is obtained in a different cultural setting is germane, and this could potentially help in laying the issue to bed.

Jhally (2014) emphasised that regardless of whether a family meal is explicitly used to link generations, it operates as a symbol of care in all families, yet at the same time it can be used as a weapon or threat. In a previous study, Davidoff and Hall (2013) supported this argument by stating that family mealtimes can thus be cultural sites for socialising children into conflict. Davidoff and Hall referenced the case of children refusing others' attempts to get them to eat, or when others reject children's demands for a desired food, or when alignments between family members are formed around food preferences and dispreferences. The emphasis by Jhally (2014) of the use of family mealtimes as a weapon or threat and Davidoff and Hall's (2013) focus on socialising children is too generic and needs to be questioned as many families in Africa are confronted with food scarcity and as a consequence, children scramble for access, not forced to eat. A number of studies have viewed family meal as an integrating and unifying element for children, which ensures their acceptance in society (Shore, 2013; Yesufu, 2013; and Tye-Murray, 2014).

3.3 The effect of communication on family meal social discourse behaviour

A number of researchers have suggested that children learn their attitudes, skills and behaviour from their parents through family socialisation (Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2013; and Benson, 2013). Family socialisation literature indicates that different aspects of family communication patterns have an effect on children and adolescents, and their influence over family decisions (Kerrane and Hogg, 2013; and Bott and Spillius, 2014). Prochaska (2013) pointed out that parents are the most important socialisation agents, and therefore understanding the nature of family communication can help in understanding the differences

in children's attitudes and behaviours. Prochaska reiterated that family patterns of communication with their children play a pivotal role in the socialisation process. The argument professed by the theorists, for example, Buijzen and Valkenburg (2013); and Benson (2013) cannot be distant from the truth, but other studies, for example, Lundgren et al (2013); Ogbu (2013); and Wisenblit et al. (2013) have pointed out that it is the kind of family rather than the family meal socialisation process that determines children's attitudes, skills and behaviours. Therefore, undertaking a research to determine the primary cause of family meal social interaction behaviour is critical.

Two dimensions of parent–child communication in a family have been identified by Sigel et al (2014). Sigel et al suggested that the first is the socio-oriented communication dimension, which is intended to produce obedience from the child in order to foster family harmony. Sigel et al (2014) reiterated that this form of communication is based on monitoring and controlling the behaviour of the children and is motivated by social conformity. In this kind of communication, the children are taught to repress their feelings and not argue with adults. The second dimension, the concept-oriented parental communication dimension, in contrast, encourages children to develop their own view of the world through openness, discussions, controversy, and independent outlook. A number of studies, for example, DiSantis et al (2013); Nestle (2013); and Schiffman et al (2013) indicated that parents may consult their children at family meal times and value their opinions in purchase decisions even for products that are not for their consumption. Nestle (2013) posited that children in concept-oriented families are expected to exert more influence on family food preparation and purchase decisions compared with those in families with socio-oriented parents. The proposition by the theorists, including: DiSantis et al (2013); Nestle (2013); and Schiffman et al. (2013) that parents would consult their children at meal times is largely dependent on the kind of social groups or family the children are coming from and also on the social settings. Undertaking a study to clarify this argument is essential.

A number of studies, for example, Giddens (2013); and Trepper and Werner-Wilson (2013), have suggested that children and adolescents have more influence in democratic families where parents try to foster a balance between parents' and children's rights and valuing self-expression and autonomy. This construct is consistent with what was proposed in a recent study conducted by Hui et al (2014), who defined legitimate power, as the degree to which the person is perceived to have the right to exert his/her influence in a decision with personal

consequences towards him/her. Hui et al found out that legitimate power had a significant impact on parents' perception of children's influence at the dinner table. Burdelski (2014) noted that mealtimes are cultural sites not only for family eating, but also for communication. Burdelski emphasised that the determinant of who participates in which kinds of communicative practices during mealtimes is linked to historically rooted ideologies and practices in most families. Zbenovich and Lerner (2013) recommended that, in addressing children's socialisation into family mealtime communication, it is always important to consider both the norms of appropriate mealtime communication and the social positioning of children in mealtime communication, which can be essential in integrating and making the children acceptable not only in the family, but enhances their chances of conforming to the general norms of the society. The view of Burdelski mirrors what is obtained in Sierra Leone, but an in-depth study is needed to unravel families' socialisation processes at mealtimes.

A number of studies have suggested that norms of communication may include the norm that all family members or social relations around the dinner table will largely remain silent during the course of the meal. For example, Henrich and Henrich (2013); and Anderson (2014) referenced the Matsigenka of the Peruvian Amazon, who are largely silent during mealtimes. In addition, Arnold (2014); and Roger et al (2014) posited that, in some families and communities, children are expected to generally remain silent while adults converse during family mealtimes, as depicted in the axiom, "children are to be seen, but not to be heard". A study conducted by King and Fogle (2013) on New England family mealtimes found out that parents significantly dominated the conversation, with children producing only one third of the talk. In a similar study conducted on urban Swedish family mealtimes, John et al (2013), concluded that parents dominated conversation, with mothers providing more than half of all comments at the dinner table. Cooren et al (2013) noted that in families where children are expected to be silent or eat separately or are positioned as servers, minimal or no communication may be directed to them. Nonetheless, Cooren et al argued that they may acquire critical socio-cultural knowledge and skills of the family through observing, listening and overhearing the communication of elders. The arguments put forth by the various theorists cannot be distant from what is obtained in Sierra Leone, but an in-depth study is needed to assert their claims (Henrich and Henrich, 2013; Arnold, 2014; and Roger et al, 2014).

Bova and Arcidiacono (2013) stated that during communication activity at mealtimes, children are socialised through different communicative roles into norms for participating in different kinds of mealtime genres considered appropriate by the family. Bova and Arcidiacono stressed that children may assume different forms of participation when they sit with their parents at mealtimes, including acting either as an author (person who composes message), animator (person who speaks the message), principal (person whose views are represented), recipient (person to whom message is directed), or over-hearer (non-recipient who attends to communicative activity). Bova and Arcidiacono further noted that across families, expectations concerning children's communicative roles always consider a child's developmental competence as well as the semiotic activity at hand. In investigating children's socialisation into mealtime communication, most researches focus on children's participation in the construction of moral discourse (Gordon, 2013; and Poveda et al, 2014). Cohen (2013) pointed out that family's cultural values or ethics are not only demonstrated at feasts and rituals, but also everyday family meals are rich cultural places for reaffirming moral sentiments of the family and community. Cohen reiterated that mealtimes are pervaded by talk-oriented towards reinforcing what is right and wrong both in the family and outside it. Mann (2015) noted that morality is socialised through grammatical markings of deference and authority, directives, assessments, justifications, excuses, apologies, prayers, storytelling, and other forms of communicative exchange in which children participate. The contradicted views of the theorists on family meal social interaction behaviour needs some thorough examination and in-depth study to clearly assert what is applicable in a specific setting and in specific social group (Bova and Arcidiacono, 2013; Cohen, 2013; and Poveda et al, 2014).

A number of studies have pointed to children's table manners at family mealtimes as a central focus of moral socialisation across historical times and social groups (De Backer et al, 2014; and Palkovitz, 2014). A study conducted by Treistman (2014) documented how sixteenth-century manuscripts were dedicated to guidelines concerning how French, German, and Italian elite children were to use their napkins and utensils, receive offers of food, and cut and chew meat, and juxtaposed it with contemporary settings. They noted that in modern times families imbue children's mealtime comportment with moral meanings. In another study conducted in a Northern Vietnamese village, families have been shown to chastise young children, especially girls, for lapses in their comportment, for example, for failing to use chopsticks correctly, sit still and attentively, eat fast with concentration, or otherwise fail to display respect (Shohet, 2013). A similar study conducted on Chinese children noted that,

they are socialised to display deference through eating every grain of rice in their bowl and not displaying a strong preference for certain favourite dishes by taking more than others (Ashkenazi and Jacob, 2013; and Ku et al, 2013). The comparison of historic family mealtimes by the theorists with modern day family approaches shows that there is a huge gap in the literature of family meal social interaction (De Backer et al, 2014; and Palkovitz, 2014). A thorough study that looks at family's meal social interaction behaviour is needed to reduce the confusion highlighted by the theorists.

Ben-Ari (2013); and Chapin (2014) emphasised that an important component of children's comportment within the family at mealtimes may involve displaying appropriate engagement in mealtime prayers. Hartley et al (2013) conducted a study in the United States and established that the children in certain families are expected to lead, join in, or say their own grace at the start of the meal. Burnett (2013) observed that usually the eldest child in the Irish family leads the grace as this genre was part of their mealtime practice. Burnett stressed that children may be sanctioned when saying grace inappropriately. A number of studies, for example, Conrad (2014); and Jacobson (2014) have shown that parents press their children's hands together in prayer position and force them to re-join singing grace, which indicates that verbal and non-verbal manoeuvres appear to have a positive outcome. But a similar study pointed out that, in the middle of singing a Johnny Appleseed grace, a child in the family suddenly opens his eyes, throws a fork on the floor, and switches to the Beatles' song ''Maxwell's Silver Hammer'' (Corwin, 2014, p. 174). There is evidently a huge contradiction in the findings of the various theorists and therefore conducting a study that helps to reduce this dichotomy is necessary (Burnett, 2013; Conrad, 2014; and Jacobson, 2014).

Duff (2014) proclaimed that for many social groups, family mealtimes are cultural sites for recounting narratives that convey moral messages, including exchanging accounts of personal or collective significance as a central facet of the meal, is just as important as the food consumed. Duff stressed that though in some cases, one family member dominates as narrator, in other cases, the narratives and the moral points they highlight are collaboratively produced by family members, including children. A comparative study undertaken by Bus and Neuman (2014) on Jewish American and Israeli family mealtime narratives, found that socialisation for storytelling in the Jewish-American families relies heavily on adult-child engagement in narrative events focused on child tellers (and heroes); while in the Israeli families, on the other hand, adults take up a larger proportion of narrative space, and hence

socialisation for narrative skills . . . relies more heavily on modelling and on allowing (narrow) participation in adult-focused stories. This discrepancy in the study of theorists (Bus and Neuman, 2014) needs to be evaluated to mirror exactly what is obtained among different social groups and in different settings, other than just the Israeli and American situations.

Berg and Breheny (2014) reiterated that even when children are not the primary authors, animators, or principals of mealtime narratives in most families or social groups; this genre of communication constitutes a universal and powerful medium for socialising them into moral perspectives. In an earlier study, Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) suggested that in the United States, dinner is often the moment of the day when family members reunite after work and school, and that it is a cultural site for recounting incidents that transpired in the course of the day or in the recent past. Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik emphasised that telling such narratives often appears to be motivated by a desire not only to update others but also to solicit their sympathies for the teller's moral stance. In a study conducted by Moore and Brainer (2013) in the United States found that family members of middle-class European American families frequently positioned themselves as morally superior to others. The idea that dinner is the assembly point for discussing what transpired from work or school in the life of each member of the family just reflects a fraction or portion of what family socialisation is all about, as several theorists, for example, Zhou et al (2013); Cicourel (2014); and Ilic and Leinarte (2015) have pointed to story-telling and the discussion of historic and cultural events as one of the drivers of family meal socialisation processes.

Parris (2015) pointed out that U.S. children often have difficulty garnering and maintaining their moral credibility when parents and siblings begin to probe their role in a narrated episode. Parris emphasised that mealtimes in many U.S. households turn out to be cultural sites for surveillance not only of children's comportment at the table, but also of their past and projected activities as narrated during mealtimes. Consequently, some children come to regard dinnertime as a provocative, even unpleasant moment when they are subjected to interrogation and criticism (Ulanowicz, 2013; and Baker and Fine, 2014). Bova and Arcidiacono (2014) noted that in Italian family dinnertimes, on the other hand, parents almost always side with their children or position them as justified in their actions. This contradictions warrant a thorough research to unravel the underpinning factors responsible for children behaving the way they do at family mealtimes.

3.4 The importance of family decision-making at mealtimes

Giddens (2013); Palfrey and Gasser (2013); and Young and Wilmott (2013) suggested that the first group in people's lives is always the family in which they were born, pointing out that cultural learning starts in the family, which are mini-models of society to which children learn to adapt. Young and Wilmott (2013) proclaimed that most families in certain social groups live closely together with just their parents and other children, or as members of extended families. Consequently, the children learn to think of themselves as part of a "we"-group or in-group that results in the development of dependent relationship that can be practical and psychological. Giddens (2013) further stressed that, in certain families or social groups, children learn to take their bearings from others when it comes to decision-making, and that personal decision-making does not exist – they are pre-determined by the group or family. The notion that children take their bearings from other members of the family is too generic as several studies have pointed to democratic decision-making at family meal times and therefore a thorough research is needed to ascertain these propositions (Ferzacca et al, 2013; Leib, 2013; and Ndiaye et al, 2013).

A number of researchers have discussed the relevance and implications of decision-making in families at mealtimes, for example, Cowan et al (2014); and De Massis et al (2014), but limited research exists on its effects on family meal social discourse behaviour. Cowan et al (2014) posited that decision-making by families in certain social groups or cultures is generally a group activity. Collar (2013) suggested that in such cultures, families usually follow traditions and are less likely to show interest in innovation decisions as they view new things with great degree of scepticism and may only be acknowledged after long resistance. Nayeem and Casidy (2013); and Islam et al (2014) argued that there are fundamental styles that all families apply to shopping and buying and identified brand, price, and quality consciousness as the key family decision-making styles. The notion that certain social groups are more traditional and non-innovative in decision-making is questionable as many social groups, for example, in Japan, South Korea, China and others that have shown significant progress in innovativeness over the years and their consumers' decision-making cannot be adjudged as traditional (Laruelle, 2013; Newall, 2013; and Feenstra and Campbell, 2014).

Quality conscious families of certain social groups search for the best quality food products by shopping carefully and systematically (Kuipers et al, 2013; Schudson, 2013; and Lehto et

al, 2014). Major et al (2013); and Whyte (2013) noted that families from certain social groups are more likely to be food quality conscious in their decision-making, because they are more anxious about the hierarchy and status of people in society. In a similar study, Giddens (2013) reiterated that social recognition and status are very important to some families, and they are keen to establish their superiority at the familial, societal or national level. As a result, high quality food products among certain social groups are associated with status, hierarchy and social recognition, which may influence family decision-making (Phau et al, 2009; and Tyler and Blader, 2013). The generic notion that certain family food decision-making is quality driven is too parochial and simplistic as there are families whose decision-making are based on survival, and not searching for quality food products that will make them stand out (Burns et al, 2013; and Invernizzi and Romenti, 2013). However, the claim of the theorists that status and hierarchy are well recognised in certain cultures cannot be distant from the truth.

Perry-Jenkins et al (2013); and Strong and Cohen (2013) noted that family food decisions change over time because of changing contexts and changes in family members and their food roles and responsibilities, stressing that changes in social systems (for example, social norms related to food acceptability) and biophysical systems (for example., availability of farmers' markets) affected families' decision-making. Strong and Cohen (2013) reiterated that family food decision-making is interwoven with decisions about other family functions, including nurturance, socialisation, and provision of other goods and services; and although it appears that most family food decisions are based on routine practices, families do intentionally reconsider these routines in response to changing contexts. The views of Strong and Cohen reflects the Sierra Leone situation, where family meal decision-making mostly hinges on the financial position of the family and reconsider their meal routines based on change in context (Mahoney, 2015).

Giddens (2013); and Toyokawa and McLoyd (2013) noted that parents tend to make all important decisions for their children, especially those related to foods, academic and career issues. A number of studies referenced how South-East Asian families play a critical role in selecting spouses for their children as a way of arranged marriages (Le et al, 2014; and Rao, 2014). Rao (2014) suggested that families sometimes rethink their food and eating goals to realign them with primary family values, emphasising that family routines often evolve along with changes in thinking about such things as socialisation of children and family dynamics.

The claim by the theorists that family decision-making is based on routine practices with huge parental influence is questionable as a number of studies, for example, Holland and Yousofi (2014); and Muhoza et al (2014) have shown family decision-making across the board varies, especially when one compares families from uneducated and educated backgrounds. Most family decision-making among educated and elitist classes in certain social groups is based on independence and self-oriented goals, which is contrary to the claims made by the theorists in their studies.

Consistent with the characterisation of decision-making in Chinese families by many theorists as group-oriented the educational and family decision-making systems in China have been described as highly hierarchical and oriented to obedience to authority (Khilji, 2013; and Jun and Rowley, 2014). Jun and Rowley (2014) suggested that the educational system in China includes, among its salient features, a uniform nationwide curriculum, standardised college entrance exams, and an emphasis on rote learning, group routines, and respect for the authority of teachers. The Chinese family decision-making is often described as modelled after traditional Confucian notions of filial piety, or the fostering of strict obedience and respect for parents and elders (Sussman, 2013; and Zarrow, 2015). In the characterisation of Confucian philosophical perspectives, Zarrow (2015) noted that the family decision-making is portrayed as a fixed hierarchy, with elders especially fathers or other male adults are held in high esteem and are given the onus to make decisions. Obedience toward parental injunctions can be viewed as an absolute requirement without regard to the quality of parental behaviour (Cloward and Ohlin, 2013). Serban (2014); and Smith (2014) argued that the construal of Chinese philosophical perspectives of Confucianism with regards to strict obedience to authority and rigid adherence to social roles and duties in decision-making though lopsided and imprecise, may be applicable to the family meal socialisation process in Sierra Leone as many social groups pay greater allegiance to hierarchical decision-making, although sometimes others show a radical deviation from the hierarchy by making decisions collectively as a family.

West (2013); and Choudhary (2014) suggested that in the Chinese social settings, the maintenance of socio-centric or interdependent self-concept decision-making at family mealtimes is held, pointing out that different construals of the self are tied to social organisation, producing culturally dependent and varying moral systems. Tyler and Blader (2013) emphasised that the moral systems of family meals in hierarchical social settings

revolve around strict adherence to duties and role obligations, maintenance of the existing social order, and inequality among persons based on social status. Tyler and Blader reiterated that the portrayals of the Chinese family meal social life, psychology, and culture as hierarchical, suggests that there is little support for democratic or autonomous decision-making, especially for children who are conceived to be in subordinate positions. A review of literature by various researchers, for example, Hoffman (2013); and Lau and Fung (2013) suggests that Chinese children abhor authoritarian parenting and control at meal times. Lau and Fung (2013) found out that family harmony at meal times in mainland China can be attributed to greater warmth and less children parental control. Lau and Fung stressed that recent emerging evidence suggests that conceptions of personal autonomy and freedom in family meal decision-making are present and meaningful to Chinese adolescents' concepts, which may aid in the development of notions of democratic decision making. LeFebvre and Franke (2013) proclaimed that at meal times, the family cares for its members and cooperates together by acting often as a single unit with common goals. As a result, each member of the family has a well-defined role and status at the dinner table determined by his/her position within the group. A number of studies, for example, Petriwskyj et al (2013); Truglio-Londrigan (2013); and Washington et al (2014) have suggested that a thorough review of family decision-making is essential to ascertain how decisions are made by families at the dinner table. As a result, this study will find out the approaches and factors used by families when making decisions at the dinner table.

Family members at meal times have strong emotional ties to one another and are linked typically for life (Goleman et al, 2013). Goleman et al further explored the cultural differences of family decision-making at meal times in China by looking at the Chinese cultures and established that the Chinese were less cooperative with out-groups than with in-groups. Tinson and Nuttall (2014) emphasised that family decision making in certain social groups tend to involve reference to authority or precedent and there is a preference for sharing responsibility of tasks or problems. However, such research studies into the impacts of family food decision making, especially when socialising at meal times are rare and therefore undertaking a study to highlight family decision-making processes is essential (Murry et al, 2013; Jarrett et al, 2014; and Segrin and Flora, 2014). There is a need for further research to gain an improved understanding of how cultural differences manifest themselves in the decision making process at family meal times.

Usunier and Lee (2009); and LaBarge and Stinson (2013) pointed to family meal decision-making as one that exerts more or less influence depending on how significant the decision is to the group. LaBarge and Stinson (2013) emphasised that unimportant family decisions are made by the individual, mid-range decisions are made by the group, and very important decisions by a key decision-maker, and referenced Latin America as social groups, where food decisions are mostly made by the wife and automobile decisions are made by the husband. In a recent study, Smith (2014) showed the Asian culture as one where families mostly exhibit traditional roles with the bulk of the decisions made by the husband, and also pointed to the existence of the extended family in such societies and their enormous influence on many families' decision-making. Despite the classification of decision-making among families in different social settings, a number of studies, for example, Nieh (2013); Weiner, (2013); and Tan and Netessine (2014) have suggested that valid empirical evidence is yet to be established as to how and who makes family decisions at the dinner table. This research will help to provide valid evidence of how decisions are made at the dinner table by families.

A study conducted on family decision-making by Bott and Spillius (2014) found out that relatively little discrepancy exists between husband and wife's food preferences, resulting in low conflict in family decisions. Other studies, for example, Dippold and Hruschka (2013); have identified multiple levels of discrepancies in preferences to typical joint-purchase decisions between husband and wife. Consequently, it is rational to anticipate that conflict in family meal decision-making is higher between parents and their children than between husband and wife, and that it is about differences between products (Gottman, 2014; and Shockley and Allen, 2015). It is apparent from the theorists that discrepancies exist as to how family make decisions at meal times. Therefore, this study will provide a strong evidence to address these discrepancies.

3.5 The importance of family norms at meal times

Family social norms and expectations of others are an important factor in explaining intention and behaviour in different social contexts, including family meal social interaction behaviour (Cong et al, 2013; Prochaska, 2013; and Tyler and Blader, 2013). Cong et al (2013); and Kagitcibasi (2013) suggested that family social norms at meal times, measures the influence of the family social environment, and are often operationalised as perceived social pressure or

expectations of other family members in general (subjective norms) or from specific groups or individuals (normative beliefs). A study conducted by Herman (2014) found that subjective norms influenced restaurant eating decisions only for the case of eating with friends, and not when eating alone. Yi et al. (2013) noted that within the family, expectations and pressure from the parents is more significant or vital; stressing that parents generally and mothers particularly, seem to be most influential concerning children's food attitudes, choices and healthy eating behaviour at family meal times. Research conducted by Barnes et al (2012) found that attitudes towards and consumption of fruit at family meal times were most favourable among children who were being raised with an authoritative parenting style than those brought up in authoritarian and neglectful homes. The views of Yi et al. (2013) that mothers' pressure influences children food attitudes are too generic as in some societies, where food scarcity is eminent, such pressures are absolutely unnecessary. A number of studies have suggested that families based on the social groups and even religious norms may manifest different approaches as to who should serve as the arbiter at the dinner table (Rockwell, 2011; Cohn, 2013; and Weinberg and Newmahr, 2014).

Fairclough (2013); and Prochaska (2013) pointed out that the family norm construct may also include descriptive elements of other preferences, attitudes or behaviour. Prochaska (2013) noted that, though social norms deal with others' social approval or disapproval ('the norms of ought'), descriptive norms deals with perceptions of what others do, think or feel about a specific behavioural phenomena such as eating, drinking, buying, or driving ('the norm of is'). Prochaska stressed that people may experience social pressure from other family members at the dinner table to perform certain behaviour because they believe that it is important that others also see them performing the same behaviour and have a positive attitude toward it. Consequently, descriptive norms are considered to influence family members' intention and behaviour at meal times in several areas including family meal social interaction behaviour (Cong et al, 2013; McKenzie-Mohr, 2013; and Prochaska, 2013). The notion that certain family members may face pressure from others can be true for certain social groups, but generalisation may tamper with the validity of the argument. Consequently, undertaken a study that critically looks at the impact of social pressure at the dinner table is essential.

Lineburg and Gearheart (2013); Maholmes (2014); and Merrill et al (2014) suggested that family mealtimes are critically important for creating familial bonds, socialisation of

behavioural norms and teaching life skills. Merrill et al (2014) reiterated that family meal social interaction behaviour at dinnertime is a cornerstone of family life across multiple cultures. A number of researchers have examined family meal social interaction behaviour at mealtimes and posited that most families focuses on a variety of conversational goals and child outcomes, including emotion regulation, well-being, and narrative skills (Oades-Sese et al, 2013; Armstrong et al, 2014; and De Backer et al, 2015). Merrill et al (2014) noted that one of the most evident goals of family meal social interaction at dinnertimes involves socialisation of politeness routines and behavioural norms. This view is also supported by Koh and Wang (2013); Merrill et al (2014); and Segrin and Flora (2014), who suggested that family meal social interaction behaviour at dinnertime is an important site for the sharing of stories of one's day and the shared family past. In comparison, other researchers have pointed out that family mealtimes are a site for teaching children general knowledge about the world around them and inculcating basic family norms into them (Edwards and Mercer, 2013; and Zbenovich and Lerner, 2013). It is evident that only a few studies, including: Brewer (2013); Lindon (2013); and Lindon (2014) have explicitly examined family meal social interaction behaviour in a group context, although there are good reasons to speculate that family meal social interaction behaviour may differ from social group to social group based on their group norms and traditions.

Rhodes et al (2014); and Turner et al (2014) viewed the descriptive norm construct as the children's perception of preferences (as liking in the attitude construct) of their parents in the same way as group norms within the theory of planned behaviour. A study of meta-analysis by Cairns et al (2013) demonstrated that a small but significant correlation exists between parents' and their children's food preferences. Cairns et al noted that parents or the person in the family responsible for family meals often prefer healthy and nutritional food. However, taste seems to be preferential for children than nutrition when making food choices (Shutts et al, 2013; Standen-Holmes and Liem, 2013; and Nestle, 2014). Consequently, discrepancies exists in preferences and the norms established by the family in their meal social interaction behaviour, and between parents and their children (Baird et al, 2014; Berlin et al, 2014; and Bott and Spillius, 2014). Therefore, this study will unravel these discrepancies.

3.6 The importance of meal sharing in families and associated groups

Whitehead (2014) defined meal sharing as any food consumption event where an individual is observed eating food in a household in which he or she can either be a member of the

family or not a member. Helman (2014) viewed meal sharing as the practice of sharing food and eating together in a social group such as a family and/or other social relations. Helman emphasised that meal sharing is central to defining and sustaining the family as a social unit. Willetts (2014) referenced ancient Greece as a social setting that viewed meal sharing as *oikos* (family), meaning those who feed together. In another study of families' meal socialisation processes in the Micronesian island of Fais, De Backer et al (2015) concluded that family roles of father and mother are rooted in the mealtime functions of provider and preparer of food, and extended family relationships are maintained through redistribution of important food items, for example, yams. De Backer et al (2015) emphasised that the children in such social settings are socialised into the importance of food sharing in the family unit through accompanying others in continuous cross-household visits that involve preparing, offering, and consuming food. Tustin (2013) emphasised that children are also warned to eat only with close relatives or face dire consequences. It is important to emphasise that though meal sharing is considered essential for socialisation values in many social groups or families, everyday realities indicate that members are not always eager to share their food items (Anderson, 2013; and Cohen, 2013). The proposition of the theorist that extended family relations are maintained only through the re-distribution of food items is too simplistic and parochial as a number of studies have shown that extended families live with and share the meals of other family members, who are the prime providers and preparers of the food they eat (Menon, 2013; Bogenschneider, 2014; and Abarca and Salas, 2015).

In a study conducted by Cohen (2013) among the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea established that, young children are socialised through prompting to obtain food from another person either by issuing a demand or by appealing to the person to feel sorry for them. In a similar study, Holmes (2013) based on children in different Samoan families, found that, one of the first words that young Samoan children pronounce is the affect-marked first-person pronoun *ita* (poor me), which they use to beg for food. Holmes emphasised that Samoan children acquire this word before the neutral form of the first-person pronoun, indicating the pragmatic role of food sharing in language development. Mercado (2013) noted that children who fail to notice when food is ready for eating may be taunted and find nothing left to eat. Holmes (2013) pointed out that Samoan families become wary of how food is distributed and display a pattern of covert grumbling and gossip over others' stinginess or greed. In a study conducted in Northern Vietnam, Barkan and Bryjak (2013) found that as in other patriarchal societies, gender plays a role in food distribution as girls are reprimanded for their greed,

while boys come to expect prime selections of food. These studies though provides a paradigm of how food is shared in different social settings and among different social groups, it does not provide a detailed analysis of the impact of food sharing would have on a family's socialisation process (Cohen, 2013; Holmes, 2013; and Barkan and Bryjak, 2013).

Larson et al (2013) noted that in many communities, meal sharing involves eating together at the same time. Skocpol (2013); Spigel (2013); and Melton (2014) suggested that for at least the past three decades, the ideal in the United States and Western Europe has been for family members to come together for the evening meal. Spigel (2013); and Melton (2014) stressed that when children violate this ideal by beginning to eat before all family members are seated at the dinner table, they may be explicitly reprimanded. However, Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013); and Santorum (2014) noted that dinnertime where everyone sits at a common table is a vanishing ideal for many families in the United States, in the face of busy schedules of working parents and highly engaged children involved in a plethora of extracurricular activities that leave little room for meal sharing. In their study of American family dinnertimes, Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) found that mothers and children sometimes dined before the father returned home, or that children ate before their parents, often while watching television. Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik stressed that even when families managed to eat together, children often sought to leave the dinner table as soon as possible rather than linger and interact with their parents, leading to extended negotiations about commitments to remain together at the meal. The arguments of the theorists is too parochial as their entire study is based on United States and proper review of meal sharing among families in other social groups and setting is necessary to show a clearer picture of the meal situations in other families and cultures (Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik, 2013; Spigel, 2013; and Melton, 2014).

Ferzacca et al (2013) pointed out that in certain social settings, the ideal is not for family members to always eat together, but rather for the children to be socialised into meal sharing that involves a social order, whereby certain members of the family eat before others, according to generation, gender, or social rank. A study conducted in China by Ching (2013) showed that older-generation family members take food before the younger generation, and on formal occasions when guests are present, he reiterated that the children may even be excluded from the dining table until the adults are finished, or are seated at a table separate from the adults. In another study conducted by Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) among Samoan families found that, older children are expected to help young untitled adults to

prepare and serve meals, pointing out that during important meals, older, titled adults generally eat the main meal before untitled adults and children, although they may bring a very young child next to them to share their food. Nonetheless, Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik suggested that during more intimate family mealtimes, adults and children may eat at the same time. A similar study conducted by Tate (2013) indicated that the same pattern holds for the egalitarian "Matsingenka" living in the Peruvian Amazon, who expects the men to eat before women and children when several family units assemble together, but in smaller nuclear family unit, the entire family eats their meal at the same time. The argument proposed by the theorists is similar to what is obtained in Sierra Leone. Consequently, unravelling these discrepancies is germane to providing a broader picture of family meal sharing in the Sierra Leonean context (Ching, 2013; Ferzacca et al, 2013; and Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik, 2013).

Rice and Prince (2013); and Lyson (2014) suggested that families and communities differ in moral and social priorities surrounding food quality and amount of food according to generation, gender, and social rank. A study conducted by Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik (2013) found that at Italian family mealtimes, parents favoured children over themselves in the distribution of food. In another study conducted (Ogbu, 2013) in the United States showed that parents emphasise that children should not take food at the expense of other family members but rather should leave enough for all. Spigel (2013) reiterated that socialisation into meal sharing is also socialisation into socio-cultural embodiments of generation, gender, and other social positionings, emphasising that embedded in the socialisation of meal sharing are messages regarding the morality of food distribution and consumption and the rights of adults and children to determine how, when, and how much family members will eat. The notion of the theorists that families differ in their moral and social priorities when sharing meal at the dinner table reflects the Sierra Leonean society, where different researchers have purported that the head of the family, usually the husband, is given the lion share of the meal (Folsom, 2013; Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik, 2013; and Gilbert, 2014).

3.7 The importance of family meal social interaction behaviour

Family meal social interaction behaviour is the meal shared by a family as a social event, which has important cultural meaning in the organisation of the family's social life with

culturally specific rhythms, norms, rights, and responsibilities (Conklin et al, 2014). Neumark-Sztainer et al (2008); Lull (2013); and McIntosh (2013) reported the existence of a positive family social discourse atmosphere, when families make mealtimes a priority, and the family structure during meals protect children from disordered eating behaviours. Windram-Geddes (2013) pointed out that lack of genuine concern and disengagement during the meal times has also been associated with overweight conditions in children, as families who interact socially with their children in a direct and clear manner during mealtimes are less likely to have children with internalising symptoms. The notion that family meal social interaction behaviour reduces disorderliness and internalised symptoms is subjective as many families in certain social groups hardly sit together to have a meal, but at the same time have children whose social behaviours are orderly and responsible (Chapman, 2013; Cohen, 2013; and Firth, 2013). As a result, conducting a study to address these shortcomings is essential and significant.

Family mealtime social interaction behaviours are characterised by responsiveness to children's questions, role assignment, and that when behaviour is well regulated, the child adaptations such as enriched language development and academic achievement can be enhanced (John et al, 2013; and Seifer et al, 2014). The parenting style, generally accounts for differences in eating and family meal social intercourse behaviours, particularly when considering outcomes associated with younger children who spend more time overall eating at home with one or more parents (Fraser et al, 2014). Philips et al (2014) noted that family meal social interaction behaviour is characterised by over-controlling and restrictive attitudes and behaviours towards food, which can be associated with overweight status in children. A number of research findings, for example, Berge et al (2013); and Drotar (2014), showed that more frequent family meal social interactions are associated with better outcomes among children and adolescents. The notion by the theorists that over-controlling and restrictiveness to children's attitude and behaviour at meal times leads to obesity is questionable as many researchers have pointed to the type of food consumed by the family as the main contributors to obesity (Betoko et al, 2013; Pearce and Langley-Evans, 2013; and Pimpin et al, 2013).

A number of sociological and social anthropological studies of food have characteristically focused on food cultures and the collective character of family social intercourse eating patterns among various social groups (Beattie, 2013; Kuper, 2013; and Parsons, 2013). Quarmby and Dagkas (2013); Baker and Gibson (2014); and Pound and Campbell (2014)

stated that in contrast to behavioural approaches, sociological approaches to studying family social discourse eating patterns aim to explain these patterns in relation to their socio-cultural contexts. Baker and Gibson (2014) emphasised that theoretical orientations for explaining collective family meal eating patterns have recommended cultural and symbolic expressions of food use, where eating patterns are understood to reflect systems of meaning constructed by people. Theoretical approaches that address the meanings of food and explain the reasons for family meal social interaction patterns are important, but require adequate practical and in-depth empirical study to provide a thorough explanation for family meal social interaction behaviours (Augoustinos et al, 2014).

Investigating social relations as the basis for understanding the importance of family meal social interaction patterns is a promising route for meeting this theoretical challenge (Argyle, 2013; Giddens, 2013; and Jaeger et al, 2013). Social relations as organised or structured social processes constitute the basis for understanding the importance of family meal social interaction behaviour (Parsons, 2013). The social context can be understood as the local configuration of social relations which are comprised of social structures such as class, race, and gender; institutional practices, collective and individual behaviour, and intersecting personal biographies (Fiske and Taylor, 2013). Fiske and Taylor reiterated that family eating patterns that are characteristic of different groups of people can be understood as being embedded in configurations of social relations and being shaped distinctively by them. Fiske and Taylor therefore, referenced the family social interaction patterns observed in a community of indigenous people situated on reserve lands in the Canadian province of Québec, which are reflective of the social relations underlying the political, economic and meaning systems of that place. Thompson (2013) emphasised that using social relations as a basis for understanding and explaining family meal social interaction patterns as social processes, accommodates both symbolic and material possibilities as well as cultural and material conditions. As a result, by examining family meal social interaction behaviour as social practice as professed by the various theorists provides a conceptual entry point for apprehending the underlying role of social relations, which connect people in the social world, and which generates family eating patterns (Fiske and Taylor, 2013; Parsons, 2013; Thompson, 2013).

The family is a social system that has "a collective identity", which is the result of shared recollections of togetherness that are created as family members spend time together in

shared meals, games, and chatting (Abuiyada et al, 2015). Abuiyada et al (2015) suggested that families that spend time together in common activities enjoy a higher quality of meal social relations. Marley (2014) noted that family social discourse is a symbolic, transactional process or the process of creating and sharing meanings and it plays a significant role in the relationship between individuals in the family and the functioning of a family or a household. He posited that a lack of social discourse within a family can have a detrimental impact on family meal interaction behaviours, family cohesion and thus on the relationships between individuals within a family. As a result, Marley cautioned that family social discourse is essential to any family as it plays a significant role in the relationship between family leisure and family functioning. The notion that social discourse at the family dinner table serves as a cohesive instrument that solidifies the family bond cannot be far from the truth, as it plays not only the critical role of pacifying the family's attitude towards each other, it also helps the family to understand family meal social interaction patterns and the mode of social discourse (Thompson, 2013; Molobi, 2014; Galvin et al, 2015).

Family meal social interaction is a communicative event bonded in time and space, delimited in its participants and governed by rules of interaction (Castells, 2013; and Haslett, 2013). Hartley (2013) noted that this family social interaction occupies a particular place on a continuum between mundane, day-to-day informal encounters at the dinner table to more formal public events that requires serious and significant discussions that borders on the welfare of the family. Cressey and Jones (2013); Forrester (2014); and Taylor (2014) argued that any occasion of face to face social interaction comes into existence through the selection and re-organisation of phenomenal elements, together with a degree of closure, however, fragile, that sets the occasion apart from other activities. The argument of family meal social interaction being delimited in its participants is questionable as it depends on the kind of family and degree of openness to accommodate more people. A number of researchers, including: Butler and Wilkinson (2013); Epp et al (2014); and Tye-Murray (2014), have suggested that, family participation and interaction at the dinner table is limited to only immediate members and other extended members are restricted. However, to get clarity into the argument raised by the theorists, a thorough study that investigates the degree of truism can be germane.

Campos et al (2013); Fogle and King (2013); and Poveda et al (2014) studies of family dinner talks at meal times represent the few studies that have highlighted variation in the

socialisation process of families. Schneider (2014) conducted research on white middle class American families and found out that individual variation exists in terms of degree of participation by family members at family dinner tables as well as child-centredness in choice of topics for discussion. Schneider also identified and highlighted sex variation in verbal responsiveness, and stressed that females (mothers) are more vocal at the dinner table than males (fathers). The argument raised by Campos et al (2013); Fogle and King (2013); and Poveda et al (2014) is very lopsided as their studies was mostly based on an individualistic setting (American), while in other social settings such as Sierra Leone, many traditional families still believes that women and children should be seen at dinner times, but not heard (Okin, 2013; Young and Wilmott, 2013; and Bott and Spillius, 2014).

A number of developmental studies, for example, Chen and Rau (2013); Hussin (2013); and Nguyen and Lwin (2014) have shown that the incorporation of family meal time social interaction helps parents in using modelling and meta-pragmatic comments to teach children to use politeness formulae, apologise, avoid rude behaviours and interruptions, and generally provide information about the rules governing both positive and negative politeness strategies. Family meal time social interaction can serve as facilitators for the development of monolog skills (Leganger-Krogstad, 2014; and Toporek and Worthington, 2014). A number of studies, including: Bjorklund and Sellers (2013); Foster (2014); and Gee (2014), have shown that the ability of children to tell stories develops through family meal time social interaction. The notion that family meal time social interaction develops the oratory skills of the child is very subjective, though true to some extent. However, it can also be argued at certain levels that children's oratory skills are natured, instead of being nurtured at the dinner table through family meal social interaction (Bova and Arcidiacono, 2014; Guo, 2014; Sahota et al, 2014). The Table 3.1 provides a comprehensive summary of the research gap, the sources of the gap, the themes and sub-themes as applicable to family meals.

3.8 Implications for the study

3.8.1 Implications of the importance of family meals

The implications of the literature on the study is that it can provide a forum for identifying the key parameters that families see as important in coming together to have dinner. This suggests that the bedrock of any proper research is dependent on the resourcefulness of the

review, which can serve as an anchor point for the future analysis and discussions of the research findings. Consequently, discussing the issues that family see as prime for their meeting at a common dinner table will provide a benchmark against which comparisons can be made with how families across different social groups and settings in Sierra Leone value the dinner table as a forum for socialisation.

3.8.2 Implications of the symbolism of family meal

It provides guidelines to the traditional continuity of food consumption by Sierra Leoneans from generation to generation and highlights the factors responsible for the perpetuity of such practices. This infers that the symbolism of food in the Sierra Leonean society may markedly be similar or different from what is obtained in other societies. This evidently also means that even within the same country, different social groups may attach different symbolism to the socialisation process of food consumption.

3.8.3 Implications of the effects of communication on family meal

It literature review shows the critical role of communication in the development of the family, especially children. The review provides a framework for pin-pointing the symbolism of communication in families' meal social interaction behaviour as a weapon for the development of children. This suggests that irrespective of the importance of silence attributed at mealtimes in most Sierra Leonean families, the symbolism of communication in the development of children cannot be overemphasised. It further implies that communications opens up the barrier between husband and wife as well as between parents and children and help cement a unified relationship or bond in the family at mealtimes. Consequently, it helps provide guidelines to the kind of communication styles inherent in the Sierra Leonean collectivist cultures when families' are having social discourse at mealtimes and determine whether communication at family mealtimes is democratic or autocratic.

3.8.4 Implications of the importance of decision-making

The implications for this study is that it will help in determining the critical factors that are responsible for Sierra Leonean families' food decision-making and whether hierarchical structure, collective approach or democratic principles are used by various families when

making food decisions at mealtimes. This means that the study will be able to determine whether other family members take their bearing from the head of the family (husband or wife) and to what extent personal decision-making is encouraged among Sierra Leonean families. This also suggests that the study will be able to identify the role tradition plays and the degree of quality, status or variety consciousness of Sierra Leonean families in their decision-making at meal times.

3.8.5 Implications of the importance of norms at mealtimes

Understandably, it will be able to juxtapose the family norms of respective social groups with those of other cultures. This infers that the essence of family norms and the enforcer of the norms at the dinner table will be identified. It also means that the review will help guide the study in determining the impact of deviation from family norms on individuals and the bond created as a result of conforming to family norms and how these are transferred from generations to generations.

3.8.6 Implications of the importance of meal sharing in families and associated groups

Justifiably, it means that the impact of meal sharing among Sierra Leonean families will be identified and compared with the outcomes obtained from the literature review. Succinctly, this suggests that the role of gender and age in family meal sharing and its impact on individuals within the family will clearly be pin-pointed. Also, it means that the review will help in defining the social structure of families in meal sharing, and the negative and positive effects meal sharing would have on families when they share their meals with other people outside their homes.

3.8.7 Implications of the importance of family meal social interaction behaviour

The implication for the study is that it will be able to compare the context of the literature's emphasis on the importance of family meal social interaction behaviours as a mechanism for the development of children to those of the Sierra Leonean situation. It also suggests that the study will be able to determine the degree of orderliness and disorderliness at the dinner table and help identify the variation in socialisation among different families.

3.9 A schematic representation of collectivism and family meal social interaction behaviour from literature review

The schematic diagram in Figure 3.1 depicts the arguments advanced by previous theorists about the influence of collectivism on families' food consumption behaviour. The factors identified by earlier theorists in Figure 3.1 were juxtaposed with this study's findings/contributions as reflected in the schematic diagram in Figure 5.1 (see Chapter 5 on page 163). This distinction was relevant in order to discern between what other theorists identified as symbolic collectivist factors that influenced families' behaviour, and the new and unique contributions made by this study. As a consequence, it can be justifiably stated that the factors in the schematic diagram in Figure 5.1 succinctly reflects this study's contributions to knowledge. The gap analysis in Table 3.1 further shows the distinction between the arguments advanced by earlier theorists about the factors influencing collectivism and this study's contributions to knowledge

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Figure 3.1: A schematic summary of collectivism and family meal social interaction behaviour from the literature review

Ethnicity
- Cultural beliefs
- Language
- Region of origin
- Social/ ethnic group
- Identity
- Discrimination
- Tribe
- Assumption

Religion
- Spiritual system
- Cultural values
- Traditional practices
- Social bonding
- Religious values
- Identity/sense of belonging

Family meal behaviour
- Language development
- Sense of belonging
- Family history

Communication
- Obedience
- Harmony
- Story-telling
- Silence
- Defence
- Authority
- Apologies
- Prayers
- Protection

Collectivism

Conformity
- Norms
- Obedience
- Meal sharing
- Politeness
- Knowledge/ idea sharing
- Silence
- Authority
- Togetherness

Social class
- Economic / income/ wealth
- Obedience
- Loyalty
- Gratitude
- Autonomy
- Age/ wisdom/ knowledge / experience
- Image
- Authority/ hierarchy
- Education
- Occupation
- Respect

Reference Groups
- Age
- Gender
- Social relations
- Ethnic group
- Friends/ neighbours/family members
- Family image
- Decision-making
- Extended family
- Identity

Source: Adapted by the author – Kakay, S. (2014)

3.10 Research gaps in the literature review

The Table 3.1 provides a comprehensive summary of the research gap, the sources of data supporting the need for further research, the research themes and sub-themes, and the contributions of the study. This is necessary to ensure that a clear contribution was made by this study by identifying the gaps from the works of prior researchers.

Table 3.1: Identifying Gaps in the literature review

Theme	Sub-themes from literature	Contributions of this study	Gap	Source of data supporting the need for further research in this area
Religion	Spiritual system, Cultural values, Traditional practices, Social bonding, Harmony, Religious values, Identity, sense of belonging	The results of this study build on the work of earlier theorists by establishing that religious factors such as: food ethics; respect/reference; affection; gender differentiation; hierarchy; education; and family religious values influences family meal social interaction behaviour	Religion is best understood as a source of cultural influence with a diverse and varied impact on the way family interact with each other and with society, and it is therefore important to examine the importance of religion in the meal social interaction behaviours of certain families, since generalisation may prove inaccurate	Jenkins et al (2013); Posthuma and Guerrero (2013); Thornhill and Fincher (2014); Wald and Calboun (2014); Burton and Clements (2013); Ferraro and Brody (2015); Arsel and Thompson (2011); Dobratz (2013); Ivtzan (2013); and Pompper (2014); Cohen and Hill (2007); Guerrero (2013); Kitayama and Markus (2014); Hofstede (2003); Collar (2013); Cohen and Hill (2007); and Kvande (2014); Cleveland et al (2015); Reeve (2004);
Ethnicity	Cultural beliefs, Language, region of origin, social/ethnic group, tribe, discrimination, identity, assumptions	The results of this study build on the arguments advanced by earlier researchers by establishing that ethnicity factors such as: family religious values; food ethics; education; hierarchy; affection; and gender differentiation influences family meal consumption behaviour	The exploration of the relations among key components of ethnicity has recently become a focus of attention and little work has been undertaken to identify the factors and their influence on family's meal social interaction behaviour	Kuczynski and Knafo (2013); Lorenzo-Blanco and Cortina (2013); Rampton (2014); Moran et al (2014); Serenari et al (2013); Blaydes and Grimmer (2013); Sauer (2014); Brice (2012); Bejanyan et al. (2014); Devos and Vu (2014); Zeiders et al (2013); Peštek and Činjarević (2014);
Conformity	Social/Group norm, Respect, obedience, Meal sharing, Politeness routines, behavioural norms, Sharing of stories, silence,	The outcomes of this study confirm the conclusion drawn by earlier researchers by emphasising that conformity factors such as: education; family cohesion; family development; participation; responsibility; direction; success; food ethics; affection; family religious	Compelling evidence for differences in conformity has been noted and that the findings are limited as research on the effect of conformity on family's meal social interaction behaviour is yet to be concretised	Khapoya (2015); Wallace (2013); Radcliffe-Brown and Forde (2015); Sigel et al (2014); Cohen (2013); De Backer et al (2015); Cloward and Ohlin (2014); Smith et al (2014); Ferzacca et al (2013); Kagitcibasi (2013); Koh and Wang (2013); Merrill et al (2014); Segrin and Flora (2014); Edwards and Mercer (2013); Zbenovich and Lerner (2013); Livi et al (2014)

	authority	values; and relationship building influences family meal consumption behaviour		
Reference groups	Age, gender, social relations, Decision-making, ethnic group, friends/neighbours/family members, family image, extended family, identity	The results of this study are in harmony with the views of earlier theorists by establishing that hierarchy/authority; task distinction; gender differentiation; education; affection; economic/social costs; economic/social benefits; family cohesion and association influences family meal social interaction behaviour	Lack of sufficient evidence on the factors that causes the influence of reference groups on family's meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table	Ching (2013); Giddens (2013); Bhanot et al (2014); Jamal and Shukor (2014); Segev et al (2014); Cowan et al (2014); De Massis et al (2014); Zarrow (2015); DeMooij (2013); Moran et al. (2014); Sammon and Kwon (2015); Cloward and Ohlin (2013)
Social status	Economic, Authority, education, occupation,	The result of this study accentuate the views of earlier theorists by reiterating that affordability; family cohesion; punctuality/attendance; participation; social etiquette; enlightenment; food ethics; and self-development influences family meal social interaction behaviour	Little work undertaken to clearly identify the factors that influence social class in family meal social interaction behaviour	Peacock et al (2014); Bales and Parsons (2014); Hofstede's (2003); Yildirim et al (2014); Davidoff and Hall (2013); and Padfield and Procter (2014); House et al (2013); Lau and Young (2013); Ghosh and Galczynski (2014); Usunier and Lee (2009)
Family meal social interaction	Age, Sense of belonging, family history,	The results of this study echo the arguments advanced by earlier researchers by emphasising that family religious values; food ethics; authority and family cohesion influences family meal consumption behaviour	Lack of sufficient evidence of the factors that influence the way families behave during social discourse at meal times	John *et al* (2013); Seifer et al (2014); Zbenovich and Lerner (2013); Fulkerson et al (2014); Marotz (2014); Figley and Kiser (2013); Bott and Spillius (2014); Sigel et al (2014)
Communication	Obedience, harmony, silence, Story-telling, deference and authority, apologies, prayers, Protection	The results of this study build on the work of earlier researchers by emphasising that education; self-development; food ethics; and respect influences family meal consumption behaviour	Little work undertaken to clearly identify the factors that influence communication at mealtimes	Henrich and Henrich (2013); Anderson (2014); Mann (2015); Chen andRau (2013); Hussin (2013); Nguyen and Lwin (2014); Neumark-Sztainer et al (2008); McIntosh (2013); Lull (2013); Philips et al (2014)

Source: Adapted by the author: Kakay, S. (2014)

3.11 Research Questions and Research Gap of collectivist families' meal social interaction pattern/behaviour

A review of the literature identified five factors as the key determinants of collectivist family meal social interaction behaviour: religion, ethnicity, reference group, conformity and social class. The literature suggests that each of these determinants contributes to collectivism, which significantly influences family meal social interaction behaviour/pattern. This conceptualisation of the determinants of collectivism mirrors the arguments of Cohen (2009); Barret (2013); and Moran et al (2014) for the religious domain; Back (2013); Neal et al (2013); and Rampton (2014) for the ethnic domain; Smith et al (2013); Tully and Wnier (2014); and Braver et al (2014) for the conformity domain; Bhanot et al (2014); Jamal and Shukor (2014); and Segev et al (2014) for the reference group domain; and Usunier and Lee (2009); Brierley-Jones et al (2014); and Peacock et al (2014) for the social status domain, and which up to the time of this research has never been tested in respect of its association with family meal social interaction behaviour, particularly in the Sierra Leonean context. This is the gap the research seeks to address.

3.9.1 Rationale for the research

3.9.2 Aim and objectives of the research

The aim of this study is to identify and review critical factors, which stakeholders perceived as influencing family meal social interaction behaviour in a Sierra Leonean collectivist context, and assess their implications on food manufacturers and retailers.

1.3.2 Research objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- Critically evaluate the relevance of food ethics, affection, education and family cohesion as collectivist symbolic cultural values at family mealtimes
- Critically analyse whether gender differentiation and adherence to hierarchy/authority at family mealtimes are affected by collectivism
- Critically evaluate the importance of family religious values and meal participation at mealtimes
- Confirm the similarities and differences between the arguments of previous studies in relation to the views presented by this study about the influence of collectivism
- Propose conclusions in relation to the primary data and provide appropriate recommendations to key stakeholders, including: policy-makers; food retailers and producers based on those conclusions.

Therefore, the main questions the thesis seeks to find answers to include the following:

- What is the influence of religion on family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- How does ethnicity influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- Why do reference groups influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- What is the influence of conformity on families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- How does social class influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- What are the association between the factors that influences families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

Based on the literature review, the following research questions were formulated to address the objectives of the research:

3.9.3 What is the influence of religion on family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

Religious beliefs and values touch the nooks and corners of the entire Sierra Leonean society, which largely influenced not only their collectivist meal social interaction behaviour, but also determines the kinds of social interaction that is acceptable at the family meal table. A number of researchers have emphasised the role religion plays in influencing family meal social interaction behaviour in various societies across the world (Bott and Spillius, 2014; Helman, 2014; and Newman and Newman, 2014).

3.9.4 How does ethnicity influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

Keltner et al (2014); Moran et al (2014); and Neuliep (2014) suggested that ethnically diverse groups of people with collectivist cultural values tended to be more cooperative and largely influenced by their in-groups when interacting socially at the dinner table. The influence of ethnicity on family meal social interaction behaviour has been empirically evidenced by a number of researchers, for example, Finlay et al (2014); Mead and Stuppy (2014); and Montada (2014).

3.9.5 Why do reference groups influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

Reference groups have been a critical influencing factor on various social groups when families are socially interacting at the dinner table in many collectivist societies, including Sierra Leone. These facts were reiterated by a number of theorists, for example, Neuliep (2014); Samovar et al (2014); and Cuddy et al (2015) that reference groups exert significant influence on families in most social groups in collectivist countries. Cheung and Liu (2014); Petrakis (2014); and Segrin and Flora (2014) warned that the influence of reference groups on family meal social interaction behaviour differs from family to family; emphasising that strong collectivist traits are associated with increased salience of group membership. Consequently, greater differentiation between in-group and out-group exists. A number of theorists supported this view by stating that families show differing levels of susceptibility to reference group influences, depending on their age, gender, ethnic background, and social relations (Augoustinos et al, 2014; Fabes et al, 2014; and Giordano, 2014). This study will therefore provide concrete evidences of the type of reference groups that influences families' meal social interaction behaviour.

3.9.6 What is the influence of conformity on families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

Harmony is a critical factor that Sierra Leonean families from differing social groups seek to maintain when interacting socially during meal times. Several studies conducted by various theorists (for example, Hofstede, 2010; Triandis, 2013; and Markus and Kitayama, 2014) have shown that families from collectivist cultural backgrounds tend to define themselves as members of a group and subordinate their personal goals to the group's goals. A number of theorists have also alluded to this claim (for example, Dean and Taylor-Gooby, 2014; Peterka-Benton and Benton, 2014; and Saad et al, 2014). This prompted the desire to develop and verify whether conformity in collectivistic societies influences family meal social interaction behaviour.

3.9.7 How does social class influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

The status of a Sierra Leonean family largely determines the level of social interaction behaviour considered acceptable during mealtimes. De Carvalho (2014); and Holttinen (2014) asserted that in all societies and cultures, families in the upper social classes are likely to be more overt and pragmatic when interacting socially during meal times at the dinner table. But in another study, De Carvalho (2014) found out that greater emphasis on obedience and conformity to family norms at the dinner table is associated with lower social classes.

3.9.8 What are the association between the factors that influences families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

It is anticipated that the determinants (religion, ethnicity, reference groups, conformity, and social status) identified as factors that influences collectivism will be directly related to the family meal social interaction behaviours of Sierra Leoneans. A number of development studies, for example, Costa-Font and Cowell (2014); Jamal and Shukor (2014); and Khare (2014) have pointed to these determinants as typical of collectivist cultures, but none has been able to show the association between the two.

3.10 Summary of the chapter

The chapter has critically reviewed the importance of meals in different social groups and settings, evaluated the symbolism of family meal as a socialisation tool, the effect communication on meal social interaction behaviours of families at mealtimes, the importance of family decision-making, the importance of family norms and the impact it has on families' meal social interaction behaviour, the importance of meal sharing in families, and highlighted the implications family meals would have on different social groups. The next chapter of the research will focus on the methodology.

<center>**Chapter Four**</center>

<center>**Research Methodology**</center>

4.0 Aim of the chapter

The main aims of this chapter are to: discuss and justify the research design and stages of the research; discuss and justify the methods used in collecting and analysing the data; and to discuss and justify the sampling methods used to select the sample from which the data was obtained. These aims were used to structure the chapter.

4.1 Research Stages

This section seeks to explain and justify the various stages involved in the research process, and the identification, discussion and justification for the selected approaches.

4.1.1 Comparative analysis of the research stages

Silverman (2013) noted that one of the most critical challenges of understanding research design is that theorists disagree about the name, the order and the nature of research stages. This disparity is evident in how Crotty (2014) and Saunders et al. (2014) identify the stages and label the models of their approaches to research. From Saunders et al. (2014) perspective, the research model was classified into six different stages with each stage labelled and separated into different categories, which they called the 'research onion'. This includes: the research philosophy; research approaches; research strategies; research choices; time horizons; and data collection methods. From this analysis, it is evident that Saunders et al.'s (2014) research 'onion' is composed of not only multiple layers with multiple categories, but the model addresses the concerns of both qualitative and quantitative methodological processes because it encompasses the views of all categories of researchers, whether scientific or humanist (McGaw and Pieris, 2014). A controversy with Saunders et al (2014) research 'onion' as pointed out by researchers is the mixing-up of the 'epistemological' and 'theoretical perspectives', which they classified as 'positivist' and 'subjectivist' philosophies (Gray, 2013; and Karlsen and Karlsen, 2013). Saunders et al (2014) research onion was

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inappropriate for this study as it sought to investigate in detail the meanings ascribed to social phenomena in the natural settings of families and businesses.

In comparison, Crotty (2014) epitomised and simplified the several layers purported by Saunders et al. (2014) and categorised them into just four stages, including: epistemology; theoretical perspective; methodology; and methods. This is depicted in the Figure 4.1. It is evident that Crotty's (2014) model is more appropriate for qualitative research as it is clearer and mostly based on conducting an in-depth understanding of people's social construct (Merriam, 2014; and Morse and McEvoy, 2014). Crotty's (2014) model has been criticised for being limited only to qualitative research (Mertens, 2014), but this does not apply to this study, which has a qualitative focus.

Figure 4.1: The Research Stages
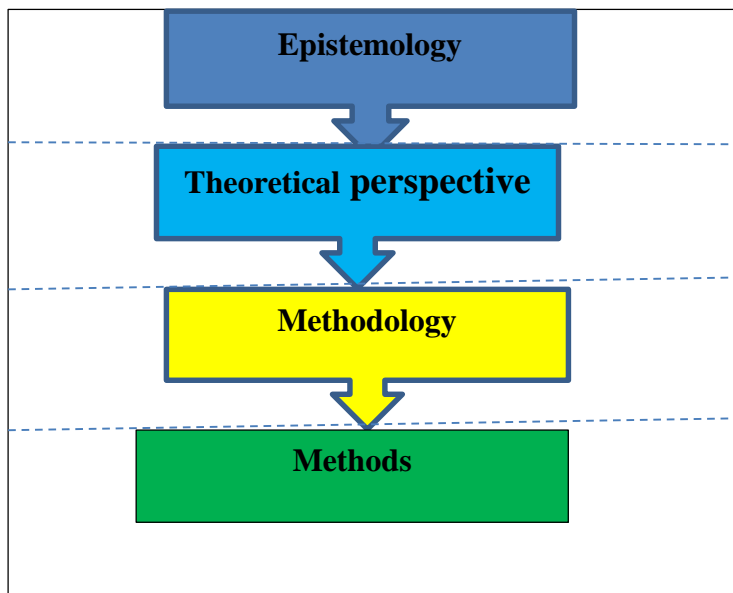
Source: Adopted from Crotty (2014)

Merriam (2014); and Salmons (2014) recommended Crotty's (2014) model due to its classification of research stages and pointed to the distinction between 'epistemology' and 'theoretical perspective' as outlined by the model. It is apparent that Crotty's (2014) model is a helpful and justifiable tool for use by any qualitative researcher in their decision-making when selecting epistemological; theoretical perspectives; methodology; and methods due to its suitability for cultural studies (Merriam, 2014; and Salmons, 2014). Consequently, Crotty's (2014) model has been adopted in this research because this study uses a qualitative approach. The reasons for selecting the proposed approach are detailed in subsequent sections, which reflect how Crotty's (2014) model was applied to this study.

4.1.2 Epistemology: Constructionism

Crotty (2014); Smith (2015); and Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2015) defined epistemology as human's understanding and interpretation of events around them. In an early study, Gopinath (2014) established that epistemology is the theoretical underpinning that demonstrates the balance between the possibilities of seeking and knowing the origin of knowledge, on the one hand, and the possibility of ensuring that the knowledge sought is acceptable and valid, on the other. Bryman and Bell (2015) epitomised the arguments by reiterating that epistemology is employed by researchers to answer two key questions, including: how do we know the world? and what is the relationship between the researcher and the researched?. Entwistle and Ramsden (2015) stated that a primary issue that affects any research is the fortitude of the epistemological perspective to be used, as it provides the benchmark for a clearer understanding of the true nature of the research and its concepts.

Based on Crotty (2014) model, this research, adopts the constructionist approach as its epistemological perspective which is reliably linked with the research nature as it deals with the 'lived experiences' of families and businesses in terms of their behaviours at mealtimes and in their interaction with customers respectively, and as a result, it is consistent with the research aim and objectives. Michelini (2015) defined constructionism as the conceptualisation of human psychology as an ensemble of social relations, which can be due to the diversity and differences in humanity. McKeown (2015); and Ramoglou and Zyglidopoulos (2015) emphasised that constructionism exists in the human mind, indicating that the responsibility of any researcher is not only to comprehend, but also to reconstruct, analyse and critique the interviewees' perspectives in a manner that may lead to the creation of significant findings/outcomes. Blazsin and Guldenmund (2015) established that the whole perspective of social constructionism is about the building of knowledge based on reality rather than creation of reality itself, which clearly discard the objectivists' perspective of knowledge. This perspective suggests that the subjects are actively involved in the construction of the meanings (Burr, 2015). Based on this perspective, this research was built around a critical review of the literature on the effect of collectivism on family meal social interaction behaviour and its attendant effects on food manufacturers and retailers. This suggests that the use of constructionist approach is the most appropriate as it gives the researcher the opportunity to engage with the social world of Sierra Leonean families and

businesses in order to understand and construct reality using their perspective and interpretation of events in their settings.

In this study, critical realism is used as a strategy as it is considered the most useful for conducting inductive research and for explaining the behaviours of families and businesses' (food producers and retailers) social constructs (Greer, 2015). It is also considered as the most appropriate strategy in addressing the research gap (see table 3.1). On the basis of the gaps identified in the literature review, the research aims and objectives, the following research questions were central during the field research:

- What is the influence of religion on family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- How does ethnicity influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- Why do reference groups influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- What is the influence of conformity on families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- How does social class influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

- What are the association between the factors that influence families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?

The data obtained from the field study clearly helped the researcher in understanding not only the 'what' and the 'how', but also the 'why' of a family behaviour at mealtimes and its attendant effects on food producers and retailers (Scheyvens, 2014). Barnes et al (2015) argued that critical realist portrays sensational experience, the images of things in the real world, and not the things directly. As a result, it helps the researcher to thoroughly explore the factors affecting families' meal social interaction behaviours and food companies using an inductive approach by linking prior knowledge and literature experience with the data obtained from the field (Wilson et al, 2015). Mingers (2015) noted that critical realists are only able to understand what is going on in the social world, if there is a clear understanding

of the social structures that have given rise to the phenomena that is understudy as what we see is only a part of the paradigm. Hafferty and O'Donnell (2015) reiterated that the only way to unravel the unseen is through an understanding of the practical and theoretical processes of social sciences. Consequently, the data for this research was collected in the natural settings of the families using semi-structured face-to-face interviews and observations to determine the factors that affect Sierra Leonean families' meal social interaction behaviours at dinner times and then use semi-structured interviews to verify the results on businesses (food companies) to determine the level of influence on their operations.

Tikly (2015) suggested that the critical realist theory is useful for the development of multi-level study (for example, individual and the group), as each level has the capacity to change the researcher's understanding of what is being studied. As a consequence, this portrays a great variety of structures, procedures and processes and the capacity that these structures, procedures and processes have to interact with each other (Burke and Noumair, 2015). Mingers (2015) argued that the position of the critical realist is that the social world is constantly changing, which is useful in understanding the reason for phenomena as a precursor for recommending change as reflected in the aims and objectives of this study.

4.1.3 Theoretical perspective of the study

Theoretical perspective is the logical position taken by the researcher to inform the methodology, which provides a context to the entire research process by emphasising the reasoning and criteria behind it (Bryman and Bell, 2015; and Crotty, 2014). The literature of research methods has identified a number of philosophical positions any researcher(s) can take, which helps shape his/her methodology, including positivism, post-positivism and interpretivism (Hasan, 2014). Discarding or using any of the philosophical underpinning does not demonstrate that one position is better than the others, but it is an indication that each has its own application, merit and value in other ways (Crotty, 2014). The fact that reality is constructed using the perspective of the interviewees, it is often subjected to the process of interpretation and re-interpretation of the intention and behaviour of the social actors, including researchers (Blazsin and Guldenmund, 2015). As a consequence, Smith (2015) reiterated that illustration and explanation of this social inquiry normally follows a constructive process that requires the involvement of the researcher in exploring the phenomenon under study.

Mertens (2014) noted that positivism is derived from a traditional approach to scientific research, which purports that objective truth exists irrespective of a person's consciousness of it or not and, that impartial truth was not expected to be created by the human mind. As a consequence, positivism is geared towards the perspective that principal norms must comprise only of the recognition of objective facts, or facts that were appreciable by wisdom and that are quantifiable (Coyle, 2013; and Jacobs, 2012). Vannatta and Vannatta (2013) reiterated that positivism is about reductionism, or the discounting of experiences or problems into their smallest elements to ease explanation and testing; and determinism, or the notions of prediction and linear cause-and-effect linkages. In contrast, Murea and Josan (2014); and Pino (2014) established that post-positivism is an extension of positivism, emphasising that the post-positivist perception provides credibility to the opinion that some estimations are conceivable, which provides the basis for generalisation. Crano et al. (2014); and Landers and Bauer (2015) buttressed this argument by emphasising that due to the complexity of human phenomena, it is unrealistic to assume there is complete prediction of the research outcomes. Conversely, interpretivism places its central focus on integrating the human perspective of events/situations, a detailed discussion of which is presented in section 4.1.4.

4.1.4 Interpretivism

The interpretivist's perspective is that the world is too complex to be condensed to a set of observable rules, and that generalisability is less significant when compared with our understanding of the true situations underpinning reality (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Taber (2015) suggested that the key drive behind the concept of interpretivism is the understanding of the social circumstance based on the 'lived experiences' of families and businesses, emphasising that the researcher must not only interpret the events, but understand the processes involved in constructing the meanings and unravelling the embodiments of the meanings based on the perspective of the participants' actions. McMillan (2015); and Thanh and Le Thanh (2015) reinforced this argument by establishing that it is important for the interpretivist to seek answers to the subjective meanings or realities, which can be used to stimulate people's actions in order to comprehend how they can be used to construct meaningful explanations.

Bryman and Bell (2015) suggested that interpretivism is based on the perspective and interpretation of the researcher involved in the collection of the data and therefore its validity

differs from researcher to researcher. Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2015) buttressed this argument by stating that there is no one single interpretation of reality in the social world due to the fact that researchers understand and interpret issues using different perspectives. Crotty (2014) suggested that the whole idea of Interpretivism emerged from the reaction to develop a natural science that is reflective of a social background as a framework of human enquiry. It is clear from this perspective that Interpretivism as a theoretical foundation is a useful and appropriate approach for this research context as it allows for the discussion of families and businesses understanding of their settings, the way families behave when interacting socially at the dinner table and their attendant effect on businesses (food producers and retailers). As such, it provides a way to make sense of the differences in the meal behaviours of families as well as food production and retailing behaviours of businesses in their specific settings. Consequently, this study employed an interpretivist approach as it theoretical approach as the data was collected in the natural context of families in their respective homes using semi-structured interviews and observations based on their perspective and own words, and the results obtained were then assessed with businesses (food producers and retailers) in terms of how they were responding to family dynamics. Food producers and retailers were questioned via interviews.

4.1.5 Paradigms of Qualitative Versus Quantitative Research

A number of researchers have long argued the relative value of qualitative research vis-à-vis quantitative research (Merriam, 2014; Parry et al, 2014; and Yin, 2014). Merriam (2014) suggested that phenomenological inquiry, or qualitative research, uses a naturalistic approach, which seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings. Adams et al (2014), on the other hand, noted that logical positivism or quantitative research uses experimental methods and/or quantitative measures to test hypothetical generalisations. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) reiterated that each paradigm represents a fundamentally different inquiry, and that the researcher's actions are based on the underlying assumptions of each paradigm.

Coolican (2014) and Yin (2014) defined qualitative research in its broadest sense as any kind of research that produces outcomes that did not use statistical procedures or other means of quantification, indicating that researchers in such a field seek causal determination, prediction, and generalisation of the research findings. Power and Gendron (2014), on the other hand, defined qualitative research as one where researchers seek to illuminate,

understand, and extrapolate their findings by linking them to similar situations. Yin (2014) emphasised that qualitative investigation results in a different type of knowledge than does quantitative analysis. Saunders et al (2014) noted that there is no agreed definition of quantitative and qualitative research, but posited the following similarities and differences depicted in Table 4.1

Table 4.1: Characteristic differences between quantitative and qualitative research

Comparison	Qualitative research	Quantitative research
Emphasis of research philosophical roots	Qualitative (nature, essence) phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, constructionism	Quantity (how much, how many) positivism, logical empiricism, realism
Related phrases	Field work, ethnographic, naturalistic, grounded, constructivist	Experimental, empirical, statistical
Area of enquiry	Understanding, description, discovery, meaning, hypothesis generating	Prediction, control, description, confirmation, hypothesis testing
Organization characteristics	Flexible, evolving, emergent	Pre-determined, structured
Sample	Small, non-random, purposeful, theoretical	Large, random, representative
Data collection	Researcher as primary instrument, interviews, observations, documents	Inanimate instruments (scales, tests, surveys, questionnaires, computers)
Principal mode of analysis	Inductive, constant comparative method	Deductive, statistical
Findings	Comprehensive, holistic, expansive, richly descriptive	Precise, numerical

Source: Adopted from Saunders et al. (2014)

Merriam (2014) and Yin (2014) put the two arguments (qualitative and quantitative) into perspective by suggesting that all knowledge, including that gained through quantitative research, is referenced in qualities, and that there are many ways to represent our understanding of the world, which is a kind of continuum that moves from the fictional that is true (the innovative) to the highly controlled and quantitatively described scientific experiment. Merriam (2014) emphasised that effort at either end of this continuum has the capacity to inform significantly. Merriam (2014) stressed that qualitative research and

evaluation are located towards the fictional end of the continuum without being fictional in the narrow sense of the term. Similar points of view was expressed in a recent study by Mok and Clarke (2015) that the special task of the social scientist in each generation is to pin down the modern-day facts, and also share the views of the humanistic scholar and the artist in an effort to gain insight into contemporary relationships.

Ragin (2014) suggested that quantitative research is not able to take full account of the many interaction effects, that take place in social settings and among different social groups. He referenced several empirical laws purported by various scientists that do not hold true in actual settings, and emphasised that the time has come to jettison the null hypothesis as it ignores the effects that may be important, but that are not statistically significant, while qualitative investigation, on the other hand, accepts the complexities and dynamism of the social world.

It is obvious that the adoption of a generic qualitative research approach can help to ensure that the data collection methods and analytical strategies used, best suit the research question posed rather than trying to fit the question to a particular philosophical stance (Fox, 2014; Kroeger et al, 2014; and Shaw and Holland, 2014). Merriam (2014) and Parahoo (2014) posited that adopting a generic qualitative research approach can enhance the credibility of a study's findings because the researcher is more likely to be concerned with accurately describing participants' experiences, staying close to the data, and ensuring interpretations are transparent. Merriam (2014) further suggested that the credibility of the research will depend on securing an appropriate sample, that ensures that the data collection techniques are consistent with the purpose of the study and posits clear strategies for data analysis. However, irrespective of the dichotomy that exists among qualitative researchers as to those for and those against research without a specific theoretical methodology, there appears to be unanimous agreement that the issue of quality is central to the integrity and trustworthiness of qualitative research (Onwuegbuzie and Corrigan, 2014; Sharp et al, 2014; and Stanley and Nayar, 2014).

4.1.6 Justification for employing Qualitative research methodology in this study

In this research, qualitative techniques were employed because they provide an enriched, detailed and dynamic information source that can help the researcher understand the 'lived experiences' of Sierra Leonean families' mealtimes' social interaction behaviours as well as

provide a deep insight of the impact of the verified results on food manufacturing and retailing companies. The implication of this is that it provides an appropriate guide for the researcher to better understand and thoroughly digest the reason(s) why families behave the way they do at mealtimes and why food companies behave the way they do with their customers, which ensures the research outcomes are valid and reliable. These views were equally posited by Merriam (2014) that, qualitative research reports are typically rich with details and insights into participants' lived experiences of the world, which may be epistemologically in harmony with the reader's experience and thus makes the whole situation more meaningful. A review of several methodological literatures indicates that qualitative research is the most appropriate approach to addressing such a study (Flick, 2014; Merriam, 2014; and Parahoo, 2014). Tulving (2014) listed a number of considerations as justification for using qualitative techniques to better understand any phenomenon about which little is yet known and gained new perspectives on things about which much is already known, or to gain more in-depth information that may be difficult to convey using quantitative techniques. Thus, qualitative methods are appropriate in situations where one needs to first identify the variables that might later be tested quantitatively, or where the researcher has determined that quantitative measures cannot adequately describe or interpret a situation (Riff et al, 2014 and Yin, 2014). Elo et al (2014) and Merriam (2014) emphasised that the ability of qualitative data to more fully describe a phenomenon is an important consideration not only from the researcher's perspective, but also from the reader's perspective as well. As a consequence, in this study, the researcher embarked on fully describing and analysing the phenomena under study using a qualitative approach in order to provide detailed, useful and meaningful insights into the behaviours of families and businesses, which is important both from the perspectives of the researcher and other readers interested in the findings of the study.

4.1.7 Methodology of the study

Research methodology is the strategy, plan of action, process or design selected by a researcher as his/her choice of methods and how they are utilised to obtain the desired outcomes (Bryman and Bell, 2015; DePoy and Gitlin, 2015; and Hair et al., 2015). Bryman and Bell (2015); and Smith (2015) noted that the choice of research methodology is influenced by the theoretical perspective of the researcher coupled with his/her views of how the data will be used deductively or inductively, and the rationale for his/her choice of

selection. As a result, this section of the research will focus on discussing and justifying the research design or plan used by the researcher to collect the data from the field, the procedures and processes involved in collecting and analysing the data and the underpinning phenomenology of the study.

4.1.8 Phenomenology of the study

Phenomenological research deals with the way humans make sense of the world around them (Merriam, 2014; Parahoo, 2014; and Relph, 2014). This is applicable to this study as it focuses on understanding the processes by which knowledge is gained or enters the respondents social world to unravel their perspective of events around them (Denscombe, 2014; Seidman, 2014; and Nicolson, 2015). In justifying the use of this research approach, Durkheim (2014, p. 102) described it as "the meaning for several individuals of their 'lived experiences' of a concept or a phenomenon". Durkheim (2014) developed the argument further by stating that phenomenology is not only a description, but it can also be seen as an interpretive process by which the researcher makes an interpretation of the meaning of the 'lived experiences'. Berdychevsky and Gibson (2015) suggested that the basic purpose of phenomenology is the reduction of individual experiences of a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence. This purpose specifically falls within the purview of the primary objectives of this research, which was conducted to assess the effect of collectivism on Sierra Leonean families' meal social interaction behaviour and then use the results to verify their impact on businesses, specifically food manufacturing and retailing companies. Gordon (2014); Merriam (2014); and Peters (2014) reiterated that phenomenology attempts the 'interpretive' understanding of social action in their bid to arrive at a causal explanation of any issue. Consequently, this thesis was undertaken with the assumption that reality is largely based on social construct as there are many meanings and interpretations people give to events and situations around them, which can be interpreted in the social and cultural context of their existence.

The aim of this research is to investigate the effect of collectivism on family meal social interaction behaviour and use the results to verify its attendant effect on food manufacturing and retailing companies to assess their impact on their operations. In order to achieve this aim and make sense of the interviewees' perspective of events in their surroundings, the researcher rigorously probed the behavioural patterns of the interviewees to determine why
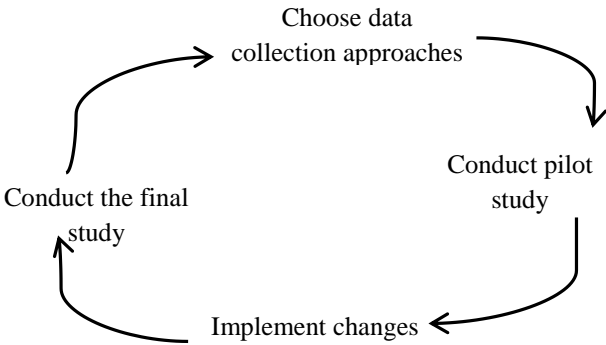
they do what they do and the implications of such behaviours on their lives, families and businesses by asking them to narrate their 'lived experiences'.

4.1.9 Research Design/Planning

A research design is a framework or plan used to guide data collection and analysis for a study (Flick, 2014; Merriam, 2014; and Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) emphasised that it is a general plan of how to answer the research questions. A guideline was developed for the entire research process, which was followed from the planning phase onto the implementation phase of the research to avoid any incongruity in the research process. Thus, this ensures that the research design was relevant to the research context as appropriate procedures and measures were employed throughout the research process (Merriam, 2014). It was apparent that accomplishing a comprehensive analysis of the research within a specified time period requires the research process to be guided by an appropriate research design (Yin, 2014). Figure 4.2 illustrates the steps used in this research to develop a research design before, during and after the data collection process. Adams et al (2014) suggested that the effectiveness of the planning process and the secondary and primary data collection are important aspects of the research design, which largely determines the researcher's ability to achieve the research aim and answer the research questions. This is depicted in Figure 4.2. In this study, an inductive approach was used as the researcher seeks to understand the common issues influencing family meal social interaction behaviour by collecting evidence from the natural settings of individuals and using the results obtained to form the basis of interviews with businesses (food manufacturers and retailers) to determine how they respond to family eating behaviour. The analysis of literature, guided the identification of theories and ideas that were tested using the data collected from the field. This was done in the format of a gap analysis (see Table 3.1). Bryman and Bell (2015) noted that inductive research involves the identification of several piece of evidence through the use of open-ended questions and themes, from which a broad conclusion can be drawn. This approach was used because it provides an appropriate instrument needed to establish the association or interaction between the factors that influence family meal social interaction behaviour and their attendant influences on food producers and retailers.

Figure 4.2: Modified Research Design

First phase	**STAGE I: RESEARCH** — Critical literature review - Understand the problem → Identifying questions and formulating research aims → Refine/revise questions and identify the research gap	Undertook extensive literature research, formulated objectives and identified research questions. A research gap was identified. Secondary data was collected from the Central Statistics Office, the Universities of Sierra Leone, internet (Salford Solar library search – on-line journals, e-libraries) and vital documents also obtained from the archives of the Ministry of Agriculture
	STAGE II: RESEARCH DESIGN/PLAN — Choose data collection approaches → Conduct pilot study → Implement changes → Conduct the final study	Reviewed, identified and selected appropriate research approach and data collection method. A pilot study was conducted and relevant changes to the semi-structured interview protocols reviewed. Ethical approval was achieved through the University of Salford's ethics committee
	STAGE III: IMPLEMENTATION — Execution (observation and semi-structured interview) → Collate data, analyse and interpret findings	After the implementation of the requisite changes in stage II of the study, the first phase of the study was conducted with families using semi-structured interviews and observations by employing the iterative process of triangulation
Second phase	**STAGE IV: APPLICATION** — Application and analysis of the results	This stage involved the application of the results obtained from families on businesses (food manufacturers and retailers)

Adopted from: Bickman et al, 2004

4.2 Data collection methods and Justifications

This section discusses, evaluates and justifies the methods used by the researcher to collect and analyse data from the field. To build an in-depth understanding of collectivist families' meal social interaction behaviours at mealtimes and those of businesses, the researcher used both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data sources included one-to-one semi-structured face to face interviews and observations. The semi-structured interviews were used in order for the researcher to be able to meet the families and businesses in their natural settings (Wilkinson et al., 2014). Observation was also blended with the semi-structured interviews to increase the validity and reliability of the research outcomes – through triangulation - and to enrich the face to face semi-structured interview discussions held with the families and businesses (Green et al, 2014). Ainasoja et al (2014) and Riazi and Candlin (2014) noted that the methods used by qualitative researchers exemplify a common belief that they can provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena than that obtained from quantitative data. However, Shaw and Holland (2014) warned that there is no agreed doctrine underlying all qualitative social research. As a result, semi-structured interviews and observations were used because it ensured personal contact between the interviewer and the interviewees. This enhanced the capacity of the interviewer to develop his knowledge on the factors that influenced collectivist families' meal social interaction behaviour and used the results to determine their influence on the operations of food companies on an incremental basis, which ensured the exercise of a greater level of control. However, the interviewer ensured that his behaviour was within appropriate and acceptable limits by only probing issues that were unclear or requesting for further explanation on issues that were inadequately explained and allowing the interviewees to freely and independently express their views.

4.2.1 Semi-structured face to face interview

Semi-structured face to face interviews are non-standardised interviews that give the researcher the flexibility to cover a list of themes or questions and are also referred to as qualitative research interviews (Brinkmann, 2014 and Flewitt, 2014). It is a range of interview situations from a combination of structured and open-ended questions, to a situation in which the interview is relatively unstructured (Brinkmann, 2014). The researcher during the semi-structured interviews introduced a theme and allowed the conversation to develop according to cues taken from what respondents said about their families, and the

food producers and retailers. Behrman (2014) and Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015) suggested that qualitative research interviews with individuals and businesses knowledgeable about a subject can help obtain in-depth knowledge effectively and economically in terms of time and cost. Thus, the aim of using semi-structured face-to-face interviews in this research was to allow Sierra Leonean families and food companies to elucidate their views on the food attributes based on their perspective and own words, which helped in identifying the factors influencing families' meal social interaction behaviours and the factors influencing food producing and retailing companies. It also gave the researcher the opportunity to probe deeper into the families' mealtime behaviours and food companies' behaviours, and obtained more information from them, which helped to adequately answer the research questions and achieve the research aim and objectives. Therefore, the researcher used audio-recording and noted the behaviours and actions of the respondents.

This study was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved face to face semi-structured interviews and observations with families about their meal social interaction behaviour, whilst the second study involved the application of the results of families on food retailers and manufacturers to assess their impacts on their operations. In the first study, the aim was to critically evaluate the relevance of food ethics, affection, education and family cohesion as collectivist symbolic cultural values at family mealtimes; critically analyse whether gender differentiation and adherence to hierarchy/authority at family mealtimes are affected by collectivism; critically evaluate the importance of family religious values and meal participation at mealtimes; confirm the similarities and differences between the arguments of previous studies in relation to the views presented by this study about the influence of collectivism; propose conclusions in relation to the primary data and provide appropriate recommendations to key stakeholders, including: policy-makers, food retailers and producers based on those conclusions; and develop a schematic summary of the results to guide family meal social interaction behaviour in the Sierra Leonean collectivist context. As a consequence, the husbands and wives were interviewed separately. The wives were always the first interviewed because of their busy schedule as after work they tended to be responsible for preparing the family meals. As a result, access to them was difficult as the interview usually coincided with their meal preparation times. However, it is worth noting that their participation and contribution to the research was positive and productive, in that they were willing to detail their families' experiences at mealtimes without recourse to holding back any private or personal information. In the second study, the interviews were

conducted in the premises of the businesses with limited interruptions from customers or relations in the bid to obtain rich and detailed information from the interviewees about the influence religion, ethnicity, conformity, reference groups and social class have on their businesses.

A copy of the participant invitation letter (see appendix 6); the research themes covered (see appendix 1); participant information sheet detailing the interview protocol, commitment, benefits; and risks and confidentiality (see appendix 7) were issued to all interviewees either at their offices in the case of families or business premises in the case of businesses. This approach was used because it was convenient for the researcher to meet the families in their respective offices to get an audience with them, while the locations of businesses were used to conduct the interviews because it was considered the most appropriate place to conduct the interviews based on the interviewees' convenience. This enabled the researcher to establish contact and to network with willing potential participants. This approach enhanced familiarity and easy bonding between the researcher and the interviewees, and eventually built trust between them. However, for the first study, the consent forms (see appendix 8) were issued to the interviewees in their respective homes before each interview was conducted. For the second study, the consent forms were signed by the interviewees in their business premises. They were completed and signed by each interviewee before the interview commenced.

Before the interview commenced, the researcher introduced himself, spoke briefly about the purpose of the visit and the participants' rights to freely withdraw from the interview process, and the confidentiality of the data collected from them. The semi-structured interviews and observations enabled the interview protocols and research themes to be discussed with each interviewee and this was done independently and exclusively with each interviewee to ensure validity and reliability of the data collected. A few of the interviewees accepted the letter of invitation and consent form without fully reading its contents, but the researcher took his time to explain the content of the letter to them. However, a handful of the interviewees had taken their time to read and understand the perspective of the interview and what was expected of them.

It is important to note that creating interviews for working families was extremely difficult as it was almost impossible to meet both members of the family (Husband and wife) at the same time. Most times when one was present, the other was absent. Despite the fact that the interviews were conducted separately, the presence of both couples in a single visit reduced

the burden of a re-visit and helped alleviate the problem of time constraints. This created a lot of complications for the research process as the interviewer needed to visits some interviewees' homes twice or thrice to guarantee an interview. Most of the interviews were conducted in the evening, when most of the interviewees had finished work and the remainder were conducted on the weekends. Therefore, it is self-evident that scheduling an interview for working families in a developing country like Sierra Leone was not only challenging, but frustrating as their busy schedules always interfere with the interview process and prevent them from keeping scheduled appointments. The researcher was able to successfully cover the forty interviewees (20 husbands and 20 wives) within the scheduled timeframe for the first study.

The themes for the family study included: culture; self-concept and identity; social bonding and the African context; collectivism and power distance; collectivism and individual cultural values; collectivism and group behaviour; relationship between collectivism and family decision-making; and family meal social interaction patterns. These themes were identified in the gap analysis (see Table 3.1).

Just as in the case of the first study, the interviews for the second study were conducted either in daytime based on the convenience of the interviewees or in the evening when the business premises were less busy. The researcher was able to successfully cover twenty interviewees (16 food retailers and 4 food producers) for the second study. A total of sixty interviewees were covered during the field study for both the families and businesses.

In the second study, the interviewer focused on the themes obtained from the first study, including: religion; ethnicity; reference groups, conformity and social class with emphasis placed on the sub-themes of each category. Before a detailed discussion of each theme, the interviewees were asked to define the theme. The interviewees were also asked to discuss which of the listed sub-themes influence their food manufacturing or retailing business and further asked to discuss the how and why they influence their businesses.

The interviews for both studies (first and second) were initiated by the researcher introducing himself and his institution of study, discussing the reason for the visit and a general discussion of the research topic to anchor the understanding of the families about the issue(s) under discussion. Sample quotations from the semi-structured interviews can be found in the appendices.

4.2.2 Advantages of semi-structured face to face interviews

Brinkmann (2014) and Morgan et al (2014) suggested that the primary advantage of semi-structured face to face interviews is that they are characterised by synchronous communication in time and place, which are accompanied by social cues. Luton (2015) reiterated that semi-structured interviews gives the interviewer the opportunity to probe for answers, which may enable him/her to understand the meanings the interviewees ascribe to various phenomena. Brédart et al (2014) emphasised that semi-structured interview may lead to discussion on issues not previously thought of by the interviewer, but essential for his/her understanding, and which may potentially help answer the research objectives and questions, or help in formulating the research question, which ensures the assembling of rich and detailed data set. Beyers et al (2014) suggested that another advantage of semi-structured face to face interview is that there is no significant time delay between the question posed by the interviewer and the response provided by the interviewee. Beyers et al (2014) emphasised that the interviewer and the interviewee can directly react on what the other say or do, pointing out that the answer of the interviewee is more spontaneous, without an extended reflection. As a consequence, in this study, factors such as communication and associates as influencers of family meal behaviour were initially not part of the original themes and interview questions formulated by the researcher, but spontaneously emerged during the interviewing process, which ensured the assembling of rich and detailed data. Surujlal (2014) buttressed this argument by suggesting that a semi-structured face to face interview gives the interviewer the opportunity to receive feedback and personal assurance about the way in which the information was provided, and that it provides a higher response rate. Cooley et al (2014) also pointed out that semi-structured face to face interview ensures that the interviewer has more control over who answers the questions.

Morrison et al (2014) suggested that a primary advantage of semi-structured face to face interviews is that it can be recorded, which ensures that the information provided by the interviewee was more accurate than when it is written out as notes. As a consequence, in this study, the interviewer used audio recorder to record the interviews, which ensured that the information provided by the interviewees were correct and accurate, and can be repeatedly listened to. Sreejesh et al. (2014) emphasised that the synchronous communication of time and place in a semi-structured face to face interview has the advantage of ensuring that the interviewer has a lot of possibilities to create a good interview ambience by making more use

of the standardised situation. Cooley et al (2014) supported this argument by emphasising that semi-structured face to face interview is easy to terminate, and that during the course of interaction between the interviewer and interviewee enough clues can be given that signals the end of the interview, for example by thanking the interviewee for his/her cooperation and asking him/her for any further remarks relevant to the research topic or interview process. In this study, the interviewer created a warm and cordial interview ambience by being informally dressed at all times and by being more open and friendly, and terminated the interviews by thanking the interviewees and asking them for any further questions, comments or statements relevant to the research topic.

The advantage of using interviews and observations (see full discussion of observation in section 4.2.5) was that the interviewer was able to get first-hand information based on the 'lived experiences' of the interviewees (families and businesses) and observe families' behaviours as they interact socially at mealtimes (Brunson and Pegram, 2015). This implies that the interviewer directly observed the behaviours of the families as they interact socially at mealtimes and information obtained from them reflects those behaviours. The results obtained from the semi-structured interviews and observations were used to form the basis of the interviews with food manufacturing and retailing companies, which enhanced the validity and reliability of the research by offering triangulation of data.

4.2.3 Disadvantages of semi-structured interviews

Saunders et al (2009) warned that a lack of standardisation may lead to interviewer bias, which ensures that the interviewer imposes his/her, beliefs and frame of reference through the questions or the way the interviewer interprets the interviewee's responses. In a recent study, Ferraro (2014) also noted that visibility of an interviewer can lead to disturbing interviewer effects, when the interviewer guides with his/her behaviour the interviewee in a special direction. Ferraro (2014) suggested that this disadvantage can be diminished as was the case in this research, by using an interview protocol and by the awareness of the interviewer of such an effect on the interview process. Budnick et al (2014) also pointed to interviewee bias as a result of the perception the interviewee holds about the interviewer. To prevent the occurrence of such biases, the interviewer allowed the interviewees to freely express themselves and probe only important questions that needed clarity, and also ensured that the interviewees were not in any way led during the questioning. However, the interviewer ensured that the interviewees were brought back on track whenever deviations occurred.

Another disadvantage of semi-structured face to face interviews was that they increased the anxiety and stress levels of some interviewees, especially if they were not confident enough to provide appropriate answers to certain questions or issues raised during the interview; it also required proper planning as the interviewer needed to arrange appropriate times that were convenient for the interviewees; the interviewer observed that prolonged discussion affected interviewees' concentration as they may either be bored or have other issues to attend to; and during the course of the interview, the interviewer observed that certain behaviours of the interviewees were exposed, including listening to the private telephone calls of businesses and personal family discussions (Saunders et al, 2014).

Sreejesh et al. (2014) noted that a key disadvantage of the semi-structured face to face interview is that the interviewer must concentrate on the questions to be asked and the answers provided, and that the interviewer needs to formulate questions due to the interactive nature of the interviewing process. Brédart et al (2014) supported this argument and reiterated that the interviewer must be both listening to the responses provided by the interviewee to understand what he/she is saying, while at the same time making sure that all the questions are answered within a set time-frame with depth, richness and detail needed. Antón and Goering (2015) cautioned that the use of recording during an interview process needs to be accompanied with note taking in the event of the malfunction of the audio recorder, and in the event of the malfunction of the interviewer. He pointed to the time consumption and rigours of transcribing the recording, emphasising that an hour of recording takes about five to six hours to transcribe. Weil et al (2014) noted that an interviewee that is distantly placed from the interviewer would sometimes take a whole day as the interviewer would have to travel and pay for the cost of travel. They emphasised that, it can even involve cancellation, if the interviewee is either sick or consumed by other personal issues. As a result, the interviewer overcame these disadvantages highlighted by the various theorists (Brédart et al, 2014; Sreejesh et al., 2014; Weil et al, 2014; and Antón and Goering, 2015) by using a tape recorder (after gaining permission from the interviewees) in combination with note taking, about observations relating to the tone, behaviour and emphasis placed on certain issues by the interviewees. Furthermore, the interviewer tried to establish a warm relationship with the interviewees and their social context, and used suitable questioning techniques such as funnelling, asking unbiased and open-ended questions, probing and verifying responses. These processes were explained to the interviewees to ease their concerns and to make sure that they understood what was involved in the interviewing process.

It was clear from the outset that such an approach was fraught with constraints as keeping the interviewees (families, and food producers and retailers) focused on the themes/topics covered was difficult as spontaneous intruders either externally (from visitors/customers) or internally (from relations) impacted the interview process as the interviews were conducted in the living rooms of the interviewees' homes and in the premises of businesses, and some were conducted outdoor with minimal interruptions from passers-by or relatives of the interviewees. These facts were reiterated by Brédart et al (2014) that one of the key problems of semi-structured interviews is keeping the interviewee focussed on the theme of the research. However, the researcher ensured that these issues, including how long the interview would take were communicated and discussed with the interviewees before the interviews began. The researcher established intimate and comfortable working relationship with each family, and food producer and retailer in order to facilitate an easy exchange and obtain truthful information from them. This enhanced the validity and reliability of the research as the interviews were conducted in a more relaxed and friendly atmosphere, which built the confidence of the interviewees to open up and provide a detailed description of their families social behaviour at mealtimes and those of businesses.

4.2.4 Justification for using semi-structured interviews

The researcher used one-to-one face-to-face semi-structured interviews in this research because it suits the purpose of the research and it enabled the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of families' behaviour at mealtimes as well as the behaviours of food producers and retailers, which helped to adequately address the research gaps (see Table 3.1). It was also perceived by the researcher as the instrument that adequately addressed the research questions and objectives. During the course of the interviews, the interviewer observed that a number of families shared meals with other people outside their homes. It was also observed that most families were opened to visits from other people, who are not part of the family. At mealtimes, it was also observed that some families ate disjointedly instead of at a common dinner table. Another critical observation made was that some families did not have a dinner table, but rather ate together on the floor from a common bowl.

The researcher ensured that under such a loose framework, the interviewees (families, and food producers and retailers) were given the freedom to speak as they desired and the interview followed a natural 'conversational' approach, which varied from family to family and from business to business. The researcher conducted the face to face semi-structured

interviews dressed informally in order to distinguish him from government officials and create an interview atmosphere in which the interviewees would feel more confident and comfortable to talk openly and pragmatically about their behaviours at mealtimes and for businesses to be more pragmatic about their operations. Therefore, the researcher created as natural a setting as possible in which to talk with the families and businesses, so that the outcome of the interview was influenced as little as possible by either the researcher or the surroundings. Mann (2015) warned that semi-structured face to face interviewees' responses are never simply passive reflections of something outside the interview room, but are also produced in the context of the interview itself, and are shaped by the interviewee's perception of his/her addressee. However, he suggested that this does not indicate that qualitative interviews are completely 'biased' and unable to explain anything about the world of the interviewee; and that in fact, although researchers need to reflect on the how and why reactivity occurs in an interview, it can often provide them with much useful information. The use of a friendly atmosphere and appearing casual allayed the fears of the families and businesses, which allowed them to open up and provide detailed information of their families' 'lived experiences' and sometimes even reflected on past experiences of their previous families (i.e. parental upbringing). The food producers and retailers also used their 'lived experiences' to reflect on incidences that affected their operations.

4.2.5 Observation

De Backer et al (2015); and Smedslund and Ross (2014) stated that observation is a neglected aspect of research and emphasised its rewarding and enlightening nature, and its significance in enriching the research data. Saunders et al (2009) defined observation as the systematic observation, recording, description, analysis and interpretation of people's behaviour. Pellegrini et al (2014) noted that the classic form of data collection in naturalistic or field research is observation of participants in the context of a natural scene. In this research, observations were used for the purpose of describing families' behaviours at mealtimes and the meanings of what is observed from the perspective of the participants (Nieuwesteeg et al, 2014). Cortazzi (2014) and Merriam and Tisdell (2015) emphasised that observation can lead to deeper understanding of issues than interviews alone, because it provides knowledge of the context in which events occur, and may enable the researcher to see things that participants themselves are not aware of, or that they are unwilling to discuss.

Cheema (2014) suggested that there are several observation strategies available at the disposal of the researcher and identified the following as critical: the researcher observing issues from the outside, without being noticed; the researcher maintaining a passive presence, being as unobtrusive as possible and not interacting with participants; and the researcher engages in limited interaction, intervening only when further clarification of actions was needed. The interviewer maintained an objective stance throughout the interview process by observing issues from outside without being noticed and being as unobtrusive as possible in the process in order to ensure that the outcomes of the research were not compromised. However, Yin (2014) warned that each of the strategies has specific advantages (add to the richness of the research data), disadvantages and concerns (people do change their behaviours because they are being observed), which must be carefully examined by the researcher. As a result, the researcher ensured that his presence as an observer does not introduce distortions by staying passive throughout the discussion and limited his participation to asking questions and listening to the interviewee's response.

Yin (2014) emphasised that the critical decisions, including the degree to which the researcher's identity and purposes were revealed to participants, the length of time spent in the field, and specific observation techniques used, would be wholly dependent on the unique set of questions and resources available at the disposal of the researcher. In this research, the researcher took into consideration the length of time assigned for conducting each interview, and the legal and ethical responsibilities associated with observer positions in social science research by probing only when necessary and maintaining a passive stance with minimal interaction (Prosser, 2014). As a result, the researcher engaged in limited interaction and allowed the families to freely express their views during the interviews with minimal disruptions, and the families were interrupted only when further clarification are needed on certain issues or when the researcher required the families to elaborate on certain issues.

4.2.6 Advantages and disadvantages of observation

A primary advantage of observation is its high level of flexibility and its ability to cover a spectrum of activity (Ainsworth et al, 2015). The interviewer realised that the observation of what people do and how they do it can lead to revealing and powerful data. Consequently, it is useful to emphasise that observational data can make a valuable contribution to uncovering the inter-relationships between families, the environment they live in and their culture (Dodman et al, 2015). Despite this usefulness of observation, there are also downsides to it.

Franco et al (2015) noted that observation as a research method is potentially complex and can be daunting to novice researchers because of practical and ethical concerns, including how to record the data so that it is a true representation. Babbie (2015) supported this claim and reiterated that researchers carrying out observation may be challenged by other researchers about the credibility of their data, for example, on whether or not people observed will change their behaviour, and whether or not the data collected represents what happened. Therefore, in this study, the researcher made sure that all the ethical and practical concerns were addressed by ensuring that they data recorded are a true representation of the interviewees' behaviours, which evidently enhanced the quality of data (Takhar-Lail and Ghorbani, 2015).To overcome the problems associated with observations, the interviewer also revealed at the outset the purpose of the interview in order to gain the confidence and trust of the interviewees, which allowed them to provide in-depth 'lived experiences' of their families' meal social interaction behaviour (Adams et al, 2014).

4.2.7 Justification for using observation

The researcher selected observation because of its richness in soliciting detailed and adequate information that can help address the research objectives and questions. Consequently, the researcher used observation as a research tool for the data collection because it is an additional measure used to verify comments made in the interviews, which are useful in qualitative study, in order to exhaustively and deeply understand the factors responsible for Sierra Leonean families' meal social interaction behaviour (Vindevogel et al, 2015). Rodgers and Saldaña (2015) noted that observation is about the researcher attempting to learn the respondents symbolic world, with the quest of understanding the distinctiveness of the individual by getting to the bottom of the process by which the individual constantly constructs and re-constructs his/her identity. The results from the observations was recorded in a table and juxtaposed with the statements made by the interviewees as a triangulation instrument, which helps to justify the authenticity of the study.

4.2.8 Analysis of interview response - Thematic Analysis

A review of the various methods available for analysis of qualitative data indicates the availability of different methods including thematic analysis; factor analysis; discourse analysis; and content analysis. Amongst these analytical techniques, thematic analysis was

used as it is the most appropriate method for classifying word-based material by reducing it to more relevant, manageable bits of data (Kuckartz, 2014). Bryman and Bell (2015) warned that the central problems of qualitative data analysis originate mainly in the data-reduction process by which many words of texts are classified into much fewer content categories, and that the allocation of incidents to the categories is subjective and mostly based on the researcher's judgement. Bryman and Bell (2015) further admonished that this can only be reduced by asking several people to independently allocate the incidents to different categories. As a result, the researcher from time to time obtained invaluable feedback and advice of incident allocation to different categories from his supervisory team, who critiqued the analysis and identified shortfalls during the allocation process. Despite these shortfalls, the researcher used thematic analysis to identify themes as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2013) and identified the frequency with which certain issues or themes appeared in the material collected. The Thematic analysis was very useful in looking for the association between collectivism and family meal social interaction behaviour, and in verifying the results obtained on businesses (food producers and retailers). The thematic analysis employed in this research is similar to Braun and Clarke (2013), who proposed a six pronged approach to thematic analysis, which they suggested maintains the methods flexibility and validity. This is depicted in Table 4.2

Table 4.2: Six stages in using thematic analysis

Stage	Activity	Description	Application in this study
1	Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas	Data was transcribed by the researcher from the tape recorder, an iterative approach of reading and reading the transcripts was done whilst typing initial thoughts
2	Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code	The researcher examined the information collected from the line by line analysis of transcripts and then generated codes to reflect the main concepts
3	Selecting the themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential	The researcher segmented the materials into manageable units by building a table with themes

4	Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (phase 1) and the entire data set (phase 2) generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis	The themes were then reviewed by the researcher in tandem with the coded extracts using thematic analysis to identify the frequency with which certain issues or themes appeared
5	Defining and naming themes	On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names of each theme.	The themes were frequently refined by the researcher and the data re-read to capture a broader picture of what the results portrayed, including clarity of definitions, and the emergence of new themes
6	Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected abstracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.	After satisfactorily probing and reviewing the thematic analysis without any new evidences, the researcher settled down to write the thesis by relating facts gathered from the analysis with the research questions and literature

Source: Braun and Clarke (2013, p. 5)

After the data (audio recording) was obtained from the field, all the semi-structured interviews conducted with the 20 families (20 husbands and 20 wives) as well as with the 20 food companies (16 food retailers and 4 food producers) were transcribed and read by the researcher. Twenty families (20 husbands and 20 wives) were selected in order to get a balanced response and interpretation of the results, and to reduce biasness to the bare minimum. This was because after the twentieth family, the data was saturated as the information collected from the 18th, 19th and 20th families (35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th and 40th interviewees) were similar to those stated by earlier respondents. The whole process started with the researcher segmenting the data into manageable analytical units. This included building a table by giving the various categories headings and sub-headings based on the themes and sub-themes used in conducting the interviews, the questions asked and the responses provided by the families and businesses. The names of each family and business (food producer/retailer) were coded for anonymity and the findings were grouped based on

themes and sub-themes and then classified based on the data obtained from each family (husband and wife) and business (food producer/retailer). These classifications were based on the issues identified as the research gap and as reflected in the schematic summary/representation of the research (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2 under analysis of results). However, for thoroughness and reliability, the researcher in certain circumstances, asked the families and businesses questions on the same themes or sub-themes using different perspectives to anchor the genuineness and sincerity of the information provided by the families and businesses. A sample of the semi-structured interview questions are presented in the appendix (see appendices 3 and 16).

Paul et al (2014) defined qualitative data analysis as the act of working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others. They suggested that qualitative data analysis requires some creativity, because the challenge is to place the raw data into logical, meaningful categories; to examine them in a holistic fashion; and to find a way to communicate this interpretation to others.

In the process of conducting the open coding, the researcher examined the materials line by line and the codes generated were used to reflect the main concepts. As a result, the researcher identified the themes by dividing the research materials into units, while eliminating those that were of no value and allocating quotes to themes as the indexing progresses in order to provide better understanding, which led to the modification and development of a better framework. The researcher also highlighted the field themes and sub-themes obtained from the field data in red for clarity and referencing purposes as well as examples provided by the families and businesses, which enabled the researcher to refer to them when needed. In the first study, the extreme right of the table was used to analyse the positive and negative impacts of factors influencing family meal social interaction behaviour, whilst the left was used to list the questions that emerged from the interviews and the responses obtained from families. In the second study, the interviewer used the extreme left of the excel spreadsheet to list the questions, themes and sub-themes that emerged from interviewing the businesses (food producers and retailers), whilst the responses were recorded on the extreme right. The names of the food manufacturing and retailing companies were coded for anonymity and the themes and sub-themes were also colour-coded to distinguish them from each other.

The researcher carefully and attentively listened to and transcribed the audio-recorder to identify the major themes and issues, and this process was iterative and repetitive to make sure that no vital information was missing when transcribing. In addition, the notes taken during the interviews about observation were also used as a reference point. The codes were organised in hierarchical order to illustrate how some codes are subsets of the other, which allowed the thematic content analysis to be done at different levels using an aggregated approach. The researcher also used cross-references to make connections between disparate elements in the coded hierarchical structure that might be ignored using units of material allocated to appropriate codes. The use of the hierarchical and cross-referencing coding enabled the researcher to identify patterns, associations and connections between codes and use the connections to establish the commonalities based on the statement made by the families and businesses during the interviewing process, which resulted in the establishment of the association between collectivism (religion, ethnicity, reference groups, conformity and social class) and family meal social interaction, and then used the results obtained on businesses (food manufacturing and retailing companies) to assess their impact.

After collating and coding all the data in the first approach, the data was summarised and organised by comparing the responses provided by the different family members (husband and wife) and businesses (food producers and retailers) and their properties from the semi-structured face to face interviews and conceptualised the interpretation of each category by each family member and business (food producer/retailer), and how they interact with each other. The researcher noted that sometimes, there were variations in responses from different family members and businesses, which could have prompted the use of more than one code, which resulted in the building up of different sub-categories. For example, there were variation in responses to the question of the influence of spiritual beliefs on families and businesses. But the responses provided by most family members and businesses support the themes and sub-themes identified by the researcher and therefore have minimal or no effect on the research outcomes as they play a critical role as the prime factors influencing families meal social interaction behaviours as well as the behaviour of businesses.

There are various computer software packages (for example, NUD*IST, NVIVO 10, AQUAD, ATLAS/ti, CAQDAS, HyperRESEARCH, and ZyINDEX) available to perform analysis of qualitative data (Catterall and Maclaran, 1998). However, in this study, NVIVO 10 was used in transcribing the data obtained from the field, which proved to be very convenient, swift and easy to use. It gave the researcher the ability to forward and rewind the

audio recorder. The researcher transcribed all the data in words and transferred them individually into NVIVO 10 to help with the analysis. The NVIVO software was password protected to prevent any external access to the data stored by the researcher. The researcher created different folders, which enabled him to store different information in the internal and external sources of the NVIVO 10 programme. The internal sources folders contained the following: consent forms; diary entries; interviews (demographic data and transcription data of individual family and business); literature reviews; and project administration, while the external folders contained the following: memos (field notes, observations, reflections and supervisor's notes) and framework matrices. Thus, the researcher ensured that the semi-structured face to face interviews were transcribed verbatim and uploaded into the computer programme NVIVO 10 to facilitate the analysis. An iterative approach of reading and rereading the transcripts, identifying themes and patterns, and comparing across the data was used in analysing the data (Snelgrove, 2014).

The categories were assigned definitions and given a code based on the researchers view to facilitate information recall and entered into NVIVO 10 to manage the large amounts of data and to help achieve consistency in coding. Thus, continuity in the coding process helped identify redundancies and overlaps in the categorisation of the scheme and the remaining categories were then grouped both sequentially and thematically (Friese, 2014). The researcher believed that NVIVO 10 facilitated the development of an audit trail through the use of memos, providing evidence of confirmation of the Research findings.

The researcher worked on the categorisation scheme, assignment of codes, and interpreted and reviewed the transcripts independently. Where there were differences in interpretations, commonalities and differences were identified and interpreted appropriately. Therefore, the researcher used triangulation to enhance the credibility of the data. Also, the audio-recordings and associated transcripts (field notes) were transcribed as soon as the researcher returned from the field to avoid unnecessary build-up of information and data and avoid loss of vital information. The transcription of the audio recordings and field notes started in June, 2014 and was completed in November, 2014 for the first study, whilst the transcription of the second study started in September, 2015 and ended in October, 2015.

4.3 Sampling method/technique

Adams et al (2014) defined sampling as the process or technique used for selecting a suitable sample for the purpose of determining the parameters or characteristics of the whole population. Coolican (2014) defined sampling as the desire of a researcher to observe part of a population in order to glean information about the whole. Consequently, to select a sampling technique appropriate for this research, the researcher critically reviewed various sampling techniques available before eventually making a choice suitable for the research as it was considered the most appropriate in answering the research questions and achieving the research objectives. Adams et al (2014) reiterated that every research study requires the researcher to determine a sample size and its statistical significance. Saunders et al (2009) summarised the sampling techniques and divided them into two: probability (representative) and non-probability (judgemental) sampling. They stated that with probability sampling, there is a known chance or probability and fairness of each sample being selected from the population and identified simple random, systematic, stratified, and cluster samplings as appropriate probability sampling techniques. They stated that for non-probability sampling, the chance or probability of each sample being selected from the total population is not known and that it is impossible to answer the research questions or address the research objectives by making a statistical inference about the characteristics of the population, and identified quota sampling, purposive sampling, snowballing, self-selection and convenience sampling as examples of non-probability sampling. In this research, due to the fact that the selected samples of families and businesses were unknown, the researcher selected the following non-probability sampling for answering the research questions and for achieving the research objectives, including: snow-balling; convenience; and experiential sampling. A detailed discussion of these sampling techniques is presented in section 4.3.2, 4.3.3 and 4.3.4.

4.3.1 Sample selection

In the first study, a total of 20 families (20 husbands and 20 wives), a sample size of 40, from various households were contacted across the country with a vivid explanation given to them about the study including potential risks of data publication, benefits to the country generally, and the assurance of confidentiality. The husband and wife (married couples) in each family were considered by the researcher as the main participants in the interview process. In the second study, a total of 16 food retailers and 4 food manufacturers, with a sample size of 20

food producers/retailers, from various regions of the country were contacted to determine how they used the data obtained from families in their businesses. All the families and businesses interviewed by the researcher spoke English as it is the official language in the country and therefore acted as the medium for conducting the research. Those families and business owners, who did not speak English, were excluded from the semi-structured face to face interviews to prevent further translation difficulties and to reduce biasness in the results. Despite the exclusion of the non-English speakers from the interview process, it had very minimal impact on the outcome of the research as the selected families and businesses were reflective of the characters and behaviours of the non-selected families and businesses. Consequently, this strategy enabled the researcher to generate a sample that was representative of the families and businesses, and provide an outcome that is reflective of the population sample and their meal social interaction and/or business behaviours. All the families and businesses were required to sign a written informed consent form prior to the interview. To prevent dissimilarities in the data gathered from families and businesses, prevent short fall in interpretation, variation in style of questioning, potential digression from the main theme of the research and to reduce biasness, the researcher ensured that all the interviews were conducted by him.

In the first study, the researcher primarily focused on urban areas, particularly the provincial headquarter towns with about 20 percent of the families selected in the North (Makeni), 20 per cent in the South (Bo), 20 per cent in the East (Kenema), and 40 per cent in the Western area (Freetown). This literally means that in the first study, the researcher interviewed 4 families in the North (Makeni), 4 families in the South (Bo), 4 families in the East (Kenema), and 8 families in the Western Area (Freetown). The study focused on the urban areas of Sierra Leone because they were easily accessible and motorable, and the characteristics espoused by urban families are not too dissimilar from those of their rural counterparts. The non-selection of respondents in the rural areas was mainly due to the fact that the roads leading to most of them are inaccessible and non-motorable, as they can only be reached via footpaths. Furthermore, it is vital to emphasise that sometimes even when the roads leading to these rural areas are motorable and accessible, the poor road conditions make it extremely difficult to reach them. This essentially inhibits the free movement of vehicles to and from these rural areas. As a consequence, the researcher limited the study to urban areas, as they were more accessible and motorable.

In the second study, 62.5 percent in the Western area (Freetown); and 12.5 percent in each of the provincial headquarter towns of Bo, Kenema and Makeni of food retailers were interviewed, while 25 percent of food producers were selected in each of the provincial headquarter towns. This suggests that the researcher interviewed 10 food retailers in the Western Area (Freetown) and 2 food retailers in each of the provincial headquarter towns of Bo, Kenema and Makeni; whilst 1 food producer was interviewed in each of the provincial headquarter towns across the country. The Western Area (Freetown) was given a high percentage or proportion due to its high population density and because it offers a complete mirror image of the entire country and provides a good opportunity to look at the religious divide (Islam and Christianity) among families and businesses. The SLIHS report (2011) indicated that 71 per cent of the population of Sierra Leoneans are Muslims with 26 per cent reportedly Christians, while 3 per cent are indigenous believers, diviners, healers, and witchcrafts. However, irrespective of the disparity in the percentage score between Muslims and Christians, in the first study, the researcher ensured that an even representation was selected for the interviews with ten families from each of the denomination with the husbands and wives interviewed separately to avoid any biasness or to prevent one couple influencing the other. In essence, a total of twenty families (20 Husbands and 20 wives) were interviewed overall with 50 per cent from each denomination. To get a clearer picture of the influence of the aspects of the determinants (religion, ethnicity, reference group, conformity and social status) of collectivism on family meal social interaction behaviour, the researcher focused on three major ethnic groups (Creole, Temne, and Mende) due to their dominance in the country and categorise all the other minority groupings as others. A tabular representation of the sample and personal data are depicted in appendix 4. In the second study as a verification exercise of the first study, the interviewer did not use these classifications and the businesses were selected purely based on ease of access and availability. A tabular representation of the sample and personal data of the food producers and retailers are reflected in appendices 12 and 13 respectively.

4.3.2 Snowball sampling

Merriam (2014) suggested that snowballing samples emerge through a process of reference from one person to the next, 'quickly building up and enabling the researcher to approach participants with credibility from being sponsored by a named person. Saunders et al (2009) reiterated that it is always difficult to get the initial contact, and emphasised that the use of

snowballing poses a huge bias as the characteristics of respondents may be similar. Reid and Mash (2014) noted that the use of snow-balling technique by researchers to collect data can be biased because the individuals selected may have a high chance of being similar. However, the researcher overcame this bias by making sure that the selected respondents reflected the research requirements, including age appropriateness (18 to 65 years) and being married couples as well as vetting their suitability in terms of their religion (Muslim or Christian). De Paiva Duarte (2014) suggested that it can be useful when the interviewees are sceptical of the researcher. Adams et al (2014) warned that for the technique to be effective, researchers need knowledge of the social situation they wish to investigate, initially gathering information from a small set of contacts that trust the researcher. As a result, the researcher conducted a pilot study to get an outlook of the initial families and businesses selected to ensure that they are dissimilar, and also ensured that the families belong to different social classes and ethnic groups, which reduced the degree of biasness, and hence its impact on the validity and reliability of the data collected.

To gain access to the primary respondents, the researcher visited them in their respective offices or business premises to make appointments and requests for an appointment with them. This request was followed by asking their consent to conduct a face to face semi-structured interview with their families at their home and for businesses at their premises either in the evening of week days or on weekends. The businesses (food manufacturers and retailers) were selected based on their suitability for the research and their willingness to participate. They were asked to sign a consent form to ascertain their willingness to participate in the interview process. The researcher asked the managers to provide the names of the employees within their organisations that might be willing to participate in the research process. This identification process enabled the researcher to also establish rapport with initial contacts, which was helpful in identifying other families. The researcher then asked their consent for a visit at their homes by asking them for their addresses and telephone numbers. The researcher developed a table to list the names, addresses and telephone numbers of families, who accepted to participate in the interview. A similar approach was used by the interviewer in reaching respondents of food manufacturing and retailing companies in verifying the results obtained from families.

4.3.3 Convenience sampling

This involves selecting those cases that are easiest to obtain for the researcher's sample (Saunders et al, 2014). Adams et al (2014) suggested that convenience sampling is the least reliable design for collecting data, but emphasised that it has the advantage of being cheap, unrestrictive and easy to conduct. Saunders et al (2014) stressed that the sample selection process continues until the required sample size has been reached and this was determined by reviewing the table containing the names, addresses and occupation of interviewees interviewed and by listening to the audio recorder to ensure that all the 20 families (20 husbands and 20 wives) have been covered. Twenty families (20 husbands and 20 wives) were selected in order to get a balanced response and interpretation of the results, and to reduce biasness to the bear minimum, as after the twentieth family the data was saturated. The interviewer used similar approach when interviewing respondents of businesses by ensuring that all the 20 interviewees (4 food manufacturers and 16 food retailers) were covered. In this research, convenient sampling was used because it provided ease of access to different families and businesses without any pre-conditions and also due to costs and time constraints.

4.3.4 Experiential sampling

Riediger (2009) defined experiential sampling as the capturing of experiences such as events, behaviours, feelings, or thoughts at the moment of, or close to, their occurrence, and within the context of a person's everyday life or natural environment. Riediger (2009) classified experiential sampling into various categories, including: interval-contingent sampling (i.e., assessments at fixed points in time, such as before going to bed at night); signal-contingent sampling (i.e., assessments triggered by signals that typically occur at varying time intervals throughout the day and that are given by electronic assessment devices, such as handheld computers); event-contingent sampling (i.e., assessments triggered by the occurrence of pre-specified events, such as expenditures); or ambulatory monitoring of physiological processes or physical activities; the recording of behavioural information; the recording of ambient environmental parameters; or the recording of the individual's geographical locations. In this research, the recording of behaviours by meeting families and businesses in their specific settings were used as it provided the opportunity for the researcher to see first-hand the

meanings ascribed to the way families and businesses behave when interacting socially at dinner times or with customers in their natural settings.

Riediger (2009) noted that there are benefits for using experiential sampling including, the fact that it offers compelling benefits in both methodological (immediacy of the measurement, and the fact that it takes place in the participants' natural environments) and conceptual (the provision of insights into the role of daily-life contexts for the target phenomena under study) perspectives. Beck (2015) noted that the fact that the information is collected within the natural context of the participants' day-to-day lives further enhances the validity of the assessment, which offers unique opportunities to understand their experiences and behaviours in their ecological context. Riediger (2009) reiterated that experiential sampling despite its advantages; poses a serious challenge to researchers due to its resource demanding nature. He also warned that experiential sampling results in retrospective memory biases and aggregation effects that impair the validity of the information assessed.

4.3.5 Impact of snowballing, convenience and experiential samplings on the validity and reliability of the research

It is imperative that just as the use of any sampling techniques in social science research could have debilitating effect on the outcome of the research; it was evident that the use of snowballing, convenience and experiential sampling could have an impact on the outcome of the research. For example, Scherbaum and Shockley (2015) reiterated that the use of snowballing, convenience and experiential sampling requires the researcher to apply subjective judgements by drawing on theory (i.e. academic literature) and practice (i.e. based on the experience of the researcher and the evolutionary nature of the research), which poses the problem of bias and transferability (or validity). However, the researcher ensured that all problems associated with biasness, validity and reliability are reduced to the bear minimum by using triangulation (face to face semi-structured interviews and observations) and by ensuring every participant was interviewed independently and exclusively as well as ensuring that there is variation in social class, regional and ethnic backgrounds of families.

4.3.6 Pilot Study

In the first study, the pilot study was conducted on four families of differing backgrounds to determine the appropriateness of the semi-structured interview protocols. The initial data

collected from the four families were analysed to identify their appropriateness for the study. In the process, the researcher identified a number of questions in the semi-structured interview protocol that needed re-adjustment, including the question on families' income. As a result, it was indicative that minor adjustments were needed to the income category to elevate the earnings of the families to match the true picture of what was prevalent on the ground. The researcher understood from the discussion held during the pilot study that Sierra Leonean families purchase their foodstuffs and prepared their meals on a daily basis, and not on a weekly basis, as first indicated in the personal data developed by the researcher. This was due to the poor electricity condition and the desire of the families to eat their food raw and fresh. The pilot study conducted on families were not included in the final sample of the 20 families (20 husbands and 20 wives) interviewed.

After critically reviewing the research themes and questions, the definition of family social interaction behaviour, household and family were included in the semi-structured interview questions to get a grounded definition of the concepts based on the understanding of the families using their own words. It was also noticed based on observations and discussion with the families during the pilot study that the semi-structured interview questions on one of the themes discussed was duplicated, for example, cultural values and family values. It was also evident during the semi-structured interviews that the question of "what sort of behaviour displayed and what sort of attitude displayed" are closely synonymous and therefore omitted "what sort of attitude displayed" as "what sort of behaviour displayed" was easier for the interviewees to understand. The initial data obtained during the pilot study were coded and analysed to determine whether the research questions and objectives have been met. This eventually led to the third stage of the research process (primary data collection).

In the second phase of the study, which involved food manufacturers and retailers, the interviewer conducted another pilot study to assess interviewees' clarity and ease of understanding of the formulated semi-structured interview protocols based on the results obtained from the first study. A sample of the semi-structured interview protocol for the food producers and retailers, including the themes is depicted in appendix 16. As a consequence, the interviewer selected one food producer and one food retailer to assess the viability of the semi-structured interview protocol. It was clear from the pilot study that the interview protocol designed from the results of the first study was easy to understand and therefore did not need any further adjustments. The pilot study conducted on businesses were not included

in the final sample of the 20 businesses (i.e.16food retailers and 4 food manufacturers) interviewed.

4.3.7 Triangulation

The researcher used a triangulation approach to substantiate the evidence raised from the research. Mok and Clarke (2015) suggested that triangulation in social science research is the mixing of data in order to obtain perspectives from diverse points of view so as to cast light on a topic. This helped the researcher to avoid the problems besieging the use of a mono-approach, which builds trust in the outcome of the research and builds the confidence of the researcher, reader and potentially the end-users about the validity and reliability of the research outcome.

Multiple sources of evidence for triangulation purposes were used, including semi-structured interviews, observations, application of the results from families on businesses and secondary data for the writing of a critical literature review and archival records. The reason why semi-structured interviews were used for the data collection process in the first and second study was due to the difficulty of engaging with working families, food producers and retailers together as a result of their busy schedules. This literally meant that other methods of data collection, for example, focus groups interviews were inappropriate for this research due to the busy agendas of working families and businesses, and the impossibility of assembling them together (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015).

4.3.8 The maintenance and practicalities of Research Ethics

Before going to the field to conduct the study, the researcher obtained ethical approval from the University of Salford Ethics Committee for the conduction of the semi-structured interview. A copy of the letter obtained from the University of Salford Ethics Committee can be found in appendix 17. In addition, before the semi-structured interviews and observations were conducted, the researcher ensured that all the families and food companies signed a consent form to ascertain their willingness to participate in the research process. No translation of the consent form was required as all the families, and food producers and retailers recruited for the research were able to read and write. A copy of the consent form can be found in appendix 9. Therefore, all the selected families and businesses prior to the interviews were given a letter of invitation, participant information sheet and research

instrument, which explained the purpose and nature of the research. This was then followed by asking them to sign the consent form. The researcher ensured that enough time (at least one week notice) was given to the families and businesses to consider whether they were willing to participate in the research or not, or given the freedom and opportunity to ask further questions about the research on issues that were unclear. It was only when appropriate consent had been obtained that an interview was scheduled.

All the data obtained from the field in the form of a manuscript/hard copy and recordings were kept in a locked drawer, while the soft copies were stored in a computer and password protected. Particular care was taken by the researcher to ensure that all removable storage instruments such as USB sticks and audio recorder were stored under lock and key in a protected place at all times. The researcher ensured that anything committed to paper or to the computer - including families' and businesses' personal opinions or information - may have to be retrieved and disclosed to them if they request them formally. The families and businesses were assured by the researcher of the storage and disposal methods of the files after use. The researcher also ensured that the purpose for which the data was processed was made clear to the families and businesses before undertaking the research and the consequences inherent in the processing of the data were clarified - an explanation provided about the people the data was likely to be disclosed to, and details of any other information that might be appropriate under the circumstance of the research. All the respondents and geographic areas involved or included in the research were coded for anonymity and confidentiality by using an appropriate coding system and the original list consisting of the names of families and businesses, who willingly agreed to participate in the semi-structured interviews and observation, were only held and known by the researcher.

4.3.9 Participant and recruitment

All the families and businesses (food producers and retailers) were recruited on a voluntary basis by emphasising to them the freedom to withdraw from the research process at any time. The first 3 days of the first week of the research were used to establish a better rapport with the primary contacts (usually individuals working either as heads of institutions or managers) so as to build familiarity and confidence. As a result, the families and businesses were selected based on availability through these established networks/contacts to serve as a conduit in establishing relationship between the researcher and other members of their

organisations, usually those at the lower end (middle and lower income families). This included: food manufacturing and retailing companies for businesses; while families were selected from various organisations across the country based on their suitability for the research using snow-balling and convenience sampling techniques. This approach eased tension and uncertainty, and reduced any cultural or social barriers that might impede the progress of the research as the interviewees were comfortable and willing to participate after knowing the purpose of the research and the interviewer's background. The creation of a warm and informal relationship potentially promoted trust and friendship, and stimulated the willingness of the interviewees to grant the researcher interview access at their homes or at their business premises. The data collection process lasted for about two months (8 weeks) between March and April, 2014 for the first study and about two weeks for the second study (between 17th and 28th August, 2015). Each interview was scheduled for an hour, but on average the interview lasted between 50 and 55 minutes. As a result, the interviews for the first study were scheduled for two members of each family, usually married couple (husband and wife), whilst the interview for the second study involved recruiting a selected member or employee of a known company.

In the first study, the date and time for each scheduled interview were agreed with each interviewee. This was followed by the formulation of a table to list the names of those who agreed to participate in the interview; the date and time of the scheduled interview; their telephone numbers; and their occupations and the organisations they work for in order to assist the researcher contact the interviewees before coming for any scheduled interviews. This approach gave the researcher the opportunity to clearly discern their religious and ethnic backgrounds, before checking their suitability for the interview process. The addresses were also recorded for the researcher to refer to them whenever needed to facilitate easy access to the interviewees and as a recall instrument. Critical attention was also given to the religious and marital backgrounds of the interviewees as this ensured a fair representation of the sample obtained from the differing social groups. This was done in order to ensure equal proportional representation of the two religious groups (Christians and Muslims), and ensure that the couples interviewed were married in order to achieve the objectives of the research, including: determining the influence of religion on families meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone; evaluating the impact of ethnicity on families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone; determining the influence of reference groups on families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone; analysing the impact of conformity on families'

meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone; evaluating the impact of social class on families meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone; determining the interaction/association between the factors that influences family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone ; and developing a schematic summary of the results to guide family meal social interaction behaviour in the Sierra Leonean collectivist context.

The second study involves application of the results of the first study on businesses. The interviewer ensured that the date and time for each scheduled interview were agreed with each interviewee. This was followed by the formulation of a table to list the names of those who agreed to participate in the interview; the date and time of the scheduled interview; their telephone numbers; and their occupations and the organisations they work for, their length of service with the organisation, and their responsibilities in order to assist the researcher contact the interviewees before coming for any scheduled interviews and to get a clear picture of the role the perform in their respective organisation. The interviewer also obtained information about the various companies identified and selected as potential participants, including: the type of food they manufacture or retail; the number of people employed; the life span of the company; and the ownership type, which gives the interviewer an insight into the sustainability and survival of the company overtime. The companies (food producers and retailers) were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the interview and initial contacts were established through other food producers or retailers.

All the interviews were conducted either on weekends or late in the evening on week days due to the busy schedules of the interviewees. It is worth noting that a number of the interviewees created difficulties before the interviews were conducted, for example, the inability to keep to agreed dates and times as most Sierra Leonean families do not keep itinerary of daily appointments, whilst some cancelled their appointments completely either due to their busy schedules, scared of the rigours involved in the interviews or lack of self-confidence. The interviewer selected families and businesses based on how convenient it was to reach them in order to narrate their 'lived experiences'. The advantage of the convenient and experiential sampling is that they are easy to access, provide rich source of information and cheaper to conduct, but have the downside of being prone to bias such as selecting the wrong interviewee, which might be beyond the control of the interviewer (Saunders et al., 2014). This implies that some of the sample selected may not reflect the true picture of families' and businesses, which can affect the validity and reliability of the research. It is essential to emphasise that, despite the validity and reliability issues associated with

convenient and experiential sampling, it was ensured that the families and businesses selected bear the right characteristics of the larger populace in terms of religious and cultural backgrounds, income groups and ethnicity (Adams et al., 2014). This was overcome by asking the interviewees to complete a personal information template that clearly outlines their religious, marital, cultural, income and ethnic backgrounds.

4.3.10 Credibility of Research findings

Yin (2014) suggested that validity; reliability and generalisability are useful instruments for use by any researcher in ensuring the quality of data, research design and the overall accuracy of the research outcomes. The themes covered during the interview process were discussed with each member of the family and food producer/retailer independently and agreed with them. The researcher ensured that only married couples (husband and wives) and food producers/retailers were interviewed and the purpose of the interview was discussed with each family and business. A step by step discussion of validity, reliability and generalisability as applied in this research is discussed below.

4.3.11 Reliability of the research

Hallinger et al (2013) defined reliability as the extent to which the researcher's data collection techniques or analytical procedures yield consistent findings. In comparison, Jones et al (2013) defined reliability from a qualitative perspective, as the truth of the findings established by ensuring that they are supported by sufficient and compelling evidence. Bryman (2013) and Bryman (2015) noted that the fact that qualitative researchers do not normally employ any formal or precise systems of measurement in social science research does not mean less reliability, and suggested that, the concept of reliability is related to the rigour with which the researcher has approached the tasks of data collection and analysis and the care with which the report describes in detail the methods that have been employed – including, especially, some discussion of how critical decisions were made and how accurate the methodology was carried out. Norris et al (2015) defined reliability from a quantitative perspective as the degree to which an instrument provides the same measurement, each time it is used under the same condition with the same subjects, and emphasised that it is more about consistency and reproducibility. However, Saunders et al (2009) warned that participant or subject error, participant or subject bias, observer error and observer bias are

the key threats to reliability. As a result, the researcher ensured best practice by trying to understand and verify the various sources of errors such as misunderstanding the questions or answers that may affect the research and then design the research themes taking into cognisance these errors (for example, subject error, observer error and misunderstanding of questions or answers) that may affect the outcome of the research by giving the interviewees the freedom to speak as they desire, by dressing informally and by ensuring that the interview followed a natural 'conversation' style. In order to reduce biases to the bear minimum, the researcher established good rapport with the interviewees, which eventually built trust and confidence between the two.

In this research, consistent, sufficient and compelling evidence were achieved through the use of triangulation or multiple approaches to enhance the reliability of the study, including the use of semi-structured interviews and observations and verifying the results obtained from the first study on businesses. The family and food producer/retailer were interviewed on a one-to-one basis, independently and exclusively, to minimise the opportunity of conferring with each other. Rigorous steps were employed in the field when the data was collected, including the taking of field notes during the semi-structured face to face interviews coupled with the use of an audio recorder for every conversation held with the various families and businesses to ensure that the data collected are reliable, consistent and compelling. In the first study, the behaviours of the participants were also observed during this process and recorded in the researcher's field note book/note pad. It was evident that, observations reflected practice and interview comments, and it is imperative from the findings in the first study as well as the results obtained from the second study that the research outcomes are reliable and dependable with compelling evidence. A number of credibility theorists emphasised three aspects for achieving reliability, including: consistent and sufficient findings, compelling evidence, rigour of data collection and analysis, all of which were employed in this research (Charmaz, 2014; and Dempsey and McDonagh, 2014).

4.3.12 Validity of the research

Yin (2014) and Yom (2014) suggested that the validity of any research is dependent on the strength of its conclusion, inferences or propositions made by the researcher. In other words, Yin (2014) suggested that validity depends on the degree of accuracy of the researcher's measurement. Flick (2014) identified four types of validity commonly examined in research methods: internal validity (the variable intended for the study is the one affecting the results

and not the unwanted variables); external validity (the extent to which the results of the study can be generalised/applied to other people); construct validity (determines whether the operational definition of a variable actually reflect the true theoretical meaning of a concept); and conclusion validity (degree to which conclusions we reach about relationships in our data are reasonable). As a consequence, the researcher maximised these perspectives (internal, external, construct and conclusion validities) in the study, which ensured that unwarranted variables were eradicated and the data were triangulated, factual and reasonable in order to reduce/eliminate errors or biasness that may affect the research outcomes. In another study, Adams et al (2014) warned researchers about the threats posed by internal validity, including history; maturation; testing; instrumentation; selection; and mortality as well as external validity, including: reactive effects of testing; reactive effects of selection; and reactive effects of experiment setting.

To enhance the validity of this research, the researcher modified and discussed Merriam's (2014) model to accentuate the validity of the research, which is depicted in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: A modified research validation strategies of Merriam's model

Validation strategies	Method adopted in the current research
Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field	The researcher employed critical observation of families' actions, events that unfolded during mealtimes and the behaviours of family as they interact socially during mealtimes at the dinner table
Triangulation	The researcher employed multiple methods when collecting the primary data such as the use of semi-structured interviews and observations to enhance the validity of the research. In order to accentuate and strengthen the validity of the results, a second study was conducted on businesses, which reflected almost similar outcomes.
Peer reviews or debriefing	This research has gone through a number of rigorous and verification processes from a number of sources, including: the three previous supervisors supervising the researcher (all of them PhD. holders) and the current one (also a PhD. holder) that cross-checked the validity of the research and held critical discussion with the researcher at intervals to raise critical issues with the researcher. It was also subjected to rigorous checks by a professor and PhD. holder during the interim review and internal evaluation to enhance validity. The same process was used before the data collection process and after the data collection process. The researcher also ensured that other PhD. colleagues provided inputs to the research process either in workshops, conferences or in the PhD. common room to get consistent feedbacks and criticisms and identify areas for improvements.

Refining research questions as the inquiry advances	The results of the pilot study and the subsequent research conducted prompted the researcher to modify the research questions to ensure that they appropriately address the research objectives. For example, the question on "what aspects of the determinants of collectivism influence family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?' was changed to 'what is the influence of religion on family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone?' and the researcher's current supervisor also requested for modifications in certain areas of the research questions in both the first on families and second study on businesses.
Clarifying researcher bias from the outset of the study	From the outset, the researcher ensured that before, during and after the data collection process, bias that may emanate from the interviewer and the interviewee in the field or during the transcription and analysis processes were eradicated or reduce to the bear minimum by ensuring that the views provided during the course of the research were absolutely those of the interviewees (families) and businesses (food producers/retailers).
The researcher solicits participants' views of the validity of the findings and interpretations	This research was put through a panel of experts to check the validity of the research during the internal assessment. The researcher also attended conferences (for example, SPARC) and seminars (PhD. Workshops) to subject the research to criticism to enhance its external validity. It also obtained ethical approval from the University of Salford Ethics Committee. During the field research, the researcher solicited the views of families and businesses about the validity of the questions asked and the responses provided showed that all the families and businesses were happy with the questions posed, but expressed concern about the lengthiness of the interviews.
Rich and thick description	In the first study, semi-structured face to face qualitative interviews and observations were used during the process of conducting the research to probe and solicit detailed, rich and exhaustive information on the themes from the families on their social interaction behaviours at mealtimes. This was done in order to achieve the research aims and objectives. In the second study, a semi-structured qualitative approach was similarly employed to verify the results obtained from families on businesses in order to accentuate the outcome of the results and ensure that they are valid, rich and true reflection of events as narrated by the interviewees
External audits	The research was subjected to external auditing during the internal assessment, conferences attended by the researcher and the VIVA. The professors or doctors that were appointed as auditors are not part of the research process and their independent contributions or judgement were invaluable and helped insure the validity of the research.

Source: Adopted from Merriam, 2014

It is evident from Table 4.3 that the validity of any research is measured by the level of involvement and engagement of the researcher in the entire research process coupled with the researcher's ability in using multiple sources to authenticate his/her findings (Bryman and Bell, 2015). In addition, validity of any research can be dependent on the extent to which it is exposed to the views of multiple audiences to critique and identify flaws inherent in it and degree of modification and fine-tuning employed by the researcher in making the research protocols/questions suitable and fitting for the respondents (Bryman and Bell, 2015). As a consequence, Yüksel and Yıldırım (2015) emphasised that it is always vital for the researcher to validate the outcomes of his/her research by ensuring that he eliminates or reduces biases that may emanate from the interviewer and interviewees, including those that might occur when transcribing or analysing data.

Invariably, validity can also be measured by the extent to which the research is subjected to external views or censorships by peers, experts and professionals in the subject area and its ability to withstand those censorships and rigors (Ferreira et al, 2015). In addition, the validity of any qualitative research can be determined by the degree of richness and thickness of the information collected and the level of competence of the researcher to exhaustively describe the events or situations as narrated by the interviews using their own words in ascribing meanings to them (Collett, 2015; and Smith, 2015). As a consequence, Bryman and Bell (2015); Morse (2015); and Power and Gendron (2015) established that it is imperative for any good qualitative research to be subjected to external auditors that are independent to help identify and eliminate any bias or weakness inherent in the research. In this study, the researcher ensured that he was constantly engaged with the interviewees; used multiple sources in collecting the data; exposed the research to criticism from various audiences; ensured that the data collected were rich, detailed and robust; and exhaustively described.

To make the research valid, the researcher ensured that the research was subjected to all the various stages identified and discussed above in order to eliminate or reduce any weaknesses inherent in the study.

4.3.13 Generalisability

A number of qualitative researchers have substituted the concept of generalisability to transferability (Candy et al, 2014; Finfgeld-Connett, 2014; and Tavakol and Sandars, 2014). Baltes et al (2014); and Seidel and Watson (2014) defined generalisability as the degree to

which the research findings are applicable to other settings, emphasising that unless some generalisation is done to research studies, knowledge cannot be pushed further. Power and Gendron (2014) pointed to doubts expressed by other researchers (for example, Adams et al, 2014) about generalising the results of qualitative research studies. In this research, the distrusts were reduced by using multiple approaches in collecting the data and embracing different approaches (clear description of the samples and rich description of the data collected, field sites and events) to enhance the generalisability of the research results beyond the geographical boundaries identified in the research. In addition, generalisability was further enhanced when the results of the first study conducted on families reflected similar picture when used on businesses (food producers and retailers). In the first study, the researcher ensured that different provinces and families of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds with differing social classes were involved in the interview process, which ensured that data was obtained from different perspectives. In the second study, a similar approach was used when applying the results on businesses by ensuring that the data obtained from the various entities are divergent and covers different perspectives. In a recent study, Merriam (2014) and Yin (2014) alluded to this view, and suggested two approaches for generalisability, including clear description of the sample selection criteria and rich description of the research sites. The researcher ensured that each of the acclaimed generalisability approaches, including snowballing and convenience sampling for selecting families and businesses through established networks with dissimilar backgrounds were used. This ensured that the sampling process had a clear description of the sample selection criteria and the samples included relevant families and businesses from the four provincial headquarters towns (Western Area, Northern province, Southern province and Eastern province) of Sierra Leone (Freetown, Makeni, Bo and Kenema), which are representative and mirror image of the country's population. Thus, the samples and sites selected for this study are similar to the population across the country, which reflects their characteristics and behavioural patterns.

4.4 Implications of the research methodology on the study

The implication of the study on the research philosophy is that it provides an insight into the philosophy appropriate for the research, which guided the outcome of the research and helped define the direction and/or thinking of the researcher. It provided an opportunity for the

researcher to understand the various research stages and how their use may significantly influence the outcome of the research and ensure an in-depth understanding of Sierra Leonean families' and businesses' social construct. It also guided the researcher in determining the approach that was appropriate in conducting the research and enhances his capability in understanding how the approach can be used by the researcher in generalising his findings. This helped the researcher in the identification of the various steps that the research goes through and raises the researcher's awareness by outlining the various factors that acted as impediments to the smooth functioning of the entire research process. It further provided suggestions as to the purpose of undertaking such a study by giving the researcher an insight into the phenomena under study and the strategy appropriate for the research.

The research methodology provided a useful insight into the methods that were used by the researcher in collecting the data from the field and the essence of using multiple approaches (triangulation) to enhance the validity, reliability and dependability of the research results. The study further provided the flexibility for the researcher to understand the essence or usefulness of a pilot study and how that might impact on the outcome of the research, which guided the researcher in determining the appropriate approach that was suitable for analysing his data and/or identifying pitfalls. It can be suggested that the sampling techniques used by the researcher determined the degree of ease or difficulty encountered by him in reaching his audiences and the choice of sampling technique also determined the outcome of the research.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The chapter has discussed the various schools of thought of research philosophy and the research stages, an explanation of the underpinning philosophy of the research, clearly outlining the justification for the choice of such a philosophy. An evaluation of the different data collection methods, including the following: semi-structured interviews and observations, their advantages and disadvantages, and the justification for the selected interview method have been discussed. The sampling methods used in collecting the field data, including: the sampling techniques: snowballing, convenience and experiential sampling were also discussed. The next chapter of the research focused on the analysis and interpretation of the research results.

<center>**Chapter five**</center>

<center>**Results and Analysis**</center>

5.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present an analysis of the results and findings obtained from the primary data, and discuss the schematic summary of the results. The chapter highlights the similarities and differences inherent in the themes as espoused by families and businesses (food producers and retailers).

The results and findings of this chapter are divided into two key sections, including semi-structured interviews and observations made by the interviewer during interviews with families; and a discussion of the implication of the results obtained from families on food manufacturers and retailers. The chapter is structured into five key sections, including religion; ethnicity; conformity; reference groups; and social class. The themes reflect the objectives of the study, with each objective/theme sub-divided into sub-sections in order to provide a detailed discussion of their influence on families and businesses' behaviours.

Phase I of the study – Families' meal consumption behaviour

The first phase of this research covers the broader aspects of the factors that influence collectivist families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone as summarised and depicted in Figures 3.1 and 5.1. The schematic diagram in Figure 5.1 presents the findings that are unique to this study, which are its contributions to knowledge. This can be juxtaposed and compared with the arguments of prior researchers in the schematic diagram in Figure 3.1. In addressing the gap (see Table 3.1) of families' meal social interaction behaviour, the researcher carried out forty in-depth semi-structured interviews during the first phase of the study. The study utilised a similar method of analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke's (2013) by transcribing the data collected from families and coding interesting features, identifying initial themes from which definitive themes were developed. The results from the forty interviews are presented and analysed in this section of the study.

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5.2 The schematic summary of results

Figure 5.1 is a schematic representation of collectivism and family meal social interaction behaviour, which depicts a summary of the unique findings obtained from the field research. It is a reflection of issues identified as themes during the qualitative analysis as factors affecting families' meal social interaction behaviours in Sierra Leone. The sub-themes that emerged from each theme and their depictions as a schematic diagram are detailed and presented in appendix 15.

The schematic representation of this study's contribution to knowledge was developed from the themes that emerged from the research findings by interviewing families in their natural settings. The schematic summary was analysed thematically based on the gaps identified in the literature and by comparing what was obtained from the primary data with those posited by prior studies. This allowed the similarities and differences inherent in each theme to be highlighted and formed the basis of the contributions of the research.

The themes were developed in no particular order, but emerged organically and following iterations, they were developed into themes. Figure 5.1 was designed in the form of a 'Venn diagram' to clearly show how the factors/themes interact with each other in the form of a web. This suggests that each factor in the framework has a network relationship with the others, and that their interaction and significance continually changes depending on circumstances.

Figure 5. 1: A schematic representation of collectivism and family meal social interaction behaviour from semi-structured interview findings

Religion
- Food ethics
- Respect/deference
- Affection
- Gender differentiation
- Hierarchy
- Education
- Family religious values

Ethnicity
- Family religious values
- Food ethics
- Education
- Hierarchy
- Affection
- Gender differentiation

Family meal behaviour
- Family religious values
- Food ethics
- Authority
- Family cohesion

Communication
- Education
- Self-development
- Food ethics
- Respect

Collectivism

Conformity
- Education
- Family cohesion
- Family development
- Participation
- Responsibility
- Direction
- Success
- Food ethics
- Affection
- Family religious values
- Relationship building

Social class
- Affordability
- Family cohesion
- Punctuality/attendance
- Participation
- Social etiquette
- Enlightenment
- Food ethics
- Self-development

Reference Groups
- Hierarchy/authority
- Task distinction
- Gender differentiation
- Education
- Affection
- Economic/social costs
- Planning
- Social benefits
- Family cohesion
- Associates

Source: Adapted by the author – Kakay, S. (2016)

5.3 Analysis of the results of family meal social interaction behaviour

This section presents the results and analysis of the findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews and observations made by the researcher during the interviews. The interviewer joined seven families at their dinner table to create an interview ambience that made the families relaxed and accept the interviewer as part of the family (sometimes before the interviews started and some other times after the interview). Joining the families at their dinner table provided an opportunity for the interviewer to record in the field notebook some of their behaviours during and after mealtimes. A tabular summary of the findings obtained from various interviewees, including observations, and themes of commonalities and differences that emerged from the study were noted. As a consequence, it gave the researcher the opportunity to present a comparative summary and analysis of the views of the interviewees, including contextualising quotations alongside observations made. The observations are used as supporting evidence for the semi-structured interviews, which helped collaborate and reinforce the research outcome and justify the use of multiple sources of data collected - the triangulation perspective of the study.

The sub-themes of each objective/theme of the study are presented in a tabular format, which is structured based on the interview protocols, including the observations made by the interviewer. The table also provides a comparative summary of the views of Muslim and Christian females as well as Muslim and Christian males. The table was further structured to provide a comparative summary of the findings from each of the gender groupings, including sample quotations. The implication of this is that it provided the researcher with the opportunity to identify, evaluate and analyse commonalities and differences within and across religions as well as gender groups. As a consequence, the meanings of the terminologies obtained from the primary data, which are embedded as themes of commonalities from the various groups (Muslim wives, Christian wives, Muslim husbands, Christian husbands) are presented in the glossary (see appendix 14).

5.4 Theme 1 – Religion: Objective 1 - Determine the influence of religion on families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone

This section of the research discusses how religion as a doctrine affects the families' meal social interaction behaviour by outlining the various antecedents that families view as critical when having social discourse at mealtimes. Spiritual beliefs, cultural values, traditional practices and social bonding were identified as the sub-themes from the data as the main issues affecting religion of the Sierra Leonean families at mealtimes. A detailed discussion of each of the sub-theme is held in the subsequent sections.

5.4.1 Spiritual beliefs

Spiritual belief in this study involves: the religious beliefs; food ethics; respect and affection; gender distinction; hierarchical credence; socialisation and education espoused by families in their meal behaviours.

Q.1	In what ways does this spiritual belief influence the way your family interact at the dinner table?
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: prayer; respect; provider; food ethics; food type; gratification; religious beliefs Differences were reflected in the following areas: protection; family unity; gender distinction; obedience; God's presence; fasting; kneeling down; posture; dress code; boundaries
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: prayer; provider; respect; gratification; food ethics; religious beliefs; family unity Differences were reflected in the areas of humility; success; responsibility; direction; God's presence; religious faith; fearing God; way of life; food wastage; relationship building; harmony; love; sharing
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: prayers; provider; respect; gratification; food type; religious beliefs Differences were reflected in the following areas: truthfulness; cultural beliefs/values; humility; food ethics; religious beliefs; God's presence; love
	Christian Males:

	Themes in common were: prayer; provider; gratification; religious beliefs; blessing Differences were reflected in the following domain: respect; humility; saviour; responsibility; family cohesion/unity; God's presence; moral beliefs; fasting; fearing God; love; bonding
Observational data	A number of the interviewees observed silence at mealtimes. It was also observed that some of the interviewees said 'bismillahi' or the Lord's prayer in silence before eating. The members of some family used spoons when eating. The children thanked both the mother and father and any elder present after eating
Comparative summary of the findings	In comparing the food religious behaviours of Muslim and Christian females, the results show that commonalities existed in the areas of prayers, God is the provider, respect, food ethics, gratifying God and family religious beliefs as reflected in the views of the 7th 17th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 35th, 37th, and 39th interviewees for Muslim females and 1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 23rd, 27th and 29th interviewees for Christian females. For example: "*Well, I teach my children to pray before their meal, I also teach them to pray after their meal and ask God to provide for us and also ask him to provide for the breadwinner. We also ask God to promote my business, and I believe that God is making that provision as it is evident in everything we are currently doing...when we are at the dinner table we expect everybody to be silent and behave appropriately- no talking is allowed during dinner. After praying we sit down quietly and eat...*" Interviewee 9, Female, Christian Despite the overwhelming similarities shared by Muslim and Christian females, there were marked differences in terms of the type of food consumed by each sect as the Christian females were more pragmatic and open to the consumption of all kinds of foodstuffs, whilst the Muslim females were selective and restrictive in their food choice. This is reflected in the following statements: "*Well, we normal say bismillahi before we start eating. For us as Muslims we believe God is the provider of anything we have in this world. We also believe that without him you will not be able to secure your daily bread and whatever you want in the world without the blessings of the almighty Allah. Also, as Muslims we are not allowed to eat anything uncleaned such as pork, monkey or other bush animals that have not been properly killed with the name of God pronounced on it. so that affects the way we interact at the dinner table*" Interviewee 21, Female, Muslim Juxtaposing the food religious values of Muslim and Christian males, it was evident that they broadly shared a number of common values such as prayer, God is the provider, gratification and religious beliefs as espoused in

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<td>the statements of 8th, 18th, 20th, 22nd, 34th, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees for Muslim males; and the 2nd, 4th, 6th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30[th]interviewees in the case of the Christian males. For example:

"I believe prayer has a great influence in everything we do, particularly before taking your meal. Calling upon the lord means we are thankful to God for having that meal. The belief we have as a family is that God and Christ has provided for the family because there is a saying in the bible – "provide us with our daily bread" and if that daily bread is provided to you, you have to say thanks and praise to God for what has been given to you".

Interviewee 6, Male, Christian

Despite the shared similarities, there were marked differences in terms of the type of food consumed as the Christian males just as the Christian females, were more open to variety in their food choices; Muslim males, just as their female counterparts, were more restrictive in the type of food consumed. This is reflected in the following statements:

"Spiritually, religiously and of course I am a Muslim and as Muslims we have certain believe that there are certain foods we should abstain from such as chimpanzees, monkeys, even though they are delicious and proteinous foods, but we do go away from them, pigs inclusive, we do not take alcohol and even our mode of dressing. If you see your girl child dressed in short shirts in Africa, not only Africa, but more in terms of our religion, we do frown at those sorts of behaviours. So I think it has some effect on the way we interact at the dinner table".

Interviewee 22, Male, Muslim</td>
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Key: MF: Muslim Female; CF: Christian Female; MM: Muslim Male; CM: Christian Male

5.4.2 Cultural values

Cultural values in this study are the generally accepted standard of behaviour expected from each member of a family at mealtimes, including: food ethics; reverence for each other; hierarchy; gender differentiation; affection; and religious beliefs.

<table>
<tr>
<td>**Q.2**</td>
<td>**What cultural values influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table?**</td>
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<td>**Muslim Females:**

Themes in common were: respect; gratification; prayer; food ethics; gender distinction

Differences were reflected in the following domains: food type; unity; politeness; sense of responsibility; hierarchy; anti-social behaviour;</td>
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	kneeling down; Meal sharing; comportment; lion share; authority
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: respect; prayer; food ethics; task distinction; gratification Differences were reflected in the following domains: hierarchy; politeness; obedience; sympathy; meal sharing; peace; greetings; love; lion share; self-identity; spiritual growth; blessing food
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: respect; prayers; authority/control; food ethics; meal sharing Differences were reflected in the following areas: sympathy; unity; family image; sense of responsibility; values; love; gratification
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: food ethics; respect; family unity; meal sharing; prayers Differences were reflected in the following domain: boundaries; sense of responsibility; obedience; values; hierarchy; gratification; love; comportment; understanding; cordiality; friendliness; spiritual growth; blessing food; revered God
Observational data	Silence was observed at mealtimes by a majority of families. Prayer was also observed by a majority of families. The children of most families thanked their parents after the meal. However, it was observed that a few families do not attach credence to thanking them, as their children did not do so after meal.
Comparative summary of the findings	Comparatively, there was overwhelming commonality in terms of the cultural values shared by each sect on issues such as respect, gratifying God and parents, prayer and food ethics as reflected in the views of the 7th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 37th and 39th interviewees for Muslim females; and the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 23rd, 27th and 29th interviewees for the Christian females. For example: *"Well, culturally we believe in silence during dinner, we expect people to say bismillahi before eating, we expect the children to wash their hands before eating, expect them to say thank you to both parents or any elder present thank you after eating, especially if the elder is contributing to the provision or cooking of the food, we expect everybody to be respectful to each other through the dinner, and we expect women to eat separately from men".* Interviewee 33, Female, Muslim Despite the overwhelming shared commonalities, there were differences in terms of gender distinction and task distinction. The Muslim females (17th, 21st, 33rd, 37th, 39th interviewees) were emphatic in their views about the

separation of males from females at mealtimes, whilst the Christian females (3rd, 9th, 11th, 13th, 27th interviewees) highlighted task distinction as critical in their food behaviours. This is reflected in the following statement:

"As Muslims, we are exempted from eating things that the Quran proclaimed that they are forbidden as part of the food or drink we take in such as alcohol or wine at dinner, pork meat, dog meat, cat meat or bush meat. These are seen in Islam as forbidden and uncleaned and anybody that eats it will not see the corridors of heaven. We also expect people to be quiet when taking their meals, to wash their hands before joining the dinner table, though in our family we mostly use spoon at the dinner table, men eat together from a common bowl, while women eat together from a common bowl separate from the men, we expect everybody to say bismillahi when eating".

Interviewee 37, Female, Muslim

In comparing the cultural values of Muslim and Christian males, it was evident that respect, prayers and meal sharing were cultural values both denominations shared as reflected in the views of the 18th, 20th, 26th, 32nd, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees for the Muslim husbands; and 2nd, 4th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 24th and 28th interviewees for the Christian males. This is reflected in the following statements:

"The main cultural values in my family are respect for elders. As a result, after dinner the children are expected to say thank you to the giver and preparer of the meal. Secondly, they must say thanks and praise to God for what they have eaten on a specific day. Respect for elders, eating together, no talking when eating and cleanliness at the dinner table – clean hands".

Interviewee 6, Male, Christian

Despite the shared commonalities between the two sects, it is evident that a majority of the Muslim males were inclined to emphasise authority/control as a predominant cultural value in their families' meal behaviour, whilst a majority of the Christian males placed emphasis on family unity as a predominant cultural value in their families' meal behaviour. This is reflected in the following statement:

"Well, as Muslims the way we eat together is that they dish in a very big bowl where all of us will put our hands together as men and during the process the oldest one among you will control whatever meat or whatever condiments is on top of that food. So you don't have to reach for that particular meat until it is being divided among you all equally. But you have to respect the rules and regulations of the elders while eating".

Interviewee 18, Male, Muslim

5.4.3 Traditional practices

Traditional practices in this study refer to the customary practices of families that are influenced by their culture or sub-culture and/or their social group or cultural settings/environment, including: food ethics; affection; modernity; respect; family religious values; hierarchy; and gender distinction.

Q.3	What traditional practices influence your family's meal social interaction pattern at the dinner table?
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: food ethics; gratification; prayer; sense of responsibility; sympathy Differences were reflected in the following domain: family unity; respect; obedience; politeness; gender distinction; peace; kneeling down; Islamic values
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: prayers Differences were reflected in the following domains: respect; food ethics; hierarchy; humility; responsibility; kneeling down
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: prayers; food ethics; respect; gratification Differences were reflected in the following areas: control; family unity; provider; truthfulness; togetherness; responsibility; cooperation; fearing God; Islamic values; God provider
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: food ethics; respect; control; prayers Differences were reflected in the following domain: sense of responsibility; modernity; sympathy; sharing; family unity; togetherness; appreciation; witchcraft
Observational data	In a majority of families, it was observed that females ate separately from males. Members of the family washed their hands from a common bowl. The families said prayers before eating and silence was observed throughout the dinner. The females were observed bringing food to the dinner table for the males. The children thanked the parents after dinner. Females cleaned and cleared the table of dishes after eating.
Comparative summary of the findings	Comparing the traditional practices of Muslim and Christian females, the findings show that they share commonality only in prayers as most Christian females (1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 13th, 27th and 29th interviewees) indicated that traditional practices do not influence their families' meal behaviour, whilst Muslim females (7th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th and

39thinterviewees) commonly shared food ethics, gratifying parents, prayers, sense of responsibility and sympathy as being central in their traditional practices. For example:

"Just as I said, the younger ones fetch water to the dinner table before meal, the children say thank you after meal, prayers before eating, quietness is expected from everybody when eating, sympathy and politeness at the dinner table".

Interviewee 1, Female, Christian

A majority of the Muslim and Christian males share commonalities in the area of prayers, respect and food ethics as reflected in the views of the 18th, 22nd, 26th, 32nd, 34th, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees for Muslim males and the 2nd, 4th, 6th, 10, 12th, 14th, 24th and 28th interviewees for the Christian males. This is reflected in the following statement:

"Well, before eating, we expect everybody to wash their hands, we expect everybody to be silent when eating, we expect everybody to respect each other and particularly elders, and we expect everybody to say bismillahi before putting the food in his/her mouth".

Interviewee 36, Male, Muslim

However, there are marked differences between the two denominations (Christian and Muslim males) in the area of control and parental gratification as a majority of Muslim males are more inclined to expect gratification from their children after a meal, whilst the Christian males are inclined to implement control at mealtimes. For example:

"I am a Muslim, so we strictly follow Islamic norms. Before eating you have to pray and before you do anything you have to pray first. After eating you say thanks to the almighty God".

Interviewee 26, Male, Muslim

5.4.4 Social bonding

Social bonding in this study is the degree of closeness established by each family either internally within the family or externally with others in their natural settings, including: socialisation; reverence; affection; education; food ethics; and family religious values.

Q.4	In what ways does social bonding influence your family's social interaction pattern at meal times?
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: food ethics; moral education; control Differences were reflected in the following domains: respect; advice source; family image; prayer; participation; happiness; training; preaching; learning; sharing ideas; modern approaches; direction; food type
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: family unity; respect; affection; prayer Differences were reflected in the following domains: meal sharing; compatibility; sympathy; sense of responsibility; social bonding; love
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: cultural values; sharing; family unity; togetherness; prayer Differences were reflected in the following areas: respect; control; family image; social group; understanding; peace; success; food type
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: family unity; sharing; togetherness; prayer Differences were reflected in the following domain: obedience; values; sense of belonging; social event; community gathering; oneness; cordiality; raising awareness; communication
Observational data	In one of the families, a pastor was observed joining the family at mealtimes. Lengthy prayer before eating was observed. The male child was asked to eat separately from his dad. The pastor and dad ate together and silence was observed throughout the dinner. After dinner a lengthy discussion was held. The wife cleared the table after meal.
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the Muslim females (17th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th) highlighted food ethics, moral education and control as the main ingredients of social bonding, which is contrary to the views of a majority of Christian females (1st, 3rd, 5th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 23rd and 27th), who emphasised family unity, respect, affection and prayers as being central to their families' meal behaviour. For example: *"Just as I have said, we are Christians and we expect our children to respect elders, we expect them to pray before taking their meal, to ensure*

| | *that if there is food, it should be shared among every member of the family as a unit, and the religious aspects of our lives has also been transferred into our family".*

Interviewee 15, Female, Christian

"… It normally educates you, which you can transfer to your family at the dinner table. It teaches us what to do and what not to do at the dinner table. Through social bonding we are able to establish control and reinforce religious beliefs at the dinner table. When you associate with people …you will learn a lot of new things… it is educative and you will learn about what is right and what is wrong and the right way to behave".

Interviewee 39, Female, Muslim

Family unity, prayer, togetherness and meal sharing are commonalities emphasised by a majority of the Muslim (8th, 20th, 22nd, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (2nd, 6th, 12th, 16th and 24th interviewees) males as influencers of their families' food behaviour. This is reflected in the following statement:

"…we believe in sharing, because we believe in give and take…it brings us together and gives us the opportunity to interact with other people in the community"

Interviewee 24, Male, Christian

However, there are differences in terms of cultural values as a majority of the Muslim males see social bonding as a way of sharing their values with others as reflected in the following statement:

"…social bonding plays a great role in shaping the behaviour of the children and it is also a way of teaching the children our cultural values".

Interviewee 40, Male, Muslim |
|---|---|

5.5 Theme 2 – Ethnicity: Objective 2 - Evaluate the impact of ethnicity on families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone

The Theme ethnicity is categorised into various sub-groups, including: tribe; region of origin; cultural beliefs; assumptions; and identity, which are individually discussed below:

5.5.1 Tribe

A tribe in this study refers to people belonging to the same social or familial groups with kinship networks and share a common language, beliefs, practices and values, and usually comes from the same region, including: city; community; village; or town.

Q.5	**In what ways does your tribe influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table?**
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: identity Differences were reflected in the following domains: cultural values; respect; gratifying parents; food ethics
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: modernity; identity Differences were reflected in the following domains: hierarchy; respect; food ethics; family unity; sense of belonging
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: respect; acceptance Differences were reflected in the following areas: authority; family unity; food ethics
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: food ethics; respect Differences were reflected in the following domain: tolerance; obedience; sharing; freedom of expression; politeness
Observational data	No observation came up as relevant tribal factor(s)
Comparative summary of the findings	A significant number of the Muslim (31st, 33rd, 35th and 37th interviewees) and Christian (3rd, 5th, 9th and 27th interviewees) females shared commonality in the area of identity as a tribal influencing factor in their families' meal behaviour. This is reflected in the following statement: *"...we encourage our children to speak temne from time to time at the dinner table to enable them become accustomed to our language and culture. We do this to make them culturally linked with our people and the region we come from".* Interviewee 33, Female, Muslim However, a majority of the Muslim (7th, 17th, 19th, 25th and 39thinterviewees) and Christian (1st, 11th, 13th, 23rd and 29th interviewees) females reiterated that tribe has no impact on their families' interaction at mealtimes as reflected in the following statement: *"No, my tribe does not in any way influence our interaction as a family at the dinner table".* Interviewee 1, Female, Christian

	Respect for elders was a common view shared by a majority of the Muslim (32nd, 34th, 36th and 38th interviewees) and Christian (6th, 10th, 12th and 16th interviewees) males as the key influencer of their families' meal behaviour.
	For example:
	"Well, as I was saying respect is always given to the parents. There is always that sort of hierarchical structure in the family – father, mother, eldest son/daughter going down to the younger kids. So at least when you sit together in that hierarchical structure, respect goes round. The father gets more respect, he is more listened to, and next to him is the mother, then to the eldest son/daughter going down to the younger kids…"
	Interviewee 32, Male, Muslim
	However, a significant number of the Muslim (8th, 18th, 20th, 26th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (4th, 14th and 28th interviewees) males proclaimed that tribe has no impact on their families' meal behaviour. For example:
	"No, my tribe does not in any way influence the way we interact as a family at the dinner table".
	Interviewee 8, Male, Muslim

5.5.2 Region of origin

Region of origin in this study refers to the degree of customary influence or non-influence a family's birth place has on their current meal behaviour, including: food ethics; religious beliefs; affection; gender differentiation; hierarchy; and ethnic group.

Q.6	**In what ways does your region of origin influence the way your family interact at the dinner table?**
	Muslim Females:
	Themes in common were: respect; food ethics
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: prayers; gender distinction; role definition; dialect
	Christian Females:
	Themes in common were: respect
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: cultural beliefs; gratifying parents; sharing; dialect
	Muslim Males:

	Themes in common were: respect; hierarchy; gender distinction
	Differences were reflected in the following areas: food ethics; prayers; family unity
	Christian Males:
	Themes in common were: food ethics; sharing; respect
	Differences were reflected in the following domain: modernity; family unity; cultural values; family religious values
Observational data	No observation was made on region of origin
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the Muslim (21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd and 37th interviewees) and Christian (3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 27th and 29th interviewees) females shared commonalities in the area of respect as a major regional factor that influences their families' meal behaviour as reflected in the following statement:
	"The region I come from makes respect for elders mandatory and sometimes if a child is too bold and talks to elders freely; it is seen as a sign of shorter life for the individual. So at the dinner table in my village, children are expected to be quiet and presence must not be felt".
	Interviewee 31, Female, Muslim
	However a significant minority Muslim (7th, 17th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st and 23rd interviewees) females emphasised that their region of origin has no influence on their families' mealtime behaviour. For example:
	"Well, I don't see that having any effect. What I am saying is that we are trying to pass on what we have inherited from our own people, with the notion that that is the best way to behave as we deem it fit for the family. So being in association with other family members or groups or the region we come from have no effect on the way my family interact at the dinner table. If we see any slight deviation from what we are trying to pass on to our children, we always go out to correct them and tell them, no, you should not do this as it is not proper to do it that way".
	Interviewee 7, Female, Muslim
	A majority of the Muslim and Christian husbands emphasised respect as a key regional factor that influences the way their families interact at mealtimes as reflected in the views of 32nd, 34th, 36th and 38th interviewees for Muslim males and the 2nd, 4th, 6th, 10th, 14th, 16th, 24th and 30 interviewees for the Christian males. For example:
	"I have just said it. Because my tribe as a Fullah, I have inherited most of the things from my father as to how we should respect food and how we should come together as a family and eat together…"

	Interviewee 34, Male, Muslim
	However, a significant number of Muslim (8th, 18th, 26th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (4th and 12th interviewees) males reiterated that their region of origin has no impact on their families' meal behaviour as reflected in the following:
	"Well, I mean I came from the Kailahun district. So I believe in a way it doesn't matter much because already we have a particular culture that is embedded in you, which you are expected to practice. So I don't think the region has any influence on the way we interact at the dinner table".
	Interviewee 12, Male, Christian

5.5.3 Cultural beliefs

Cultural beliefs in this study are norms, standards and expectations held by families as convictions or set requirements for every member of the family at mealtimes, which are transmitted from one generation to another over a period of time.

Q.7	**In what ways does your cultural belief influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour?**
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: respect; food type; food ethics Differences were reflected in the following domains: gratifying parents; family norms/values; family religious beliefs; control
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: food ethics Differences were reflected in the following domains: family unity; respect
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: respect; food ethics; food type Differences were reflected in the following areas: hierarchy; prayer; family unity
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: food ethics Differences were reflected in the following domain: respect; modernity; sharing
Observational data	Before sitting at the dinner table, some families were observed washing their hands from a common bowl. Prayer was also observed by a number of

	families and they were quiet throughout the dinner. In some families, girls served the dinner, while the boys brought water to the dining table. Hierarchy in terms of sitting position was observed.
Comparative summary of the findings	Food ethics such as hygiene/washing of hands, silence, table etiquette, food wastage, food boundaries, and the forbidden use of the left-hand were similarities emphasised by a majority of the Muslim (7th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th and15th interviewees) females as cultural beliefs that influences the way their families' interact at mealtimes. The following statement reflect that: *"Well, like I said earlier if you talk whilst eating pepper will go the wrong part, which can be dangerous to your health. Also, if you fail to properly wash your hands, the chances of you getting sick are very great. So we believe, washing the hands before eating will prevent you from sickness and disease".* Interviewee 21, Female, Muslim However, a majority of the Muslim wives emphasised respect and the type of food consumed as central to their cultural beliefs, which were not reflected in the views of Christian females. For example: *"Well, the common belief is that you should pray before eating and respect elders as I have already discussed. If you are sitting at the dinner table and you fail to provide sit for the elder, it is interpreted as being disrespectful and people would even say you were not born to last for a long period, it is interpreted as short life. Also, there is the belief that if you eat pork or monkey or drink alcohol, you will go to hell. So that is why we don't even encourage our children to join other families outside the home when having dinner".* Interviewee 31, Female, Muslim A majority of the Muslim and Christian males shared commonalities in the area of food ethics as reflected in the views of 8th, 18th, 20th, 26th, 34th, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees for Muslim males and the 2nd, 6th, 10th, 16thand 24th interviewees for Christian males. For example: *"...If the culture of eating and not talking was difficult to implement initially, but when we highlighted the danger of pepper going down the wrong part, they realise the significance of eating and not talking. Also, in my culture children are not allowed to take meat or fish on top of the rice when eating..."* Interviewee 6, Male, Christian However, a majority of the Muslim males emphasised respect and food type as central to their families' cultural beliefs, which was not reflected in the views of the Christian males - a significant minority (4th, 14th and

	28[th]interviewees) of whom indicated that it does not impact on their families' behaviour. For example:
	"We believe that as Fullahs, we respect the two parents and be always thankful to them and look up to them as the provider of the food. We believe without these two people, we will not have food...Also, our belief as a Muslim is that we should not eat foods that forbidden such as pork, monkey, alcohol, etc."
	Interviewee 34, Male, Muslim

5.5.4 Assumptions

Assumptions in this study are the taken for granted views that are unexplained to members of the family at mealtimes, but are expected to be followed by every member of the family at mealtimes. They are unspoken and unwritten social norms.

Q.8	**What taken for granted practices (assumptions) influence the way your family interact at the dinner table?**
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: prayer; gratification; respect; God provider; food ethics Differences were: reflected in the following domains: sense of responsibility; obedience; family unity; moral education
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: food ethics; prayers; respect; sense of responsibility Differences were reflected in the following domains: affection; family unity; gratification; family image
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: prayers; food ethics; respect Differences were reflected in the following areas: God's protection; family cultural values; family unity; hierarchy
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: prayers; respect; food ethics Differences were reflected in the following domain: family unity; conformity; humility
Observational	In a number of families, girls knelt down when giving water to their fathers.

data	Every member of the family washed their hands before sitting at the dinner table. In some families, silence was observed, prayers were conducted silently and the father was first served followed by the eldest son. Hierarchy was observed.
Comparative summary of the findings	Prayer, respect for elders and food ethics, including basic hygiene/washing hands; silence; table etiquette; no food wastage; forbidden use of left-hand; and appreciation are commonalities shared by a majority of Muslim (7th, 17th, 19th,21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 23rd, 27th and 29th interviewees) females as taken for granted behaviours they expect from members of their families at mealtimes. For example: *"When we start eating, my children know that they are not allowed to talk because if you talk the food we get up your head. So after prayers, nobody is allowed to talk and we are all required to concentrate on the food. After eating, the younger ones will clear the table. This was the principle I met my parents implementing and I am doing the same to my children to make them more responsible and respectful to their elders. The place I grew-up in we all use to eat together and the younger ones are expected to clear the table, wash the plates and pans, and sweep the floor".* Interviewee 13, Female, Christian However, the findings also showed that there are differences between the two denominations as a majority of the Muslim females emphasised gratifying parents, including the assumption that God is the provider of the food the family eats, whilst a majority of the Christian females were more inclined to emphasise that the assumptive practices makes children more responsible. This is indicated by the following statement: *"...we should pray before eating, and we should pray after eating, we should say thank you to whoever cooked the food, and we thank god for the provision".* Interviewee 15, Female, Christian A majority of the Muslim (18th, 20th, 22nd, 26th, 32nd, 34th, 36th and 38th interviewees) and Christian (2nd, 4th, 6th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30th interviewees) males expressed similar views with regards to prayers, food ethics and respect as key assumptive practices their families must observe at mealtimes as reflected in the following statement: *"…We normally pray before eating our dinner and I always ask my kids to pray, hold the dish when eating, wash your hand thoroughly before eating, you don't talk when eating, you don't take a portion of the food in front of your dad or an elder, you have to respect elders. For example, if we are all eating together from the same bowl and then you take portion of the food in front of me, it is translated as ill-mannered".*

Interviewee 12, Male, Christian	

5.6 Theme 3 – Conformity: Objective 3 - Analysing the impact of conformity on families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone

Conformity in this study is the responsiveness of individuals to their families' expected norms, which guarantees acceptance by the broader family group or society in general. The theme conformity is categorised into various sub-groups such as togetherness, obedience, norms at mealtimes, and meal sharing. A comprehensive discussion of the influence of each sub-groups on participating males and females are presented below.

5.6.1 Togetherness

Togetherness in this study is the symbolism families' associate with unity, oneness, cohesion, harmony and sharing as a way of demonstrating affection and respect for others at mealtimes.

Q.9	**What is the importance of togetherness in your family's meal social interaction**
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: affection; family cohesion; respect; idea sharing Differences were reflected in the following domains: prayers; food ethics; troubleshooting forum; reflective forum
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: affection; family cohesion; idea sharing Differences were reflected in the following domains: companionship; sense of belonging; confidence building; respect; troubleshooting forum; control; responsibility
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: family cohesion; idea sharing; affection; respect Differences were reflected in the following areas: planning; troubleshooting forum; family tradition/values; cooperation
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: family cohesion; affection; idea sharing Differences were reflected in the following domain: boundary reduction; confidence building; troubleshooting forum; respect; hierarchy/control; bonding; spiritual beliefs/prayers
Observational data	In a some families, though they eat together in a group, males eat separately from females

Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the Muslim and Christian females shared similar views about togetherness as fundamental influencer of affection, family cohesion and idea sharing as reflected in the views of the 7th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th interviewees for Muslim females and the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 23rd, 27th and 29th interviewees for Christian females. For example: *"It is very important. It brings unity in the family, it brings oneness and concern for each other, togetherness ensures that there is a smooth working relationship between every member of the family and provides a forum for sharing ideas".* However, a majority of the Muslim females emphasised respect as an essential ingredient for togetherness, whilst Christian females were less emphatic about its significance in their families' meal behaviour. This is echoed in the following statement: *"It is very important because when we are together as a family, we can teach the children to pray every day, we can teach them how to respect their elders, to know the rights and wrongs of society..."* Interviewee 19, Female, Muslim *"It makes me feel happy, feel love and feel very special. It is very important to eat together as a family as it is not all the time we eat together as a family. Eating together brings unity and affection in the family".* Interviewee 1, Female, Christian In highlighting the importance of togetherness, a majority of the Muslim (8th, 18th, 20th, 22nd, 26th, 32nd, 34th, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (2nd, 6th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30th interviewees) males posited similar views by emphasising that family cohesion, idea sharing and affection are central to their families' meal behaviour. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Togetherness is the hub that really propels family growth. Because with togetherness you will disagree to agree, with togetherness you can share and correct each other as you get along. It provides the platform for family affection, enhancement and unity. If you are not together and do not share ideas together, then you will realise that there will be very limited progress in the family".* Interviewee 8, Male, Muslim Despite the avowed similarities between the two denominations, a majority of the Muslim males reiterated that respect is the centre-piece of their families' togetherness, which was less emphasised by a majority of the Christian males. For example:

	"…Togetherness engenders development and cooperation. A family that sticks together has a greater chance of growing and developing as a unit than one that cares only for themselves and their own goal. Eating together fosters unity and respect in the family and it also enables us to express concern and love for each other".
	Interviewee 36, Male, Muslim

5.6.2 Obedience

Obedience in this study is the act of promptly responding to or complying with the explicit requests, instructions or orders given by an elder or a senior member of the family to an individual at mealtimes and to whom every member of the family is accountable to at a specific point in time.

Q.10	What is the importance of obedience in your family's social interaction at the dinner table?
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: respect; family unity/stability; authority Differences were reflected in the following domains: success/progress; God fearing; gratifying parents; responsibility; cultural beliefs
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: respect; authority; moral ethics; love; family unity/stability Differences were reflected in the following domains: boundaries; humility; responsibility; advice forum; life longevity; success; avert accident; respect
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: respect; family cohesion; authority Differences were reflected in the following areas: success; God's word; affection; decision-making; incentives/rewards; traditional beliefs; family image
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: respect; family cohesion; authority Differences were reflected in the following domain: cultural norms; success; communication enhancement; contribution; protection; modesty; confidence building
Observational data	No observation was recorded on obedience, but in a number of families, the father was highly respected by every member of the family as the children and wives followed his command when instructed

Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the Muslim (7th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 27th and 29th interviewees) females presented similar views about the importance of obedience by emphasising that it brings respect, it encourages adherence to authority and promotes unity and stability in the family. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, obedience is important as it guides the behaviour of the children and shows them the importance of respecting elders and even their colleagues or brothers and sisters. With obedience, the children can listen to authority and follow the rules set at the dinner table...So obedience in Africa can be viewed as a sign of responsibility and humility. If your children are disobedient, the tendency of them becoming street kids is very great, but a child that obeys has greater chances of succeeding in life because of the blessing he/she would have gotten from the parents".* Interviewee 33, Female, Muslim Despite the overwhelming similarities, a majority of the Muslim females were less emphatic about the love obedience brings in the family and the moral ethics it teaches the children, which was overwhelmingly emphasised by a majority of the Christian females. For example: *"It is very important because will bring about other issues such as love between the mom and the children and the dad and the children. It will enhance the relationship among members of the family and teaches the children the norms of moral ethics".* Interviewee 15, Female, Christian A majority of the Muslim (8th, 20th, 26th, 32nd, 34th, 36th and 38th interviewees)and Christian (4th, 6th, 10th, 12th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30th interviewees) males shared commonalities in the areas of respect, family cohesion and authority as the primary symbolism of obedience in their families' meal behaviour as reflected in the following statements: *"It is very critical because it brings respect and decorum, it brings a sense of normality in the family because if the younger ones obey and respect their older siblings, there is some form of control, and there some form of chain of command, that of the father is not there, the younger ones should listen to the eldest. So whatever happens there is always that chain of command even in the absence of the father. As I said, obedience is very critical because it brings decorum and unity because if you obey there will be little room for friction within the family. It is only when nobody listens to each other that chaos will ensue. But if obedience is maintained within the family at the dinner table, it will be very helpful to keep the family in order".* Interviewee 32, Male, Muslim

5.6.3 Conformed behaviour

Conformed behaviour in this study is the synchronised behaviour expected from every member of the family at mealtimes, which must match with that professed and demonstrated by a majority of others around the dinner table.

Q.11	What sort of conformed behaviour is expected from members of your family when interacting at the dinner?
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: food ethics; respect Differences were reflected in the following domains: moral education; family religious beliefs; advice
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: food ethics; respect Differences were reflected in the following domains: prayers; politeness; moral education
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: food ethics Differences were reflected in the following areas: prayers; politeness
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: food ethics Differences were reflected in the following domain: respect; prayers; politeness; boundaries; sharing
Observational data	In a majority of families, washing of hands, prayers and silence was observed
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the Muslim (7th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 3rd, 5th, 13th, 15th, 23rd, 27th and 29th interviewees) females posited similar views that their families' observance of food ethics and respect for elders at the dinner table are expected conformed behaviour everyone must adhere to. For example: *"Respect for each other and for elders, prayers before eating, saying thank you to both parents for the preparation and provision, quietness observed throughout the meal".* Interviewee 27, Female, Christian A majority of the Muslim (8th, 32nd, 34th, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (4th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30th interviewees) males emphasised similar views about the significance of observing food

ethics as an arbiter of expected conformed behaviour from their families at mealtimes. This is reflected in the following statement:

"They are expected to wash their hands, they are expected not to eat with their left hands, they are expected to cover their meal when not eating, they are expected to cover their mouth when coughing, etc."

Interviewee 16, Male, Christian

However, a majority of the Muslim males emphasised respect as expected conformed behaviour at mealtimes, which is less emphasised by the Christian husbands as reflected in the following statements:

"They are all expected to be very respectful, that is the key word, to whosoever that is witnessing that particular dinner in terms of observing the cultural things I made mention of".

Interviewee 20, Male, Muslim

5.6.4 Meal sharing

Meal sharing in this study is either the act of benevolence shown by a family to a less privileged member of their community or neighbourhood by allowing him/her to join their dinner table at mealtimes or the act of eating together with members of one's family at mealtimes.

Q.12	How does meal sharing affect your relationship with other people outside your home?
	Muslim Females:
	Themes in common were: respect; build relationship; affection
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: love; family image; affordability; appreciation; blessing; unity; religious; charity
	Christian Females:
	Themes in common were: affection; build relationship
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: respect; appreciation; affordability; charity; survival; conflicts; family image; jealousy; word of God; love
	Muslim Males:
	Themes in common were: respect; build relationship; affection
	Differences were reflected in the following areas: unity; divulge secrets; protection; greed; satisfaction; care; happiness; appreciation

	Christian Males: Themes in common were: build relationship; affection; unity Differences were reflected in the following domain: respect; appreciation; love; cooperation; sense of belonging; charity
Observational data	It was observed that a majority of families have extended families members and social relations with whom they share their meal. It was also observed that a minority of other families do not share their meals with outsiders
Comparative summary of the findings	Affection and relationship building were similar views highlighted by a majority of the Muslim (7th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 33rd, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 27th and 29th interviewees) females as the key drivers for sharing a meal with others, which is echoed in the following statement: *"It affects my relationship with them positively. It makes them come closer and have affection for my family and they do appreciate the provision I am making for them".* Interviewee 13, Female, Christian However, a majority of the Muslim females emphasised the significance of the respect meal sharing brings to their family, which was not reflected in the views of the Christian females. For example: *"It makes our neighbours and people that we share with love and respect our family and makes them very friendly towards us and our children"* Interviewee 19, Female, Muslim A majority of the Muslim (18th, 26th, 32nd, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (2nd, 6th, 12th, 14th, 16th and 30th interviewees) males shared similar views by emphasising relationship building and affection as fundamental to meal sharing in their families as reflected in the following statements: *"Inviting people at the dinner table enhances the relationship and it also enables you to know people you have not met before".* Interviewee 30, Male, Christian Conversely, while a majority of the Muslim males emphasised respect as symbolic in meal sharing; a majority of the Christian males, on the other hand, emphasised unity as symbolic in meal sharing. For example: *"It is my own sister anyway, my elder sister. We are just used to sharing food with her so as to create oneness, unity especially for my wife to be more close to my extended family members".*

	Interviewee 2, Male, Christian

5.7 Theme 4 – Reference Groups: Objective 4 - Determining the influence of reference groups on families' meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone

The theme reference groups in this study is sub-categorised into age, gender, extended family, associates and decision-making. A step by step discussion of each category is presented below:

5.7.1 Age

Age in this study is the degree of influence exerted by a member of the family either as a result of his/her seniority/elderliness, hierarchy, experience or wisdom to make decisions and prevail on others at mealtimes.

Q.13	How important is age in your family's social interaction at the dinner table?
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: respect; hierarchy; wisdom; experience; authority/guidance Differences were reflected in the following domains: learning; advice; decision-making; peace/harmony
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: respect; hierarchy; authority/guidance Differences were reflected in the following domains: wisdom; maturity; love; protection; understanding
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: respect; wisdom; hierarchy; experience; authority/guidance Differences were reflected in the following areas: protection; contentment; advice; learning; unity/stability; understanding/tolerance; peace; contribution; decision-making; success; blessing
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: respect; hierarchy; authority/guidance Differences were reflected in the following domain: wisdom; decision-making; values; affection; participation
Observational data	Hierarchy was observed by a majority of families. The males washed their hands from a common bowl and the females did the same. Males ate separately from the females, but as a group. In a majority of families, every

	member of the family, except the younger children said prayers before eating.
Comparative summary of the findings	Commonalities were shared in terms of respect, hierarchy and authority by a majority of the Muslim (7th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 27th and 29th interviewees) females as important consideration of age in their families' meal behaviour. This is echoed in the following statement:

"Age is very important as it serves authority and determinant of whom to respect and who not to talk freely to at the dinner table. When an elder is speaking to you at the dinner table, it is important you abide by his/her command. If I am not around, the eldest daughter/son takes responsibility for the entire family and the younger ones must respect her and the orders she gives. Age enables us to determine who is older than the other and determines who should be respected at the dinner table because you cannot ask the elder one to fetch water when the younger is seated at the same table".

Interviewee 5, Female, Christian

However, a majority of the Muslim wives highlighted the symbolism of wisdom and experience as fundamental arbiter of age, which was only emphasised by a minority of the Christian females as reflected in the following statement:

"Age is important as it signifies respect, authority, wisdom and experience. In our culture, it is always important to give respect to your elders, whether they are your parents or not. At the dinner table, children are not allowed to talk in the presence of elders as a symbol of respect".

Interviewee 21, Female, Muslim

A majority of the Muslim (18th, 20th, 22nd, 26th, 32nd, 34th, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (6th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30th interviewees) males posited commonalities in the areas of respect, hierarchy and authority as symbolic consideration of age when their families are having dinner. An example of this is shown in the following statement:

"Age of course depicts the hierarchy of one's family and because you are either the father, mother, eldest son/daughter, it is onerous on everybody, especially at the dinner table to respect people that are older than you. In Africa, we respect age a lot and as a family it is paramount that we give credence to age, particularly to people that are older than you. So age is very important as it signifies authority and who should do what in the home".

Interviewee 14, Male, Christian

5.7.2 Gender

Gender in this study is the sphere of influence exhibited by each member of the family as a result of being either a male or female, including: separation; boundaries; role definition and distinction; and the privileges accorded to specific others (males) by families at mealtimes.

Q.14	Why does gender influence the way your family interact socially at the dinner table?
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: gender distinction; no impact Differences were reflected in the following domains: role definition, male supremacy, breadwinner, learning
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: no impact; gender distinction Differences were reflected in the following domains: boundaries
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: gender distinction; no impact Differences were reflected in the following areas: role definition, gender separation, authority
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: no impact; gender distinction Differences were reflected in the following domain: role definition, gender separation, respect, authority, food quality
Observational data	In a majority of family, the males washed their hands from a common bowl and the females did the same. In a majority of families, the males ate separately from the females. Females were observed serving the food and clearing the table after meal. Females swept the dining area after meal
Comparative summary of the findings	In highlighting gender as an influencing factor in their families' meal behaviour, a minority of the Muslim (7th, 25th, 31st and 35th interviewees) and a majority of Christian (1st, 11th, 13th, 15th, 23rd, 27th and 29th interviewees) females posited similar views that it has zero or very limited impact on their families' meal behaviour. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, in the home of my parents, who were illiterates gender was very important, but as an educated individual I don't attach too much importance to gender as I treat all my kids the same, whether boy or girl. So gender is not important at all in my family".*

Interviewee 31, Female, Muslim

Conversely, a majority of the Muslim and a minority of Christian females shared similar views of gender acting as a discerning factor in their families' meal behaviour as reflected in the following statement:

"Well, in my family, we most times eat from a common bowl, and women are only allowed to eat together with women and men are also expected to eat with men. Also, greater attention is given to male children than the female ones because my husband always sees the male children as his future inheritance. He always signals that the women will one day get married and absorbed into another family while the men will always bear his name. So at the dinner table, he gives the male children more attention than the females. Also, the cleaning of the pots, pans and plates are normally done by the females and they are also required to sweep and clean the dinner table before and after eating".

Interviewee 33, Female, Muslim

In proclaiming the limited or zero impact of gender in their families' meal behaviour, commonalities were shared by a majority of Muslim (8th, 22nd, 26th, 32nd and 36th interviewees) and Christian (2nd, 10th, 14th, 16th, 24th and 30th interviewees) males as reflected in the following statement:

"With me, gender does not affect my family because whilst we are at the dinner table, I allow all my children boys or girls to join me at the dinner table. Whosoever want to eat whether boy or girl join me at the dinner table. We talk about social, developmental issues. We do not talk about anything profoundly secret".

Interviewee 22, Male, Muslim

Conversely, a majority of the Muslim males and a significant number of Christian males shared similar views in relation to the distinctive use of gender as a discrimination instrument at their families' mealtimes. For example:

"Most times the women are together and eat together, while the men stick together and eat together. However, there are certain times when the entire family sits at the same dining table and eat together, especially on occasion such as Christmas. Also, gender determines the roles and responsibilities of the children, including the parents in the family. For example, we expect the females to prepare the meal and serve it, while the men fetch water to the dining table".

Interviewee 6, Male, Christian

5.7.3 Associates

Associates in this study are non-family members that influenced the meal behaviours of families, including: work colleagues, family friends, neighbours and house help, who visit the family from time to time.

Q.15	**In what ways do associates influence your family's interaction at the dinner table?**
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: regulation/control; build relationship; idea sharing Differences were reflected in the following domains: respect; troubleshooting forum; affection; unity/stability; breed conflict; meal sharing; advice; burden
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: regulation/control; idea sharing; build relationship Differences were reflected in the following domains: civility; thieving; unity; love; prayer; expectations; advice; conflict; respect; blessing
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: build relationship Differences were reflected in the following areas: idea sharing; regulation; meal sharing; love; family image; family history; respect; identity; burden; politeness
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: idea sharing; relationship building Differences were reflected in the following domain: unity; participation; troubleshooting forum; guidance; advice; values; socialisation
Observational data	No observation was recorded on the issue of associate during the field study
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of Muslim (7th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 27th and 29th interviewees) females shared identical views about the influence associates have on their families, including control or regulating the children's behaviour, fostering close relationship with the family and act as an educative forum or forum for sharing ideas. An example of this is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, like I said earlier, we have a system of shared beliefs and values in my family, wherein we are always open to strangers sharing meal with us at the dinner table irrespective of the background of the visitor. We are always*

open…it teaches the children the importance of sharing, particularly in Sierra Leone were opportunities are scarce. When God provides for the family it is always important that we share with other people as this will act as blessing to the family…builds an everlasting bond of respect and trust as they will always say good things about your family outside…forum of sharing ideas…"

Interviewee 27, Female, Christian

A majority of the Muslim (8th, 18th, 20th, 22nd, 26th, 32nd, 34th, 36th, 38th and 40[th]interviewees) and Christian (6th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30[th]interviewees) males emphasised that relationship building is the fundamental influence associates have on their families' meal behaviour.

For example:

"Like in my situation, like I said, I am a father of three, but I have so many extended family members around me, and I always try to educate my children that I was brought up in an extended family home and I know how I was brought up. Therefore, they should always cultivate the idea of bringing extra people into the family because I was helped by a different people and therefore I have nurtured the idea of encouraging different members of different families into my family and I believe they are always warmly welcomed by even my children and it builds a good relationship between us".

Interviewee 20, Male, Muslim

However, a majority of Christian males emphasised the sharing of ideas as a fundamental aspect of associates, a factor less emphasised by Muslim males. For example:

"It provides the means of sharing ideas and knowing each other and understanding the problems of each other. Also, associates serve as a forum for guidance as they help you to determine what is good or bad in the family. For example, if you have a problem, the associate in your life will tell you or guide how you to solve it…"

Interviewee 6, Male, Christian

5.7.4 Decision-making

Decision-making in this study is the thought process of consulting with other members of the family about the availability of alternative choices that may lead to better planning and/or reasonable outcomes at mealtimes.

Q.16	**How important is decision-making in your family's social interaction at the dinner table?**
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: planning; development; respect; family unity/stability; authority/guidance/control Differences were reflected in the following domains: consultation; progress/success; prioritising; peace; age; care; organising
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: planning; authority; family unity/stability Differences were reflected in the following domains: task distribution; responsibility; harmony; progress/success; direction; development; consultation; discipline; safeguards; discipline; participation
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: planning; authority/hierarchy Differences were reflected in the following areas: organising; learning; equality; achievement; choices; obedience; harmony; management; coordination; unity/stability; consultation; family image; understanding; development; waste reduction; consent; direction
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: planning; authority/hierarchy Differences were reflected in the following domain: judgement; consultation; understanding; development; rationality; contribution; obedience; collaboration; learning; stability/unity; democracy
Observational data	No observation was recorded on the issue of decision-making as the researcher was not fortunate to witness any.
Comparative summary of the findings	Planning, authority and family unity are common views shared by a majority of Muslim (7th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 23rd, 27th and 29th interviewees) females as key influencers of decision-making in their families' meal behaviour. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Decision is very important in all the things we do as family from children's school fees discussed at the dinner table to the amount spent on feeding all needs to be decided by me and my husband and sometimes we even involve the children into it. Also, decision making can be a very good control instrument. For example, if my daughter misbehaves at the dinner table and we ignore it and fail to decide on the line of action to take to correct her behaviour, she will end up becoming a bad person...It is very important because like I said it is what keeps the family together. A family without a decision-maker can never be able to enjoy stability or to maintain order at the dinner table".*

	Interviewee 31, Female, Muslim
	Conversely, a majority of the Muslim females emphasised decision-making as a fundamental tool that enhances their families' development and an instrument used for fostering respect in their families; factors less emphasised by a majority of the Christian females. This is reflected in the following statement:
	"Decision-making brings peace, develop and progress in a family, decision-making guide the family on the right path, decision-making prevents every day quarrels and disorder in the family, decision-making reduces tension and make everybody happy at the dinner table, decision-making enhances love and understanding in the family, and decision-making brings unity and love in the family. It also brings respect especially to the one making the decision".
	Interviewee 37, Female, Muslim
	A majority of the Muslim (8th, 18th, 22nd, 32nd, 34th, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (2nd, 4th, 6th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30th interviewees) males suggested similar views, including planning and authority or control as the primary instruments of decision-making in their families at mealtimes. This is reflected in the following statement:
	"Decision-making in a family is very important. It is only through decision-making that we are able to plan for the future of the family. Sometimes we use decision to give the family direction and it is through decision-making that we are able to correct the wrongs of a child and make them right. If as a father I cannot make that will guide my family, they will all end up be very bad people in society".
	Interviewee 36, Male, Muslim

5.7.5 Extended family

Extended families in this study are distant blood relations such as aunts, cousins, grandparents, etc., who are not part of the immediate family members, but live under the same roof and share meal together.

Q.17	**How do extended family members affect your family's meal social interaction behaviour?**
	Muslim Females:
	Themes in common were: economic/financial constraints; background differences; domestic chores

	Differences were reflected in the following domains: backbiting; divulge family secret; breeds hatred; stealing; witchcraft; sharing; conflict; advice; jealousy
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: economic/financial constraints; background differences Differences were reflected in the following domains: domestic chores; conflict; backbiting; jealousy; divulge family secret; stealing; sharing; hatred; lineage knowledge
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: economic/financial constraints; background differences; domestic chores Differences were reflected in the following areas: behavioural challenges; jealousy; domino effect; obligation; ostracisation; sharing; stalls development; hatred; divulge family secret; stealing; witchcraft; malice; conflict; income subsidisation; charity; backbiting; cultural beliefs; strengthens bond
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: background differences Differences were reflected in the following domain: domestic chores; stealing; bullying; jealousy; stalls development; appreciation/gratification; gifts; domino effect; obligation; witchcraft; conflict
Observational data	In a majority of families, it was observed that the children of the extended families do most of the domestic chores, especially the females
Comparative summary of the findings	Commonalities shared by a majority of the Muslim (7th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 15th, 27th and 29th interviewees) females as influencing factors, include background differences and economic or financial constraints as the major effects extended families have on their families' meal behaviour. For example: *"Like I said earlier, it is source of stealing in the home, particularly if the extended family members' character is different from those of your family. There will always be quarrels, backbiting and comparison between your children and the children of the extended family members, which breeds hatred and animosity...affects the way your family lives and they are also constraint to resources... also affect the level of expenditure in terms of the quantity of food to purchase for the family as well as the quality".* Interviewee 27, Female, Christian However, a majority of the Muslim females reiterated domestic chores as the primary benefit extended families have on their families' meal behaviour, which is not reflected in the views of a majority of the Christian

females. This is reflected in the following statement:

"Well, sometimes extended family can be good, but some other times, they can be bad. Let me talk about the good first. If you have extended family members with good behaviour that can be reflected on your children and they also help with household chores. But if the extended family is one of bad character, they have the tendency of negatively influencing your children. Also, extended families can be a burden on resources, especially when things are not right at home".

Interviewee 21, Female, Muslim

A majority of the Muslim (8th, 20th, 22nd, 32nd, 34th and 36th interviewees) and Christian (2nd, 6th, 10th, 14th, 16th, 24th and 28th interviewees) males share similarity in the area of background differences as major influencing factor extended families have on their families' meal behaviour. This view is echoed in the following statement:

"It poses huge problems because since they are relations, it is very difficult to drive them from home irrespective of their behaviour or character. You will always be scared of what other members of your extended family will say or feel about you. For example, if the person that joined your family from one of your extended relation, say nephew/niece, is a thief, that will induce your own son/daughter to start imitating the same behaviour. That will greatly affect interaction in the family both at the dinner table and outside it".

Interviewee 6, Male, Christian

Despite the shared similarity, it is indicative as suggested by a majority of the Muslim males that economic or financial constraints and domestic chores are major influences extended families have on their families' meal behaviour, which were less emphasised by the Christian males. This view is reflected in the following statement:

"Extended family is a burden when you look at it from a financial point of view. There are also behavioural challenges associated with extended family. For example, the negative outside influence of the extended family normally feeds into the family, which may disrupt the smooth functioning of the family…The good aspects of extended family members is that if you have the right kind of person, that person will support and assist the family by helping household chores. As a result, it eases some of the chores burden in the home".

Interviewee 8, Male, Muslim

5.7.6 Identity

Identity in this study is the position or rank occupied by an individual within a family that distinguishes them from others either as a result of hierarchy, authority, birth or age at mealtimes.

Q.18	What is your opinion of the definition of identity within the family when interacting at the dinner table?
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: position/rank Differences were reflected in the following domains: role/responsibility; control; respect; discriminatory; expectations
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: position/rank Differences were reflected in the following domains: control; ethics; unity; boundaries; sense of belonging; discriminatory
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: position/rank Differences were reflected in the following areas: priority; age; respect; control; obedience; responsibility
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: position/rank Differences were reflected in the following domain: orderliness; respect; discriminatory; roles/responsibilities; learning
Observational data	No observation was made on the issue of identity
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the Muslim (17th, 19th, 21st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th and 15th interviewees) females shared commonalities by suggesting position or rank of an individual in the family as the most crucial element of identity definition in their families' meal behaviour. This is reflected in the following statement: *"I have a positive opinion of identity definition as members of my family's position will be known by visitors and extended members of the family"* Interviewee 33, Female, Muslim A significant number of the Muslim (22nd, 26th, 32nd, 34th and 36th interviewees) and a majority of Christian (2nd, 4th, 6th, 10th, 14th, 24th, 28th and 30th interviewees) males posited similar views by emphasising position/rank as the most significance in terms of identity definition in their families at mealtimes. This view is echoed in the following statement:

	"Whilst you are at the dinner table and they have identified you as the figure head, even though they may give premium to the eldest, in terms of meal, they feel you should be the first to taste/try the meal. They give you that priority. Once they have finished cooking, if it is chicken, for example, they will say let give daddy the priority. Even the eldest will tend to identify you as the one they should be given respect to and that kind of thing". Interviewee 22, Male, Muslim However, a significant number of Muslim males denounced identity definition in their families by emphasising that it is discriminatory, which is inconsistent with their earlier views. This statement was not reflected in the views of Christian males. For example: *"Well, I come from an extended family were the definition of identity is not important. So my opinion of identity is that it is not relevant too much in a family as it brings discrimination among the children, especially if you are living with extended members of your family".* Interviewee 38, Male, Muslim

5.8 Theme 5 – Social class

The theme social class is divided into various sub-groups, including income/wealth, occupation, education, authority, ethnic/family background and religious position and a detailed discussion of each is presented below:

5.8.1 Income

Income in this study is the salary, earnings and wealth earned by the breadwinner(s) of a family, either individual or combined that guarantees their access to abundant and variety of foods that are of better quality at mealtimes.

Q.19	**How does income/wealth affect the way your family interact socially at meal times?**
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: food quality; food quantity; food variety; happiness; control Differences were reflected in the following domains: affordability; satisfaction; family unity/stability; family image; respect; modern foodstuffs; participation
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: food quality; food quantity; food variety; happiness

	Differences were reflected in the following domains: love; respect; appetite; satisfaction; survival; meal frequency; affordability; healthy growth; sharing; family unity/stability
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: food quality; food quantity; happiness; authority/control Differences were reflected in the following areas: lifestyle change; modern foodstuffs; sharing; satisfaction; saving; investment; development; relationship building; healthy growth; peace/stability; sustainability; scarcity
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: food quality; food quantity; food variety; happiness Differences were reflected in the following domain: affordability; planning; sustainability; understanding; meal frequency; standard of living; participation; status; choices; modern foodstuffs; satisfaction
Observational data	It was observed that the quality and quantity of food in some families was relatively bigger and better than others. Some families also enjoyed variety at mealtimes and take fruits after meal.
Comparative summary of the findings	Food quality, food quantity, food variety and happiness were commonalities shared by a majority of the Muslim (7th, 19th, 21st, 31st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 27th and 29thinterviewees) females as factors influencing their families' meal behaviour. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Like I said if we have enough income, everybody will be happy, especially the children as they would be able to access more food and also the quality of food at the dinner table will be of the right kind that everybody wants. We e can also buy variety of foodstuffs. But when our incomes are not sufficient enough to get the appropriate quality and quantity of foodstuffs, sometimes the children will be sad as they will not be sufficiently fed and probably not satisfied with the quality of the food, but irrespective of what we always stay together as a family and try not to show it outside".* Interviewee 19, Female, Muslim Despite these similarities, a majority of the Muslim females were more inclined to suggest that income acts as an enabler in controlling the behaviours of their children at mealtimes as reflected in the following statement: *"Income is very important because we can only talk about have a stable and good family if we are able to provide for our children. If we do not have money to provide for our children, it is very difficult to even control them. When there is sufficient income at home the family will always be happy and*

they will be admired by neighbours and other people. Income is also important because it brings respect to the family, if you do not have income in Africa, people will hardly respect you. Even your children sometimes will fail to listen to you if you cannot provide for their needs".

Interviewee 37, Female, Muslim

A majority of the Muslim (8th, 22nd, 34th, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (6th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30th interviewees) males shared commonalities in the areas of food quality, food quantity, food variety and happiness as major determinant of the income earned by a family, which influences their meal behaviour. This view is echoed in the following statement:

"In the first place, it has an influence on the quality of food provided and prepared for the family, and when the food is nice, you will see the emotion from the kids, they will be very happy. Also, when the food is enough there will be no crying after eating because they will be satisfied and fed. But if the food is not enough and the kids are not fed, those older ones will grumble and the younger ones will cry as they need more. So income plays a role in the aspect of the quality, variety and even the quantity. And the meal is not only restricted to the solid aspect like rice, but you have bring on board other ingredients or other treats to go along with the food, so that they will enjoy the meal and that is being influenced by the kind of income you have".

Interviewee 34, Male, Muslim

However, dissimilarity emerged in the area of control as a majority of the Muslim husbands identified income as an instrument that can be used to control their families' behaviour at mealtimes, which is not reflected in the views of the Christian husbands. For example:

"Well, the income you earn and the amount available to spend on food is paramount in any family because just like I said if I have a raise at work or obtain a bonus at work, the family will always feel it as we will even sometimes eat outside instead of eating our regular meal. So income means a lot in a family as it is what determines the stability and peaceful co-existence of everybody in the family. It is also important because without it you cannot be able to regulate the behaviours of your children at the dinner table as nobody will listen to you and your authority will be completely lost".

Interviewee 40, Male, Muslim

5.8.2 Job/occupation

Occupation or job in this study is the source of livelihood of the breadwinners of the family, which enables them to fend for them, but at the same time affects their participation and/or ability to share meal with others.

Q.20	**How does your job affect the way you interact with your family at the dinner table?**
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: lateness/time constraint; absence Differences were reflected in the following domains: tiredness; participation; appetite; family unity; appreciation; stress; hunger
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: lateness/time constraint; participation Differences were reflected in the following domains: tiredness; family unity; appetite; food quality; respect; absence; happiness; relationship
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: lateness/time constraint; absence; participation Differences were reflected in the following areas: control; happiness; love; relationship; responsibility; peace
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: lateness/time constraint; participation Differences were reflected in the following domain: absence; responsibility; food quality; security; tiredness; happiness; variety
Observational data	It was observed that a number of the interviewees were too busy to have meal with their families. It was also observed that the husbands often come home late, sometimes after the dinner has been served.
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the Muslim (7th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd and 39th interviewees) and Christian (3rd, 5th, 9th, 15th, 27th and 29th interviewees) females expressed commonality in the areas of lateness (time constraint) and absences from the dinner table as the main effect their jobs have on their families' meal behaviour. An example of this is reflected in the following statement: *"Sometimes, I leave work late to come home and any day I come home late means that dinner will be prepared late when the children are either asleep or trying to go to bed. So I believe my job affect the way we interact as a family sometimes especially for days that I may stay late at work, which forces me to miss the mealtimes".*

	Interviewee 27, Female, Christian
	However, a majority of the Christian females reiterated the effect their jobs have on their rate of participation or loss of appetite at mealtimes, an issue less emphasised by a majority of the Muslim females. This is shown in the following statement:
	"...sometimes I come late from work and by then they have finished eating dinner or sometimes I work so hard in my job that when I come home I have less time and feeling tired and loss of appetite will cause me not to want to share the dinner table. I just check on the kids to make sure that they are doing fine and ask them to close the main gate and go straight to bed. And if my husband is out of town, I work a lot, which affects my family when I come back from work"
	Interviewee 3, Female, Christian
	A majority of the Muslim (8th, 20th, 22nd, 32nd, 34th, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (2nd, 4th, 6th, 10th, 14th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30th interviewees) males suggested similar views by emphasising lateness (time constraint), participation rate and absence at mealtimes as the main effects their jobs have on their families' meal behaviour. For example:
	"I can come home and may be at the dinner table, I will receive a call that something has gone wrong, and I will have to leave the dinner table abruptly to go to address the problem. Sometimes, it happens even before we have the dinner, I will receive a call and I will just leave the home again before dinner is served. I will sometimes stay out for longer than expected and my family will start urging me to come home and join them for dinner. Sometimes, I will be lucky to join them, but at other times, they will have their dinner without me, which affects my participation".
	Interviewee 14, Male, Christian

5.8.3 Education

Education in this study is the knowledge of food or cultural ethics transferred by parents or senior members of the family to children or subordinates that enable them to behave in a healthy, civilised or modernised way.

Q.21	How important is education in your family's meal social interaction behaviour?
	Muslim Females:
	Themes in common were: civilisation; table etiquette; hygiene
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: hygiene; confidence;

	societal acceptance; family history; advice; family image; obedience; respect; balanced diet; happiness; control; cultural/traditional values
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: hygiene; table etiquette; civilisation Differences were reflected in the following domains: balanced diet; success/progress; harmony/unity/stability; table etiquette; division of labour; respect; responsibility; decision-making; morals; knowledge; humility; awareness; sharing; confidence
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: knowledge; moral ethics; hygiene; family cohesion; food quality/balanced diet Differences were reflected in the following areas: tolerance; idea transfer/experience; orderliness/hierarchy; respect; success/progress; awareness; cultural/traditional values; development; civilisation; responsibility; planning; direction; religious values
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: moral ethics; balanced diet/food quality; hygiene; family cohesion; knowledge Differences were reflected in the following domain: judgement; learning/sharing ideas/enlightenment; direction; affordability; communication/information; rewards; success/progress; family unity; solution; responsibility
Observational data	No observation was made on the issue of education
Comparative summary of the findings	Civilisation, table etiquette and hygiene are similar arguments raised by a majority of the Muslim (7th, 17th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 27th and 29th interviewees) females about the importance of education in their families' meal behaviour as reflected in the following statement: *"Education actually provides the light to civilise behaviour in our home as it teaches basic etiquette and morals. For example, the issue of washing hands before eating, no talking when eating as pepper will go the wrong part, respect for elders, and so on are as a result of education. Education also teaches the children how to behave in public. Even watching television, children learn how to treat each other and respect elders. So if these basic educational issues are taught to the children both in school and at home, their interaction at the dinner table will be polite and respectful to others".* Interviewee 21, Female, Muslim A majority of the Muslim (8th, 18th, 20th, 22nd, 26th, 32nd, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (2nd, 6th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30th interviewees) males shared commonalities in the areas of moral ethics,

	hygiene, knowledge, balanced diet and family cohesion as fundamental issues that education brings to their families' meal behaviour at dinnertimes. An example of this is shown in the following statement:
	"Education enables us to effectively utilise our God given talent. Normally, conversation or learning starts at the dinner table, while schools and our professions serve as an ingredient to success. It is only through education at the dinner table that we are able to teach our children the basic ethics of life such as hygiene and how to behave appropriate in and outside the home. Education helps unite the family along a common front". Interviewee 30, Male, Christian

5.8.4 Authority

Authority in this study is the power or right given to individuals in the family either as a result of their age or contribution, which enables them to instil discipline, enforce behavioural control and make decision they deem appropriate for all to follow at mealtimes.

Q.22	How important is authority in your family's meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table?
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: control; decision-making; unity/stability/peace Differences were reflected in the following domains: respect; cooperation; development; success; social etiquette; responsibility; discipline; happiness; boundary; troubleshooting; leadership; rules and regulations
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: control; family unity/stability/peace Differences were reflected in the following domains: leadership; responsibility; respect; obedience; age; expectations; decision-making; boundaries; good manners
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: control; hierarchy/boundaries; family unity/stability Differences were reflected in the following areas: obedience; civilisation; responsibility; humility; direction; decision-making; bonding; respect; fear
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: hierarchy; control; family unity Differences were reflected in the following domain: receptivity; decision-

	making; compliance; obedience; family stability/cohesion; governance; centralisation; checks and balances; respect; progress; penalty; rules
Observational data	In a majority of Christian and Muslim families, prayer was observed. The father was the first served followed by the oldest (son) next in line in the perceived hierarchy. Silence was observed throughout with intermittent disruptions from the younger ones in the family. It was observed in one family that the children were scared of their father and even after meal they did not hold any conversation
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the Muslim (7th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 3rd, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 23rd, 27th and 29thinterviewees) females posited similar views by identifying control and family unity, stability or peace as the main determinants of the influence of authority in their families' meal behaviour. This is shown in the following example: *"Well, for law and order to be maintained at the dinner table, there must be somebody that everybody must respect and be afraid of, who usually is the figure head. If authority does not exist, just as decision-making, the entire family will be in chaos as nobody listens to nobody. For example, when my husband is not at the dinner table, sometimes, the children will argue with each other, but when my husband is at the dinner table, they will be scared of even talking. So authority brings orderliness and control at the dinner table. It also ensures that the right thing is done all the time, which guarantees family unity, stability and harmony".* Interviewee 31, Female, Muslim However, the views were distinct in terms of decision-making, as a majority of the Muslim females were inclined to suggest that it is the main influencer of the use of authority in their families at mealtimes, which is less emphasised by a majority of the Christian females. For example: *"Authority is important. We should know that we are not just by ourselves. Whatever way you look at it, you are under the control of someone. We all know that we are under the control of the dad, and if the dad is not around we are under the control of the mom, and if the dad and mom are not around, the elder brother or sister takes control. So in terms of decision-making and control, everybody is expected to look up to that person. That does not mean that s/he should be the only person suggesting how things should be run, any other person can suggest, sit together and discuss and make the right decision".* Interviewee 7, Female, Muslim Hierarchy, control and family unity were commonalities shared by a majority of Muslim (8th, 18th, 20th, 22nd, 26th, 34th, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (2nd, 4th, 6th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30th interviewees) females as the main significance of the use of authority when having social discourse at mealtimes. This is reflected in the

following statement:

"Everybody knows that the head of the family is the father and next to him is the mother. So everybody in the family will have to understand that those are the hierarchy or chain of command or control in the family and therefore you will have to respect them. If you don't respect them, you will be seriously reprimanded. Authority definitely ensures that the family is unified and stable. So you have to respect authority, not only at the dinner table and in the home, but also outside the home, whether at school or at work. Don't talk to authorities freely as you choose especially your mother and your father…"

Interviewee 14, Male, Christian

5.9 Family meal behaviour

Family meal social interaction in this study refers to the common meal shared by members of a family and the discussions held afterwards at the dinner table to demonstrate unity, respect and fear of God, including the demonstration and adherence to the family's cultural values.

Q.23	What sort of behaviour does your family display at the dinner table?
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: authority; food ethics; respect; prayer Differences were reflected in the following domains: happiness; friendliness; love; unity
	Christian Females: Themes in common were: respect; authority; prayer; food ethics Differences were reflected in the following domains: hierarchy; control; humility
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: authority; respect; prayer; food ethics Differences were reflected in the following areas: unity; humility; love; sharing; happiness; jokes/fun
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: food ethics; respect Differences were reflected in the following domain: prayer; humility; jokes/fun; open conversation
Observational data	A majority of Muslim and Christian families were observed saying their prayers', they were silent throughout the dinner and the mother served the

	meal.
Summary of the findings	A majority of the Muslim (7th, 17th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 3rd, 5th, 9th, 13th, 15th, 23rd, 27th and 29th interviewees) females shared similarities in food behaviour on issues such as prayer, respect, food ethics and authority/control as the main influencer of the families' meal behaviour. This is echoed in the following statement: *"My family displays positive behaviour such as politeness and respect throughout dinner. The behaviour generally is good – we expect every member of the family to pray, respect authority and be quiet and respect every other person around the table"* Interviewee 25, Female, Muslim A majority of the Muslim (18th, 22nd, 26th, 32nd, 34th, 36th, 38th and 40th interviewees) and Christian (4th, 6th, 10th, 12th, 16th, 24th, 28th and 30th interviewees) males shared commonalities in food behaviour on issues such as food ethics and respect, which they emphasised are the prime influencers of the way their families behave at mealtimes. This is echoed in the following statement: *"At the dinner table, there is no singing; you should know how to handle your meal. You don't just eat and be throwing your meal all around. Because if you eat like a crazy person, we will just ask you to leave the table until everybody finishes and then you will be asked to clear the table. We always encourage the children to eat a little and drink a little as it enables the food to go down and provide space for another. We don't allow the children to be moving around when eating. You should wait until after dinner before you get up, unless if you are pressed to use the loo. Politeness and humility, respect and quietness and concentration on the food is important".* Interviewee 4, Male, Christian

5.10 Communication

Communication in this study is the degree of freedom individuals have in freely expressing their opinions before, during or after mealtimes, which build their confidence and enable them to learn/share ideas with others.

Q.24	**How do you feel communication at mealtimes contribute to your family's development?**
	Muslim Females: Themes in common were: learning; confidence building Differences were reflected in the following domains: freedom of expression; fluency; respect; assurance; table etiquette; cultural continuity

	Christian Females: Themes in common were: learning; confidence building Differences were reflected in the following domains: respect; idea sharing/experience; affection
	Muslim Males: Themes in common were: learning; confidence building Differences were reflected in the following areas: overcome challenges; ethics; love; understanding; reduce complaints; story-telling
	Christian Males: Themes in common were: confidence building; learning Differences were reflected in the following domain: respect; advice; story-telling; mould behaviour
Observational data	No communication was observed in a majority of families during dinner. But after dinner, a majority of them discussed lengthily before leaving the dinner table. Prayer was observed at the dinner table. However, open communication and interaction was observed in a minority of families during dinner. The atmosphere was cordial and friendly. Some families used spoons when eating. A mother was observed sharing jokes with her children
Comparative summary of the findings	Learning and confidence building are commonalities shared by the Muslim (7th, 19th, 21st, 25th, 31st, 33rd, 35th, 37th and 39th interviewees) and Christian (1st, 5th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 23rd, 27th and 29th interviewees) females, which was emphasised by them as key ingredients of communication at mealtimes. This is reflected in the following statement: *"It is a practice as they will take it outside. To communicate too much at the dinner table is regarded as being rude or disrespectful. But with regards the development of the children, I think it contributes positively to their development because they will have the basic education that you should not talk when you are eating because of what will be the outcome. The way you do things such as washing your hands is a good part of education so that when they grow up they will pass these practices on to their own children as a good practice and the culture will keep its continuity, our cultural values will not be easily forgotten and it builds the confidence of the children".* Interviewee 39, Female, Muslim A majority of the Muslim (8th, 20th, 22nd, 26th, 32nd, 34th, 36th and 38th interviewees) and Christian (4th, 6th, 10th, 14th, 24th and 30th interviewees) males emphasised similar views in the areas of confidence building and learning as the main ingredients communication brings to their families at mealtimes as reflected in the following statement: *"Communication helps develop the knowledge of the children as they will*

	be able to listen what adults say and understand their implications in life. Sometimes communication can be an opportunity for idea sharing, which can be helpful to the development of the children. Communication plays an important role in the family because generally communication is very important as it builds confidence in the family. If you do not communicate within the family there will always be problems, lack of understanding. But if there is communication within your family everything will always go smoothly without any problem. Nobody will be hurt, it will prevent people from making unnecessary complains, you will do things correctly". Interviewee 40, Male, Muslim

5.11 Factors influencing families' meal social interaction behaviour

This section provides a comprehensive summary of the themes, sub-themes and the factors that influenced families' meal social interaction behaviour. It also provides the gender categories of the Christian and Muslim families, including comments made by each with regards the factors that influenced their families' meal behaviour.

Table 5.1: A Summary of the factors that influenced families' meal social interaction behaviour

Theme	Sub-theme	Factor	CM in family	CF in family	MM in family	MF in family	Comment
Religion	**Spiritual beliefs**	Prayers	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		God provider	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Respect	-	√	√	√	Embraced by a majority (CF, MM, MF)
		Gratification	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Food ethics	-	√	-	√	Embraced by a majority of CF and MF
		Religious beliefs	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Food type	-	-	√	√	Embraced by a majority of Muslims only (MM, MF)
		Family unity	-	√	-	-	Emphasised by a majority of CF only
		Blessing	√	-	-	-	Emphasised by a majority of CM
	Cultural values	Food ethics	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Respect	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families

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		Prayers	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Gratification		√		√	Embraced by a majority of females regardless of religion (CF, MF)
		Family unity	√				Emphasised by a majority of CM only
		Authority/control			√		Emphasised by a majority of MM only
CM,		Meal sharing	√		√		Emphasised by a majority males regardless of religion (CM, MM)
		Task distinction		√			Emphasised by a majority of CF only
		Gender distinction				√	Emphasised by a majority of MF only
	Traditional practices	Food ethics	√		√	√	Emphasised by a majority (CM, MM, MF), but less by CF
		Prayers	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Respect	√		√		Emphasised by a majority of males regardless of religion (CM, MM)
		Gratification			√	√	Emphasised by a majority of Muslims only(MM, MF)
		Control/authority	√				Emphasised by a majority of CM only
		Sense of responsibility				√	Emphasised by a majority of MF only
		Sympathy				√	Emphasised by a majority of MF only
	Social bonding	Family unity	√	√	√		Emphasised by a majority (CM, CF, MM), but less by MF
		Cultural values			√		Emphasised by a majority of MM only
		Food ethics				√	Emphasised by a majority of MF only

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		Sharing	√		√		Emphasised by a majority of males regardless of religion (CM, MM)
		Respect		√			Emphasised by a majority of CF only
		Moral education				√	Emphasised by a majority of MF only
		Togetherness	√		√		Emphasised by a majority males regardless of religion (CM, MM)
		Affection		√			Emphasised by a majority of CF only
		Control/authority				√	Emphasised by a majority of MF only
		Prayer	√	√	√		Emphasised by a majority (CM, CF, MM), but less by MF
Ethnicity	**Tribe**	Food ethics	√				Emphasised by a majority of CM only
		Modernity		√			Emphasised by a majority of CF only
		Respect	√		√		Emphasised by a majority of males regardless of religion (CM, MM)
		Identity		√		√	Emphasised by a majority of females regardless of religion (CF, MF)
		Acceptance			√		Emphasised by a majority of MM only
	Region of origin	Food ethics	√			√	Emphasised by a majority (CM, MF), but less by CF and MM
		Respect	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Sharing	√				Emphasised by a majority of CM only
		Gender distinction			√		Emphasised by a majority of MM only
		Hierarchy			√		Emphasised by a majority of MM only

	Cultural beliefs	Food ethics	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Respect			√	√	Emphasised by a majority of Muslims only (MM, MF)
		Food type			√	√	Emphasised by a majority of Muslims only (MM, MF)
	Assumptions	Prayers	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Food ethics	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Respect	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Gratification				√	Emphasised by a majority of MF only
		Sense of responsibility		√			Emphasised by a majority of CF only
		God provider				√	Emphasised by a majority of MF only
Conformity	**Togetherness**	Family cohesion	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Affection	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Idea sharing	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Respect			√	√	Emphasised by a majority of Muslims only (MM, MF)
	Obedience	Respect	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Family cohesion	√		√		Emphasised by a majority of Christians only (CM, MM)
		Authority	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Family unity/stability		√		√	Emphasised by a majority of females regardless of religion (CF, MF)
		Moral ethics		√			Emphasised by a majority of CF only

		Love		√			Emphasised by a majority of CF only
	Conformed behaviour	Food ethics	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Respect		√		√	Emphasised by a majority of females regardless of religion (CF, MF)
	Meal sharing	Building relationship	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Affection	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Respect			√	√	Emphasised by a majority of Muslims only (MM, MF)
		Unity	√				Emphasised by a majority of CM only
Reference Groups	**Age**	Respect	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Hierarchy	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Wisdom	√		√	√	Emphasised by a majority (CM, MM, MF), but less by CF
		Authority/guidance	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Experience			√	√	Emphasised by a majority of Muslims only (MM, MF)
	Gender	No impact	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Gender distinction	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
	Associates	Idea sharing	√	√		√	Emphasised by a majority (CM, CF, MF), but less by MM
		Regulation/control		√		√	Emphasised by a majority of females regardless of religion (CF, MF)
		Building relationship	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
	Decision-making	Planning	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families

		Authority/hierarchy/guidance/control	√	√	√		Emphasised by a majority (CM, CF, MM), but less by MF
		Development				√	Emphasised by a majority of MF only
		Family unity/stability		√		√	Emphasised by a majority of females regardless of religion (CF, MF)
	Extended families	Background differences	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Economic/financial constraints		√	√	√	Emphasised by a majority (CF, MM, MF), but less by CM
		Domestic chores			√	√	Emphasised by a majority of Muslims only (MM, MF)
	Identity	Position/rank	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
Social class	**Income**	Food quality	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Food quantity	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Food variety	√	√	√		Emphasised by a majority (CM, CF, MF), but less by MM
		Happiness	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Authority/control			√	√	Emphasised by a majority of Muslims only (MM, MF)
	Occupation	Lateness/time constraint	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Participation	√	√	√		Emphasised by a majority (CM, CF, MM), but less by MF
		Absence			√	√	Emphasised by a majority of Muslims only (MM, MF)
	Education	Moral ethics	√	√	√		Emphasised by a majority (CM, CF, MM), but less by MF

			CM	CF	MM	MF	
		Hygiene	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Knowledge			√		Emphasised by a majority of MM only
		Civilisation		√			Emphasised by a majority of CF only
		Balanced diet/food quality	√		√		Emphasised by a majority of males regardless of religion (CM, MM)
		Table etiquette		√		√	Emphasised by a majority of females regardless of religion (CF, MF)
		Family cohesion	√		√		Emphasised by a majority of males regardless of religion (CM, MM)
	Authority	Hierarchy/boundaries	√		√		Emphasised by a majority of males regardless of religion (CM, MM)
		Control	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Family unity/stability/peace	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Decision-making				√	Emphasised by a majority of MF only
Family Meal behaviour	**Family meal behaviour**	Food ethics	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Respect	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Authority		√	√	√	Emphasised by a majority (CF, MM, MF), but less by CM
		Prayer		√	√	√	Emphasised by a majority (CF, MM, MF), but less by CM
Communication	**Communication**	Confidence building	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families
		Learning	√	√	√	√	Predominant in all families

B. Phase 2 of the study – Businesses

The second phase of this research covers the application of the results obtained in phase 1 of the study on practices of food retailers and producers. Figure 5.2 presents the findings obtained from the primary data of interview responses of businesses. In identifying the impacts of the factors used in phase 1 of the study on businesses, the researcher carried out 20 in-depth face to face interviews (16 food retailers and 4 food manufacturers). The results from the 20 interviewees are presented and analysed in this section of the thesis.

5.6 Analysis of the results for Food Manufacturers and Retailers

This section of the research broadly discussed the schematic summary of the research, the emerging research themes from the verified results of families in order to identify their attendant effects on businesses (food retailers and manufacturers).

5.6.1 Research Schematic diagram for Food Manufacturers and Retailers

Figure 5.2 is a schematic summary of the themes that emerged from businesses during the semi-structured interviews. It is a representation of the issues identified as factors influencing the operations of food retailing and manufacturing companies in Sierra Leone. These themes include: business religious values; communication; customers' food ethics; hierarchy; customer retention; social group; business ethics; education/training; business finance; and product pricing.

To underpin this study's contribution to knowledge, it is evident that all the themes in the schematic summary (see Figure 5.2) are new perspectives, which have been added to the concept of collectivism from the dimension of food retailers and manufacturers in Sierra Leone. The emerging themes from the study's findings are reflected in Figure 5.3. A detailed picture of the emerging themes and their attendant sub-themes are presented in appendix 10. The themes that emerged from the field study are fully discussed in the subsequent sections with quotes from the interviewees. A Venn diagram is used to illustrate the themes obtained from the thematic analysis, which were designed and presented in no particular order. The diagram demonstrates how the factors interact with each other and the meanings of the themes, including: religion; ethnicity; conformity, reference groups and social class in the

study of families is the same attributed to businesses (food retailers and producers). In addition, the meanings of the terminologies obtained from the primary data, which were embedded as themes of commonalities from the food retailers and producers are presented in the glossary (See appendix 14)

Figure 5.2: A schematic summary of the verified collectivistic behaviours of food retailers and manufacturers in Sierra Leone

Religion
- Business religious values
- Business success/growth
- Consumer type
- Customer relationship
- Stakeholders
- Customer food ethics

Ethnicity
- Customer relationship
- Respect/politeness/ preferential treatment
- Product quality
- Repeat purchase
- Tribal sentiment
- Communication style
- Hierarchy
- Stakeholders
- Customer retention
- Business religious values
- Personality

Collectivism

Social class
- Affordability
- Micro-credit scheme
- Product quality
- Bad debt
- Profitability
- Staff training
- Preferential treatment
- Product pricing

Reference Groups
- Stakeholders
- Advice/wisdom/experience
- Financial burden
- Business ethics
- Personality/dignitary
- Communication style
- Hierarchy
- Preferential treatment

Conformity
- Customer relationship
- Communication style
- Advertisement/word of mouth
- Customer satisfaction
- Product quality
- Customer retention
- Business success
- Business promotion
- Business ethics
- Respect

Source: Adapted by the author – Kakay, S. (2016)

5.7 Religion

5.7.1 Spiritual beliefs

Q.1	In terms of religion, which of the following factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing business:
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: prayers; business success; prayer times; customer food ethics Differences were reflected in the following domains: God's protection, God provider, God safeguard business, God promote business, public education, manner of approach, negotiation, God's mercy, discounting, targeting, relationship, business expansion
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: inherited practices; prayer times; prayer; skills transfer Differences were reflected in the following areas: business expansion, sustainability, timely payment, incentives
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and manufacturers (1st, 2nd and 4th interviewees) shared commonalities on issues such as prayers and prayer times as the main religious factors influencing the operations of their businesses in terms of supplying retailers and developing customer base respectively. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, in talking about spiritual beliefs, the situation in our country is such that we deal with Muslims and Christians, which affects our business. It affects my business in the sense that when it is time for prayers, most of our customers are inaccessible as they go for prayers at different times of the day. When they go for prayers, especially the Muslims that practice the five daily prayers, we have to wait for them each time we supply their shops with bread, which can cause delay to the way we transact business with them.".* Interview 2, Food manufacturers However, a majority of the food retailers emphasised that God is responsible for their business success and that the type of food consumed by individuals in their community affects their level of sales, while the food manufacturers were more emphatic and concerned about inheritance or transfer of ownership and skills to their descendants. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, I believe prayers influence my business in that the success we seek in*

	life or in whatever we do is largely influenced by the God we believe in. so in that light, one would say pray influences our business positively. In the first place, just like I said, prayer is significant in ensuring that my business prospers, but in the same vein, it also affects the way I conduct business as some of my customers are Muslims and do not buy certain types of food items. So I restrict my business to only those things that the customers in my vicinity are willing to buy". Interviewee 2, Food retailers

Q.2	**How do family religious values affect the way you market your products?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: business success; prayers; consumer type Differences were reflected in the following domains: business location; comfortability; variety; guaranteed sales; God guide; God protects; relationship; turnover; almighty Allah; heaven and earth; product type; beliefs; religion
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: business success Differences were reflected in the following domains: belief system; societal structure; education; sustainability
Comparative summary of the findings	In reiterating the symbolism of religious values in the successful marketing of their products, a majority of food retailers (2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 13th and 14th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 2nd and 4th interviewees) emphasised that the success of their businesses can be attributed to their religious values. This statement is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, in Africa we believe that sacrifices and prayers during the opening of any business help promote its success and ensure it is successful in the long-term. However, the only way I can be able to sustain and promote my business is if I can obtain cheap credit with low interest rate to expand my business."* Interviewee 13, Food retailer However, despite this commonality, a majority of food retailers emphasised prayers and consumer type as critical factors affecting the way they market their products; views less emphasised by a majority of the food producers. This argument is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, Sierra Leone is a small country your relationship with people and the*

	type of consumers you have in your locality can help boost your business significantly and the culture of prayers for success is part of our society".
	Interviewee 7, Food retailers

5.7.2 Cultural values

Q.3	**How do customers' cultural values affect the way you market your products to them?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: religious values; prayers; customer food ethics Differences were reflected in the following domains: gifts; acceptability; spirituality; relationship; prioritising God; negotiation; discount; tribal values; preferential treatment
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: no impact Differences were reflected in the following areas:
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 13th interviewees) emphasised that religious values, prayers and the food type consumed by customers are the main cultural values that influences the way they market their products; factors not emphasised by the food manufacturers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees). This is reflected in the following statement: *Erm, well, the religious aspects, especially prayers influence my business. The community in which my business is located is highly populated with Muslims, and we do not sell some type of products because the consumers in our vicinity do not consume most of those products, especially alcoholic products and food items containing pork products. So most of the consumers do not consume products that are prohibited by the Islamic religion. Some alcoholic products are more profitable than other groceries, so that could cause the sales level to fall".* Interviewee 11, Food retailers

Q.4	**Why do cultural values affect the way you market your products?**
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: prayer; customer food ethics; customer type; business success
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: neighbourhood; acceptability; business location; God's mercy; repeat purchase; prioritising God; patronisation; competitors' tribe; community; profitability; appreciation; sales volume
	Food Manufacturers:
	Themes in common were: no impact
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: investment; prayers; customer type; delay transaction; skills; sustainability
Comparative summary of the findings	In advancing reasons for the influence of cultural values in marketing their products, a majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 2nd and 4th interviewees) shared commonality in the area of business success as a fundamental impediment to marketing. This is shown in the following statement: *"It is because of the way the society is structured and to overcome that requires more education provided to people about its impact on businesses. You know, this can help increase the level of my business success".* Interviewee 2, Food manufacturer However, whilst a majority of the food retailers emphasised prayer, type of product consumed and customer type as factors affecting the marketing of their products; food producers were more emphatic and concerned about the heredity of their businesses by their descendants. This is reflected in the following statement: *"In the first place, my shop is located in a place that is predominantly Muslim, I am not saying there are no Christians in the neighbourhood, but the bulk of the people that buy my products are Muslims. So I only sell products that are acceptable to them, for example, I cannot sell luncheon meat or alcohol drinks. Moreover, when it is time for prayers, especially on Fridays, the level of sales drops as most of our customers goes for prayers".* Interviewee 1, Food retailer

5.7.3 Traditional practices

Q.5	**How do traditional practices affect the way you market your products to consumers?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: no impact Differences were reflected in the following domains: no impact
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: no impact Differences were reflected in the following areas: no impact
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food manufacturers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) presented shared commonalities by emphasising that traditional practices have no impact on the way they market their products to consumers. This is echoed in the following statement: *"It has no influence on my business, I target Sierra Leoneans, I do not target Christians or Muslims, neither do I look at culture or traditional practices"* Interviewee 3, Food manufacturers

5.7.4 Social bonding

Q.6	**How does social bonding affect the marketing of your products?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: neighbours; competitor; elderliness/age; customer relationship Differences were reflected in the following domains: preferential treatment; understanding; age; politeness; profitability; obedience; respect; wisdom; advice; free gifts; relationship; negotiation; discounting; peer groups; friends; relatives; loan; trust; job; decision-making; retention; profit margin
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: neighbours; customer relationships Differences were reflected in the following areas: age; experience; family members; friends; relationship

Comparative summary of the findings	In justifying the influence of social bonding in marketing their products, a majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) shared similar views with food manufacturers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) that neighbourliness and customer relationship are fundamental in the way they market their products to consumers as reflected in the following statement:
	"Well, the people that influence my business are my neighbours really, as most of the shops in the neighbourhood do patronise with us. Though we supply products to shops outside our neighbourhood, but the bulk of the purchase is done by our neighbours as we have good relationship with them".
	Interviewee 4, Food manufacturer
	However, a majority of the food retailers emphasised competitor and elderliness as the key influencer of the way they market their products to consumers; factors less emphasised by the food producers. This is reflected in the following statement:
	"With the encouragement I give to the aging, it can go a long way in attracting other customers and they themselves can act as promoters of my business by talking to other customers about the way I treat them. I believe that can prevent them from going to my competitors".
	Interviewee 12, Food retailer

Q.7	**Why does social bonding affect the way you market your products?**
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: neighbours; relationship building; business growth
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: communication style; business plan; traditional; equitable treatment; preferential treatment; age; recommendation; competitor; decision-making; business ethics; sympathy; customer attraction
	Food Manufacturers:
	Themes in common were: business growth
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: consultation; employees; family members; solidarity

Comparative summary of the findings	In advancing the reasons for the influence of social bonding on the marketing of their products, a majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 6th, 10th, 11th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 2nd and 3rd interviewees) shared commonality in the area of business growth as a fundamental factor for the use of social bonding in the marketing of their products. For example: *"Well, because no man is an island. Sometimes, you need to consult with people, whether they are your employees or family members for the future growth of the business".* Interviewee 3, Food manufacturer However, a majority of food retailers emphasised relationship building and neighbourliness as fundamental social boding factors that affects the marketing of their products; factors less emphasised by food producers. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, because your neighbours are your pillars, if they do not buy from you, it can influence outsiders to do the same thing. So it is very important to have a perfect relationship with them in order to make your business grow".* Interviewee 2, Food retailer

5.8 Ethnicity

5.8.1 Tribe

Q.8	**In terms of ethnicity, which of the following factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing business:**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: respect; preferential treatment; politeness; personality/identity; age/hierarchy Differences were reflected in the following domains: God provider, relationship, business success, customer ethics, equitable treatment, customer satisfaction, communication style, loyalty, discounting, tribe, family beliefs, quality, micro-credit, suppliers, prayer
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: respect; politeness; age/hierarchy; preferential treatment; product quality Differences were reflected in the following areas: equitable treatment, discounting, greetings salutation, relationship, timely payment, communication style, customer retention, repeat purchase, identity,

	frequency, negotiation, customer satisfaction, profitability
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the food retailers (1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 12th, 14th, 15thand 16th interviewees) and manufacturers (1st, 2nd and 3rd interviewees) shared ethnic commonalities in the areas of respect, preferential treatment and politeness as major influencers of their business operations. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, for me I am Fullah, and most times they will patronise with me. But as I said earlier, in Sierra Leone we do things in common and none of those factors influence the way I deal with my customers. However, in terms of identity, especially in Africa, it is traditional to respect personalities or elders when you receive them as customers or when they come visit your business. Generally, I treat them with respect and politeness and give them a lot of attention and communicate with them in a proper manner".* Interviewee 5, Food retailer Despite the avowed similarities, a majority of the food retailers emphasised personality/identity as a major tribal influencing factor in the way they transact business with individuals, whilst a majority of the food manufacturers were emphatic on product quality as the main factor that influences the way they transact business with retailers. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, I don't use them much to promote because what I believe in is the quality of production as that may be able to influence a lot of people to come to you from time to time and may probably be able to make them not to consider other alternatives".* Interviewee 1, Food manufacturer

Q.9	**How does tribe affect the way you market your products to customers?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: identity/personality; respect Differences were reflected in the following domains: competitor; God provider; relationship; environmental outlook; tradition; personality; elders; societal structure; religious beliefs; tribal values; achievement; business growth; language; product type
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: product quality Differences were reflected in the following domains: respect; business promotion; repeat purchase; politeness; perishability; distribution; prayer; communication; quantity; preferential treatment; sales frequency; salesforce;

	competitors; discounting; happiness
Comparative summary of the findings	In reinforcing their argument, a majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) presented divergent views from food producers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) by emphasising identity/personality and respect as fundamental tribal factors they use to market their products. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, I think identity is the most crucial in the Sierra Leone society. Sometimes, you deal with important personalities or elderly people, when they come to your shop to buy. So you are expected to treat them with respect and politeness, otherwise people will start talking bad about you, which can affect the number of people buying from your shop".* Interviewee 1, Food retailer However, a majority of the food producers were emphatic about the importance of product quality in attracting higher consumer purchase rate; factors less emphasised by the food retailers. For example: *"Quality is also important because if your product is good, some retailers even without begging them they will always come to buy from you. If the quality of your product is good, it makes the consumers satisfy, which makes them to always come to buy from you".* Interviewee 4, Food manufacturers

5.8.2 Region of origin

Q.10	**How does customers' region of origin affect the marketing of your products?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: no impact Differences were reflected in the following domains: no impact
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: no impact Differences were reflected in the following areas: no impact
Comparative summary of the findings	Emphasising the impact of customers' region of origin on the marketing of their food products, a majority of food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th) suggested that region of origin has no impact on their businesses. For example:

	"Well, no, it doesn't affect my business, because irrespective of people's social groups, or their region of origin, we are all involved in chicken as a meal. Unlike pork, Muslims do not eat pork, but for chicken it cuts across all ethnic groups and religions as everybody eat chicken and egg. I treat all my customers the same, the only difference is that I might employ somebody to take the products to their cars or load it in their vehicles".
	Interviewee 1, Food manufacturers

5.8.3 Cultural beliefs

Q.11	How do customers' cultural beliefs affect the way you market your products to them?
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: identity; respect/dignity; tribal sentiment; preferential treatment Differences were reflected in the following domains: customary sacrifices; loyalty; hygiene; communication style; food type
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: identity; politeness; preferential treatment Differences were reflected in the following areas: free market; discounting; competitors; negotiation; equitable treatment
Comparative summary of the findings	In touting the impact of cultural beliefs on their businesses, a majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 4th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 13th, 14thand 15th interviewees) presented similar views with those of food manufacturers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) by emphasising identity and preferential treatment as fundamental to their companies' marketing strategy in attracting increased sales volume. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, identity of the customers is very important, especially those that buy from us frequently and in large quantities. When the retailers that buy our products in large quantity come to buy, we usually give them preferential treatment to ensure that they do not go to our competitors. Sometimes, we even give them discount just to keep them happy, which ensures that the come again. However, giving them discount affects the profitability of the business and sometimes, we negotiate with them by explaining the circumstance of the effect of the discount on the business. But generally, we treat all our customers the same".* Interviewee 4, Food manufacturer However, a majority of food retailers presented differing views from food manufacturers by emphasising respect and tribal sentiment as cultural influencing factors, whilst food producers were more emphatic about politeness. For example:

	"Well, I think identity is the most crucial in the Sierra Leone society. Sometimes, you deal with important personalities or elderly people, when they come to your shop to buy. So you are expected to treat them with respect, otherwise people will start talking bad about you, which can affect the number of people buying from your shop". Interviewee 1, Food retailers

Q.12	**Why do cultural beliefs affect the way you market your products?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: prayers; respect; repeat purchase; politeness; communication style; customer relationship Differences were reflected in the following domains: age, acceptability; responsibility; customer retention; business success/growth; sales generation; competitor; sales promotion; turnover; obedience
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: respect; politeness; prayers; repeat purchase; customer relationship, communication style Differences were reflected in the following domains: business growth; product quality; communication style; brand; customer loyalty
Comparative summary of the findings	In justifying the symbolism of cultural beliefs in marketing their products, a majority of the food retailers (2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) shared commonality in the areas of respect, prayers; repeat purchase, communication style, politeness and building customer relationship as emblematic in their business dealings. For example: *"Well, politeness and respect counts hugely when dealing with customers. The better you talk to people, the more they will come to your business. If you are polite in communicating with your customers and respecting them, will make them come again and again. So it influences greatly the number of customers the company is able to retain and the number of new customers recruited. As the existing customers will always talk about your company to new prospects".* Interviewee 3, Food manufacturer

5.8.4 Assumptions

Q.13	**How do customers' assumptive practices affect the way you market your food products to them?**
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: no impact
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: no impact
	Food Manufacturers:
	Themes in common were: no impact
	Differences were reflected in the following areas: no impact
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) reiterated that consumers' assumptive practices have no effect on the way they transact business with them. An example of this statement is re-echoed below: *"No, none of them influence the way I interact with my customers. My primary objective is to ensure that I talk to my customers nice, be supportive of them and encourage them to come again…"* Interviewee 6, Food retailer

5.9 Conformity

5.9.1 Togetherness

Q.14	**In terms of conformity, which of the following factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing business:**
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: politeness; respect; repeat purchase; communication style; advertisement/word of mouth; customer relationship
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: customer satisfaction, customer retention, impulsive buying, staff training, negotiation, competitors, sharing, free gifts, loyalty, honesty, obedience, age, gender

	Food Manufacturers:
	Themes in common were: politeness; respect; product quality; repeat purchase; communication style
	Differences were reflected in the following areas: relationship, customer retention, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, recruitment/training
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food manufacturers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) posited identical perspectives on factors such as politeness, respect, repeat purchase and communication style as vital togetherness issues that influenced the way they interact with their customers. For example: *"Well, truly, I always like to encourage my customers, and I always make sure I am polite with them and talking to them appropriately. I have learnt over the years how to talk to my customers. So I have built the capability to influence my customers positively. I will try to convince them through verbal negotiation until they buy to me. So through respect and politeness, I always employ an open door policy to anybody that is interested in buying my food items. I always make sure that I am guaranteed a repeat purchase and definitely many customers I have done business with do come again".* Interviewee 6, Food retailer Conversely, a majority of the food retailers emphasised advertisement/word of mouth and relationship building as vital to their business success, which were less emphasised by the food manufacturers. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, politeness influences my business tremendously. Eh, sometimes, if you are polite to your customers and talk to them nicely, it can help attract other customers as your loyal customers will talk to others through word of mouth. This can result in increased and fast sales with a faster turnover".* Interviewee 13, Food retailer

Q.15	**How does togetherness affect the way you market your products to your customers?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: politeness; respect; customer satisfaction; building customer relationship; customer retention Differences were reflected in the following domains: loyalty; audience; happy customer; listening; recommendation; staff training; manner of approach; build business image; business improvement; improve customer base; word of mouth/advertisement; profitability; competitors; prospective customers; business promotion; obedience; hierarchy; repeat purchase;

	communication skills; open society
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: politeness; product quality; customer retention Differences were reflected in the following domains: good customer conduct; communication style; peaceful approach; repeat purchase; impulsive buying
Comparative summary of the findings	In highlighting how togetherness affect the marketing of their products, a majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 2nd and 3rd interviewees) shared similar views by emphasising that politeness and customer retention as fundamental togetherness factors that influenced the way they deal with their customers. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, togetherness can only be achieved by being polite to your customers as that can help to increase their level of satisfaction. You know, a satisfied customer is a happy customer, so one need to always make sure that your customers are happy by treating them with respect and dignity and approach them in a good manner as that is the only way you can promote your business and you can be able to retain them, otherwise they will look for alternatives".* Interviewee 2, Food retailers However, despite the similarities displayed by the food retailers and producers, there were dissimilarities as the food retailers were more emphatic about customer satisfaction and building formidable relationship as the fundamental influencers of togetherness; whilst the food retailers were more emphatic about product quality as instrumental for customer retention. For example: *"Well, togetherness is largely influenced by the politeness culture, which influence the way we do business with our customers as we need to talk to them politely at all times to encourage them to come again. But I believe quality is very important because if your product is good, some retailers even without prolonged negotiation, they will always come to buy from you. If the quality of your product is good, it makes the consumers satisfy and happy, which further guarantees repeat purchase".* Interviewee 4, Food manufacturer

5.9.2 Obedience

Q.16	**How does being obedient to customers affect the marketing of your products?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: respect; politeness Differences were reflected in the following domains: advertisement; staff training; basic morals; tradition; negotiation; honesty; open door policy; repeat purchase; competitors; credibility; relationship; sharing; personality
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: politeness; respect; product quality Differences were reflected in the following areas: repeat purchase; customer satisfaction
Comparative summary of the findings	In emphasising the importance of obedience when marketing their products to consumers, a majority of the food retailers (3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 9th, 10th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food manufacturers (1st, 2nd and 3rd interviewees) shared commonality in the areas of respect and politeness as being critical in attracting customers to their businesses. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, I think respect is the most paramount thing I give to every customer that comes to buy from me. Though, I normally give honesty and obedience consideration in my business, but respect comes first. Well, I value and respect my customers because they are the people that actually made me who I am today and therefore respecting them and treating them with honesty will go a long way in influencing my business relationship with them an even act to strengthen the bond between us".* Interviewee 14, Food manufacturers However, despite the shared similarities, a majority of food producers emphasised product quality as central in influencing customers to buy their products; a factor less emphasised by the food retailers. For example: *"Well, I know that I am able to retain the clientele which may promote growth and ensure that the eggs are fresh and good, and the chickens are tasty and of better quality, that probably may help in the customers coming to me from time to time instead of going to another business".* Interviewee 1, Food manufacturer

5.9.3 Conformed behaviour

Q.17	**How does conforming to customers' norms affect the marketing of your products?**
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: respect; politeness
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: discounting; customer satisfaction; prayers; repeat purchase; dignity; audience; better relationship
	Food Manufacturers:
	Themes in common were: respect; politeness; business success
	Differences were reflected in the following areas: business expansion; manner of approach; communication style
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of food retailers, including the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th interviewees and food producers, including the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees shared commonality in the areas of politeness and respect as fundamental conformed behaviour that affects the way they market their products to consumers. This is shown in the following statement:
	"Well, I think politeness ensures good behaviour, as it increases my business, promote expansion and increase my customer base - people willing to buy my products".
	Interviewee 2, Food manufacturer
	However, whilst a majority of food producers emphasised business success as key aspect of conformed behaviour; a majority of food retailers were less emphatic about it influence in the marketing of their products. For example:
	"Well, knowing your customer base, especially those that are important is necessary for the growth of the business. So we usually ensure that, like I said earlier, we pay attention to them and their needs, while continuing to seek new and important customers".
	Interviewee 4, Food manufacturer

5.9.4 Sharing

Q.18	How does sharing affect the marketing of your products?
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: free gift; business promotion
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: awareness raising; customer attraction; sales; profit; respect; obedience; impulsive buying
	Food Manufacturers:
	Themes in common were: no impact
	Differences were reflected in the following areas: no impact
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the food retailers (5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th and 16th interviewees) shared differing views from food manufacturers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th) about the influence of sharing in the marketing of their products as they emphasised that free gifts are most often used as a promotional instrument; a factor reiterated by food producers as having no impact in the marketing of their products. This is reflected in the following statement:
	"There are some customers, if you give them a 'mint' or 'sweet' for free, they will make it a habit of exploiting your kindness anytime they want to buy a food item, and they expect you to give them for free. But on the other hand, if the customers are reasonable, it is a way of promoting your business, as anytime they need to buy any food item, they will always recall that kindness and come to your shop to buy. So it creates loyal customers and helps enhance the bond between you and the customers".
	Interviewee 9, Food retailer

5.10 Reference groups

5.10.1 Age

Q.19	In terms of reference groups, which of the following factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing business:
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: neighbours; decision-making; competitors; customer relationship; friends; elderliness/hierarchy; respect
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: negotiation; discounting; free gifts; politeness; customer satisfaction; repeat purchase; preferential treatment; obedience; suppliers; advertisement/word of mouth;

	customer retention; family relations; business success
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: neighbours; decision-making; employees Differences were reflected in the following areas: quality; discounting; advice; relationship; trust; customers; visitors; business success
Comparative summary of the findings	In touting the influence of age on their businesses, a majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 13th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and manufacturers (1st, 2nd and 4th interviewees) shared commonalities in the area of experience, respect, customer relationship building and wisdom as key age influencing factors in their business operations as reflected in the following statement: *"Well, I always look up to elders and respect them when doing business with them. I receive a lot advice from them, which sometimes can be useful to the growth of my business. They are a good source of wisdom to my business. It influences my relationship with the whole family because when they are not around their children or their relatives will come to buy from me. This helps build my relationship with the entire family and eventually boosts my sales as I can freely sometimes give them the products on loan because of the trust that exists between us".* Interviewee 7, Food retailer However, whilst a majority of the food retailers were emphatic about the influence of competitors, friends/families, and elderliness/hierarchy; a majority of the food manufacturers placed emphasis on their employees and customers as the main influencing factor in their operations. For example: *"In terms of age, it is symbolic as we use it to seek advice from the most experience staff and also family members as to the way forward in expanding the company. Like I said, it is important to also talk to your more experience customers or employees by seeking their advice on the sales of certain products".* Interviewee 3, Food manufacturer

Q.20	**How does age affect the way you market your products to your customers?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: preferential treatment; communication style; respect, hierarchy

	Differences were reflected in the following domains: loan security; traditional requirement; building relationship; community; obedience; business success; profitability; advice source; wisdom source; financial costs; societal perspective; competitors; free gifts; discounting; negotiation; cultural perspective; business promotion
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: decision-making; hierarchy Differences were reflected in the following domains: discounting; negotiation; advice source; business success
Comparative summary of the findings	In emphasising how age affects the way they market their products to consumers, a majority of the food retailers (3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th interviewees) suggested preferential treatment, hierarchy, communication style and respect as fundamental age factors that influenced their dealings with consumers, which was divergent from the views presented by a majority of the food producers (1st, 2nd and 4th interviewees), who were more emphatic about decision-making as an influencing age factor. This is shown in the following statement: *"Well, I think age is paramount in the way you relate with your customers. At times, we deal with our peer groups as customers and some other times; we deal with elders as customers. So when we are dealing with our own peer group, we normally relax the conversation, but with elders, you should talk to them with respect and they can influence the business as you have to give them preferential treatment by dealing with them first, and talk to them in a polite manner and even sometimes negotiate prices with them. It affects my business negatively because we don't normal make any profit from them".* Interviewee 5, Food retailers

5.10.2 Gender

Q.21	**How does customers' gender affect the way you market of your products?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: no impact Differences were reflected in the following domains: no impact
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: no impact Differences were reflected in the following areas: no impact

Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4^{th}interviewees) shared common view about the influence of gender as both categories reiterated that it has no impact in the way they market their products to customers. For example: *"No, none of the factors influence my business as the business I do cut across all ethnic groups. So I don't discriminate my customers. But top class people do most times patronise with us".* Interviewee 11, Food retailers

5.10.3 Associates

Q.22	**How do associates affect the marketing of your products?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: competitors; suppliers; neighbours Differences were reflected in the following domains: partners; peer group; friends; customers; relations; free gifts; importers; wholesalers
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: competitors; government; neighbours Differences were reflected in the following areas: decision-making; price; employees; customers
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the food retailers (4th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food producers (2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) shared similar views on aspects such as competitors and neighbours as the main influencers of the way they market their products. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, it can help promote my business because if you ill-treat one customer, when they return to their neighbourhood through word of mouth, they can explain that to family members, and neighbours, especially as I have a lot of customers coming from the hinterlands such as Bo, kenema, Kailahun. So that can give your business a bad advert, which can adversely affect your sales volume, and the level of profit. But if you are nice to them and treat them with respect, which can generate a new set of customers for your business and prevent them from going to your competitors".* Interviewee 7, Food retailers However, the food retailers shared dissimilar views from food manufacturers as they were more emphatic about suppliers as the main influencers of the way they market their products, whilst the food producers laid emphasis on government involvement as fundamental to the way they market their

	products. For example:
	"Well, may be like what we are doing now, by getting the government involved in taking decision whether to still continue to allow these people to import eggs from outside the country, which is not very good for our business. If we are able to succeed with the government may be get some kind of arrangement whereby the government can increase custom duties so that there will be a level playing field. Other than that, we will be suffering from those imported eggs, but if we are able to get the government to provide a level playing field, probably we will be able to continue to do business even in the face of the imported eggs".
	Interviewee 1, Food manufacturer

5.10.4 Decision-making

Q.23	**How does customers' decision-making affect the way you market your products?**
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: business success; business ethics
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: profitability; increased sales; advice; free gifts/promotion; loyal customers; negotiation; discounting; family; friends
	Food Manufacturers:
	Themes in common were: business success; business ethics
	Differences were reflected in the following areas: discounting; price; government; time; employees; customers; family; friends
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the food retailers (1st, 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) shared commonalities in the area of business success/growth and ethics as a key symbolism of decision-making. This is reflected in the following statement:
	"Decision-making makes my business to grow and enable me as businessman to determine what is wrong and what is right, which enables the business to push forward".
	Interviewee 14, Food retailer

5.10.5 Extended families

Q.24	**How do extended families affect the marketing of your products?**
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: financial burden
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: externality; relationship; free gifts; profitability; dependency; competitors
	Food Manufacturers:
	Themes in common were: financial burden
	Differences were reflected in the following areas: profitability
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) re-echoed similar views that extended families affect the marketing of their products adversely in terms of the financial burden they pose to the sustainability of their businesses. For example: *"Well, I think extended families and my neighbours mostly affect my business. You know, if you have so many extended families, most of them will be dependent upon you. So if you give them too much preference, it can have a negative effect on your business. My neighbours, on the other hand, are very important part of my business because for them to buy from me, I need to ensure that we have a better relationship, otherwise they will go to my competitors. So building a relationship with them is important".* Interviewee 8, Food retailers

5.10.6 Identity

Q.25	**How does customers' identity affect the way you sell to them?**
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: age/hierarchy; preferential treatment; personality/dignitary
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: peer group; respect; obedience; advice; wisdom; relationship building; sales promotion; profitability

	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: age/hierarchy Differences were reflected in the following areas: advice; experience; customer relationship building
Comparative summary of the findings	In highlighting the symbolism of identity in marketing their products, a majority of food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 13th, 14th and 15th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 3rd and 4th interviewees) presented similar views about the symbolic role of age influencing the way they sell their products. This is reflected in the following statements: *"In terms of age, it is symbolic as we use it to seek advice from the most experience staff and also family members as to the way forward in expanding the company. Like I said, it is important to also talk to your more experience customers or employees by seeking their advice on the sales of certain products. Sometimes, it can be family members or friends and with their advice, I think they can help the business in making the difference".* Interviewee 3, Food manufacturers However, a majority of the food retailers emphasised preferential treatment and personality/dignitary as fundamental to the way they treat or sell their products to customers; a factor less emphasised by the food producers. This is shown in the following statement: *"...But for people around society, there are customers that influence my business in terms of dignitaries because I have to have many links with other people in my business. So as a result, I actually do seek those people to help promote my business. The dignitaries actually influence my business because in my country, you have to have link and people in society that are very much successful are people you have to link up with. For example, they sometimes help in the clearing of my goods at the customs without paying a lot of dues. As a result, I always give preference to them because I know what I will gain from them. It is very clear that when they come to buy from me, I always treat them preferentially compared with other customers".* Interviewee 14, Food retailer

5.11 Social class

5.11.1 Income

Q.26	**In terms of social class, which of the following factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing business:**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: affordability; micro-credit schemes; product pricing Differences were reflected in the following domains: bad debt, customer satisfaction, decision-making, discounting, sympathy, free gifts, word of mouth/advertisement, variety, respect, neighbours
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: product quality; product pricing; affordability Differences were reflected in the following areas: price differentiation, politeness, respect, customer retention, price control, production cost, impulsive buying, timely payment, communication, customer satisfaction, relationship, age
Comparative summary of the findings	In emphasising the impact of social class on their businesses, a majority of the food retailers (2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th, 11th, 12th, 13th and 16th interviewees) and manufacturers (2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) shared similar views on issues such as economic (low income) and/or affordability and the pricing of products as the main challenging factors in the operations of their businesses. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Well, I will say the income of the consumers largely influence my business as the more income people earn, the more sales I will make. Well, in my community, we have a mixture of customers of different income groups. Most times, those in the high income categories buy expensive food stuffs and do not ask for credit, while the middle and low income earners, during the course of the month, sometimes will request for loans. That can affect the business as it can delay my purchase of items from wholesalers. Some of the loans will end up becoming a bad debt, which can affect not only the profit margin, but the survival of the business".* Interviewee 16, Food retailer Conversely, whilst a majority of the food retailers emphasised training and the provision of micro-credit schemes as way of enhancing or expanding their operations, the food manufacturers were more emphatic on product quality as an instrumental factor for their business success. For example: *"...Well, it probably has some influence because they are happy; they are satisfied as they have a good quality product and at the same time the service they get from you, your communication with them, probably will make them*

	more satisfied to buy and go with a lot of satisfaction". Interviewee 1, Food manufacturers

Q.27	**How does income affect the way you market your products to your customers?**
	Food Retailers: Themes in common were: profitability; bad debt; affordability Differences were reflected in the following domains: micro-credit scheme; sales volume; negotiation; discounting; slow returns; profitability; borrowing; loans; business expansion; interest rates; price control; suppliers; importers; turnover; competitors
	Food Manufacturers: Themes in common were: bad debt; profitability Differences were reflected in the following domains: communication; respect; manner of approach; relationship; loans; credit; raw materials; business expansion; affordability
Comparative summary of the findings	In highlighting how income affects the marketing of their products to consumers, a majority of food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) shared similar views with food producers (1st, 3rd and 4th interviewees) that bad debt and profitability are the major income factors that influenced their transaction with consumers. This is reflected in the following statement: *"Sometimes, I look at all those factors, but one that affects my business the most is the level of income earned by the customers, which influence the quantity of sales I make per month. As most of customers are low income earners or very poor people. Most times because the customers are low income earners, we are forced to reduce prices for them, which can adversely affect the amount of profit I make. As a result, the sympathy I have for them, sometimes influence my business negatively, just like I said, as it reduces my volume of profit and can even results in products taken on loan, not to be repaid".* Interviewee 13, Food retailer However, a majority of the food retailers emphasised the issue of affordability as a prime income factor that affects the marketing of their products, a factor less emphasised by the food producers as reflected in the following statement: *"Well, the income people earn strongly influence my business because as most of my customers are lower income families and cannot afford to buy. So some of them take the products on loan, some come with insufficient cash,*

	some make part payment or deposit, some make advance payments, some take the products on loan until the end of the month. So if the number of people that come to take the products on loans are higher, it can affect the amount of money I have available to buy new supplies, but if on the other hand, most of customers make payment in advance, that increases my liquidity position and make it easier for me to buy more products".
	Interviewee 8, Food retailers

5.11.2 Job/occupation

Q.28	**How does customers' occupation affect the way you sell to them?**
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: loans/credit;
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: bad debt; supplies; liquidity; profitability; affordability; product pricing; communication; respect
	Food Manufacturers:
	Themes in common were: no impact
	Differences were reflected in the following areas:
Comparative summary of the findings	In emphasising the impact of customers' occupation on the marketing of their products, a majority of the food retailers (2nd, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 13th, 14th and 16th interviewees) shared dissimilar views with food producers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4thinterviewees) that the type of occupation of consumers mostly determines whether they can pay for the products or take them on loan/credit; which were not reflected in the views of the food producers. A sample of this statement is shown below:
	"...because in African, you know, people get money when working in the civil service. So when they come to your shop, they spend money freely and as a matter of fact any businessman would prefer such customers. With the middle income earners, most times in the mid or towards the end of the month, their incomes are exhausted and they find it difficult to buy, you know. The low income earners always struggle to purchase food items. As a result, many of the customers in the middle or lower income groups always request for credit, which can affect the way I conduct my business. Some will end up paying when you give them credit; others end up as a bad debt, which can significantly reduce our profit margin".
	Interviewee 9, Food retailer

5.11.3 Education

Q.29	**How does education affect the way you market your products?**
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: staff training
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: taxation; qualified staff; connectivity, national vocational programmes; qualified individuals; employees; basic morals; communication
	Food Manufacturers:
	Themes in common were: staff training
	Differences were reflected in the following areas: cost of production; price control
Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the food retailers (1st, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 16th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) shared commonality about the significance of staff training as an educational factor in enhancing employees' skills in the marketing of their products. For example: *"Well, the most important way of promoting the business is to train the staff in basic moral and social interaction with customers. They have to learn basic morals, how to approach customers, and how to talk to customers"* Interviewee 4, Food retailer

5.11.4 Authority

Q.30	**How does customers' as authority affect the way you sell your products to them?**
	Food Retailers:
	Themes in common were: preferential treatment;
	Differences were reflected in the following domains: loyalty; personality; authority
	Food Manufacturers:
	Themes in common were: no impact
	Differences were reflected in the following areas: no impact

Comparative summary of the findings	A majority of the food retailers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th interviewees) and food producers (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th interviewees) presented divergent views about authority in terms of the preferential treatment of their customers, as a majority of food producers emphasised that it does not affect the way they market their products. An example of this statement is presented below: *"...I give special preferential treatment to some customers based on their loyalty and personality in society. For example, if some customers that operate a restaurant and buy goods in large quantity, I always give them preference because it results in faster and higher turnover compared to certain customers that buy in small quantities. Sometimes big personalities frequently buy from your shop, it can act as a catalyst in attracting large number of customers to your business, which can increase your sales volume and promote your business in the community".* Interviewee 10, Food retailer

5.11.5 Factors affecting the marketing of the products of food retailing and manufacturing companies

This section provides a comprehensive summary of the themes, sub-themes and the factors that influenced the marketing of the products of food companies. It also provides a summary of the comments made by each with regards the factors that influenced their behaviours when dealing with customers.

Table 5.2: A summary of the factors affecting the marketing of the products of food retailing and manufacturing companies

Theme	Sub-theme	Factor	FR	FM	Comment
Religion	Spiritual beliefs	Prayers	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Business success	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Prayer times	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Customers' food ethics	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Inherited practices		√	Emphasised by a majority of FM only
		Skills transfer		√	Emphasised by a majority of FM only
		Customer type	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
	Cultural values	Religious values	√	no impact	Emphasised by a majority of FR only, but a non-factor to FM
		Prayers	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Customers' food ethics	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Customer type	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Business success	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
	Traditional practices		no impact	no impact	Predominantly stated by all the food companies as a non-factor
	Social bonding	Neighbours	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		competitors	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Elderliness/age	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Customer relationship building	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Business growth	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
Ethnicity	Tribe	Respect	√	√	Predominant in all food companies

		Preferential treatment	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Politeness	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Identity/Personality	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Age/hierarchy	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Product quality		√	Emphasised by a majority of FM only
	Region of origin		no impact	no impact	Predominantly stated by all the food companies as a non-factor
	Cultural beliefs	Identity	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Dignity	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Tribal sentiment	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Preferential treatment	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Prayers	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Repeat purchase	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Politeness	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Communication style	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Customer relationship	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Respect	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
	Assumptions		no impact	no impact	Predominantly stated by all the food companies as a non-factor
Conformity	**Togetherness**	Politeness	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Respect	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Repeat purchase	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Communication style	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Advertisement/word of mouth	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Customer relationship	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Product quality		√	Emphasised by a majority of FM only
		Customer satisfaction	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Customer retention	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
	Obedience	Respect	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Politeness	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Product quality		√	Emphasised by a majority of FM only
	Conformed behaviour	Respect	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Politeness	√	√	Predominant in all food companies

		Business success		√	Emphasised by a majority of FM only
	Meal sharing	Free gifts	√	no impact	Emphasised by a majority of FR only but a non-factor to FM
		Business promotion	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
Reference Groups	Age	neighbours	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Decision-making	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		competitors	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Communication style	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Customer relationship	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Friends	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Elderliness/hierarchy	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Respect	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		employees		√	Emphasised by a majority of FM only
		Preferential treatment	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
	Gender		no impact	no impact	Predominantly stated by all the food companies as a non-factor
	Associates	Competitors	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Suppliers	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		neighbours	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Government		√	Emphasised by a majority of FM only
	Decision-making	Business success	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Business ethics	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
	Extended families	Financial burden	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
	Identity	Age/hierarchy	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Preferential treatment	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Personality/dignitary	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
Social class	Income	Affordability	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
		Micro-credit scheme	√		Emphasised by a majority of FR only
		Product pricing		√	Emphasised by a majority of FM only
		Product quality		√	Emphasised by a majority of FM only
		Profitability	√	√	Predominant in all food companies

		Bad debt	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
	Occupation	loans/credit	√	no impact	Emphasised by a majority of FR only, but a non-factor to FM
	Education	staff training	√	√	Predominant in all food companies
	Authority	Preferential treatment	√	no impact	Emphasised by a majority of FR only, but a non-factor to FM

5.12 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has discussed the analyses of the findings obtained from the field in the first and second stages of the research, and the implications of the findings on the study. The next chapter of the research will focus on the discussion of the findings obtained from the field.

Chapter Six

Discussion chapter

6.0 Aim of the chapter

This chapter aims to discuss the relevance of the research findings and relate them with the literature findings were possible. The chapter broadly discusses the issues evidenced by the interviewees and compares them with prior research findings and highlights where there are aberrations from majority of the interviewees. As a consequence, emphasis was placed on discussing the research aims and objectives. The primary aims of this study were to:

- Critically evaluate the relevance of food ethics, affection, education and family cohesion as collectivist symbolic cultural values at family mealtimes
- Critically analyse whether gender differentiation and adherence to hierarchy/authority at family mealtimes are affected by collectivism
- Critically evaluate the importance of family religious values and meal participation at mealtimes
- Confirm the similarities and differences between the arguments of previous studies in relation to the views presented by this study about the influence of collectivism
- Propose conclusions in relation to the primary data and provide appropriate recommendations to key stakeholders, including: policy-makers; food retailers and producers based on those conclusions.

As a consequence, the discussion of this chapter is designed based on the objectives and the relevant themes and sub-themes of the study.

6.1 Discussion of findings of family meal social interaction and businesses' behaviours

The discussion of the findings for families and businesses are explained under five broad themes based on the objectives of the study, including: religion; ethnicity; reference groups; conformity; and social class.

6.2 Objective 1: Determining the impact of religion on Families and businesses

Discussion of the impact of religion on families and businesses is sub-categorised into spiritual beliefs, cultural values, traditional practices and social bonding, each of which are discussed in detailed below:

6.2.1 The impact of spiritual beliefs

Under the perspective of religion, the results show that spiritual beliefs is ingrained in families across Sierra Leone as a majority of interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) emphasised that their families have religious values that guide their behaviour; their families held prayers before eating as they believe that God is responsible for providing food for their families; and that God must be respected and thanked at all times (before and after meal) for the food provided for their families. Despite the similarities, a majority of Muslim and Christian females emphasised food ethics such as silence at mealtimes, washing of hands before eating, and the non-wastage of food as fundamental aspects of their families' spiritual beliefs; a factor less emphasised by a majority of the Muslim and Christian husbands. This may be due to their gender responsibility and the keen attention they pay to the proper functioning of the family as a whole. It is also evident from the results that a majority of the Muslim females and males were more selective in their families' food choices due to their religious beliefs, whereas the Christian females and males were more pragmatic and open to all kinds of foods. The results also show that even within the same religion and gender classification, for example, Muslim females, differences emerged including: God protects the family; family unity; gender distinction; obedience; God's presence; fasting; kneeling down; posture at mealtimes; dress code; and food boundaries. Other issues raised by a significant number of the interviewees as spiritually influencing their families' meal behaviour include: humility; success; responsibility; direction; observing God's presence; demonstrating the fear of God; building relationship with others; harmony; love; sharing; truthfulness; respect; and God is the saviour. This implies that a majority of the interviewees embraced family religious values; prayers; God makes provision for the family; and respecting and gratifying God as fundamental to their families' way of life. This further implies that despite the religious divide between the Muslim and Christian families, there are shared commonalities between them, and that the so called 'division/schism' between the two sects is man-made or at least blurring: may be due

to acculturation. In comparison with businesses, a majority of food retailers and manufacturers emphasised prayers, business success and prayer times as the main religious factors affecting the marketing of their products. However, they have divergent views as the food retailers were more emphatic about customers' food ethics and the type of food consumed by the consumers in their locality as fundamental to the way they market their products. In comparison, the food producers were more emphatic about business inheritance and skills transfer to their descendants as the main factors affecting the sustainability of their businesses. The results from these businesses also revealed that even within the food retailers and producers marked differences exist in terms of the spiritual factors affecting the marketing of their products, including: God protects businesses; God provides for businesses; God safeguards businesses; God promotes businesses; public education; manner of approaching customers; negotiation; God's mercy; discounting; targeting; relationship; business expansion; sustainability; timely payment; and incentives. This implies that a majority of respondents held the inclination that prayer and prayer times affects the marketing of their products. This further implies that food retailers and producers need to understand the role of God and the symbolism of family religious values in shaping the consumption behaviour of families and helps them to learn how to segment their markets to meet the needs of the different categories of consumers. In addition, the comprehension and use of these fundamentals (prayers, families' religious values and the symbolism of God) by businesses can help them customise their products and design their advertising messages accordingly to reach a broader audience. The fundamental role of prayers in families' meal behaviour and businesses emphasised in this study reflects those of Burton and Clements (2013); Dobratz (2013); and Ivtzan (2013), that prayer at family mealtimes brings unity and that difference in the type of food eaten by families and/or sold by businesses are largely influenced by spiritual beliefs. The aspect of family and business religious values were also emphasised by Cohen and Hill (2007); Reeve (2004); and Cleveland et al (2015) as instruments to promote national unity and maintain national identity. However, this study brings a new dimension to the argument by highlighting specific issues such as gratifying God at mealtimes; God is responsible for business success; inheritance; skills transfer; prayer times; food ethics; God protecting the family from social ills; God is the provider of the food eaten by the family or access to the products sold or produced by businesses; and gender distinction at mealtimes as fundamental factors affecting families' meal behaviour as well as businesses. This implies that spiritual beliefs largely influence the kind of food families eat and/or drink or the kind of products sold by businesses, which sometimes influences the kind

of people they associate with. These were the gaps the study identified in the literature such as: the generalisation of the impact of spiritual beliefs on families and businesses, as lacking sufficient evidence and argument, and which it sought to fill.

6.2.2 The impact of cultural values

On the issue of cultural value as a religious domain, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) emphasised respect for elders, food ethics and prayers before eating as fundamental to their families' meal behaviour. Despite the avowed similarities, a majority of the Muslim and Christian females emphasised the need for gratifying God and parents, and observing food ethics at mealtimes as being symbolic in their families' meal behaviour. In comparison, a majority of the Muslim and Christian males emphasised sharing meals with others as fundamental to their families' religious cultural values. Furthermore, the results show that a majority of Christian males were emphatic about family unity as a significant cultural value; a majority of Muslim males were emphatic about the symbolism of authority/control as fundamental cultural values; a majority of the Christian females were emphatic about the significance of task distinction as symbolic cultural values; and a majority of Muslim females were more emphatic about gender distinction as fundamental cultural values. It was also evident from the results of this study that even within the same religion and gender group, there were minor differences in cultural values, including: hierarchy; politeness; obedience; sympathy; meal sharing; peace; greetings; love; husband getting the lion share; self-identity; spiritual growth; and blessing of the food. Other issues identified by a minority of all interviewees in relation to cultural values include: food type; unity; sense of responsibility; anti-social behaviour; kneeling down; comportment; authority; family image; family values; gratification; boundaries; obedience; understanding; cordiality; friendliness; and revered God, which they emphasised are important cultural values in their families at mealtimes. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees see respect for elders, food ethics and prayers as essential cultural values in their families' meal behaviour, and that the Muslim and Christian females attached higher importance to the gratification of God than those of their male counterparts (Muslim and Christian males). In comparison, a majority of food retailers emphasised that religious values; prayers; customers' food ethics; business success and food type are fundamental cultural values affecting the way they market their products to consumers; whilst all food producers reiterated that cultural values do not affect the way they market their products to consumers. The results also show

that a difference exists even within food retailers and producers as a minority emphasised free gifts to customers, acceptability, relationship building, prioritising God, negotiating and discounting the price of products, preferential treatment and tribal sentiment as important cultural values that influences the marketing of their products. This implies that a majority of the businesses acceded to the symbolism of cultural values as influencers of the way they market their products. This further suggests that food retailers and producers need to take note of the symbolic role cultural values plays in the lives and livelihoods of families/consumers and ensure that they are part of their marketing policies and plans for any future expansion as they are fundamental not only to the growth of their businesses, but sustainability overtime. As a consequence, it is imperative that for food retailers and producers to succeed in marketing their products, they must design their marketing agenda and strategies around families' cultural values, which can help them, generate more sales and increase the profitability of their businesses. This argument reflects those of Cohen and Hill (2007); and Jenkins et al. (2013); and Ferraro and Brody (2015), who emphasised that cultural values and social connectedness, are an integral element of societal religious life. Despite the similarities shared with Ferraro and Brody (2015); Cohen and Hill (2007); and Jenkins et al. (2013) about cultural values which is largely generic, this study was able to specify respect, religious values, prayers, food type, gratification of God and parents, and food ethics as fundamental cultural values affecting families and food retailers. This implies that cultural values are becoming an important overlap of religious values, as it is difficult to discern between religion and cultural values in most Sierra Leonean family, which indicates that it is vital for businesses to start learning about the significance of their impacts on their performances. The generic description of cultural values by previous studies led the researcher to believe that there were gaps in their findings, which this study helped to address.

6.2.3 The impact of traditional practices

In emphasising the impact of traditional practices as a religious domain, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) emphasised prayer as a predominant factor in their families' meal behaviour. Despite the shared similarity, a majority of the Christian females suggested that traditional practices do not influence their families' meal behaviour, which was contrary to the views of Muslim females, a majority of whom posited additional factors, including: food ethics; gratifying parents;

sense of responsibility; authority/control and sympathy as major influencers of their families' meal behaviour. This is consistent with the views of a majority of the Muslim and Christian males, who reiterated respect and food ethics as fundamental in their families' meal behaviour. In addition, a majority of Muslim males emphasised gratification of God and parents as symbolic traditional practices, whilst Christian males were emphatic about authority/control as fundamental traditional practices. This suggests that a majority of interviewees were inclined to use traditional practices at mealtimes, and that traditional practices are not predominantly embraced by most Christian females due to acculturation and/or other factors such as urbanisation, though their male counterparts (Christian males) are more inclined to use them. In comparison, all food retailers and all food producers either consciously or sub-consciously do not attach any symbolism to traditional practices when they market their products, which conflicts with the tribal sentiment emphasised by food retailers. This suggests that all businesses do not embrace traditional practices as essential to the marketing of their products. This further suggests that failure of food retailers and producers to understand the impact traditional practices have on their businesses' performance and survival could adversely affect the market growth potential of their products as a majority of the families/consumers are still influenced by them. As a consequence, food retailers and producers need to re-evaluate their marketing, decision-making, advertising and commercial strategies to include families' traditional practices as the way forward for increased future sales and growth. This is consistent with the views of Guerrero (2013); and Thornhill and Fincher (2014), who identified traditional practices as influencers of the behaviour of collectivist societies and proclaimed that, they are positively associated with people's religiosity. It is evident from the findings of this study that the views of Guerrero (2013); and Thornhill and Fincher (2014) are too generic and broad to be meaningful to future researchers as they failed to identify specifically the traditional practices that influenced people's behaviour. As a consequence, this study provided detailed and specific traditional practices that influenced families' meal behaviour, including: prayers; respect and food ethics; sympathy; sense of responsibility; and gratifying parents as symbolic traditional practices shared by a majority of families in Sierra Leone. This implies that despite a majority of Muslim families (males and females) still embrace traditional practices as part of their social interaction at mealtimes, the findings of this study show that there is a gradual deviation from these practices, and presumably, there are greater tendencies for such deviations to increase in the future. However, it is imperative for businesses to gradually start to inculcate these practices in their marketing strategies in order to attract more customers to

buy their products and build a satisfactory and formidable relationship with them. These were the gaps identified by the researcher as being too broad to be meaningful to future researchers, which are succinctly fulfilled by this study.

6.2.4 The impact of social bonding

In analysing the impact of social bonding as a religious factor on families' meal behaviour, a majority of Muslim females purported food ethics, moral education and authority/control as fundamental in their families' meal behaviour, which is contrary to the views of a majority of Christian females, who emphasised family unity, respect, affection and prayer as intrinsic in their families' meal behaviour. However, a majority of Muslim and Christian males emphasised family unity, prayer, togetherness and meal sharing as essential to the way their families behaved at mealtimes. This indicates that family unity and prayer are central to the family religious values of Christian females, Muslim males and Christian males, but offers distinct set of values/beliefs to the Muslim females, and the way people socialise in society may vary from one group to the other due to cultural, gender, age, regional or religious differences. As a consequence, even within the same family, sometimes bonding is limited to people of the same age group or gender. This implies that a majority of the interviewees view social bonding as a fundamental influencer of their families' meal behaviour. The results also show that even within the same gender and religious domain of families, a minority of the interviewees demonstrated significant social differences in the way they relate with others, including: advice source; family image; participation; happiness; training; preaching; sharing ideas; direction; social group; understanding; peace; success; compatibility; sympathy; sense of responsibility; love; obedience; values; social event; community gathering; oneness; cordiality; raising awareness; and communication. In comparison, all food retailers and all food producers emphasised that socially bonding with their neighbours builds a formidable relationship with customers in the community they are operating in, which affects the marketing of their products and business growth. For example, a food retailer emphasised that by socially bonding with colleagues or employees, promotes the sharing of ideas, which can be helpful to the future growth of the business. However, a majority of the food retailers emphasised the symbolism of competitors who sell the same products as them and elderliness as fundamental influencers of the way they interact with customers; factors less emphasised by the food producers. The results from businesses also show that distinctions were evident even within food retailers as well as producers, including: preferential treatment;

understanding; age; politeness; profitability; obedience; respect; wisdom; advice; free gifts; relationship; negotiation; discounting; peer groups; friends; relatives; loan; trust; job; decision-making; retention; and profit margin. This implies that all businesses view social bonding as fundamental to their marketing operations as it helps foster close ties between them and families/consumers within their community. This further suggests that food companies, particularly the retailing outlets that operates in these communities can be able to make their presence felt by becoming more engaged at a societal level and creating a forum of social events to facilitate interaction/socialisation with the drive for educating families/consumers about their products, which enhances broader usage, and stimulates future demand for their consumption. The same argument was advanced by Arsel and Thompson (2011) that the identity of individuals depend in large measure on their feeling of acceptance, highlighting that the social experiences of everyday life is the distinct values of a particular group, emphasising that in the process, the group acquires a distinct identity, separate from others. This argument was further reinforced by Kitayama and Markus (2014), who noted that, individuals are more likely to see themselves as part of an encompassing social network and to act in accordance with what one perceives to be the feelings, thoughts, and actions of the others. Despite these similarities, this study is the first to specify the various components of social bonding and its impact on families and businesses in Sierra Leone, including: food ethics; moral education; control; family unity; respect; affection; prayer; togetherness; neighbours; competitor; elderliness/age; and meal sharing as fundamental to the way Sierra Leonean families interact at mealtimes and the way businesses deal with their customers. This suggests that irrespective of the commonalities shared about social bonding by families and businesses, differing perspectives are bound to emerge either due to their lack of awareness of its symbolism, the upbringing of individuals or the type of social groups they interact with over the years. The implication of this is that businesses need to learn and understand these inter and intra social group distinctions, and market their food products and/or create social events based on the values inherent to each of the social group. These gaps were what led the researcher to question the validity of the broad concept of social bonding used by earlier theorists such as: the generalisation of the view that individuals and businesses act in accordance with the feelings, thoughts, and actions of the others, which has been sufficiently filled by this study.

6.3 Objective 2: Evaluating the impact of ethnicity on families and businesses

Discussion of the impact of ethnicity on families and businesses is categorised into tribes, region of origin, cultural beliefs and assumptions, each of these sub-factors are discussed in detailed below:

6.3.1 The impact of tribe

In highlighting tribe as an ethnic factor in their families' meal behaviour, a majority of Muslim females, Christian females and Muslim males, and a minority of Christian males emphasised that tribe has no impact on the way their families' interact at mealtimes. A minority of Muslim and Christian males emphasised respect for elders as fundamental to their families' meal behaviour. Despite these similarities, differences were evident as the results show that whilst a minority of Christian females were emphatic about modernity as an influencer on the way their families behave at mealtimes, a minority of Muslim males were more emphatic about acceptance, and a minority of Christian males emphasised food ethics as a symbolic influencer of the way their families interact at mealtimes. The results of the findings also show that even within the same religion and gender groups, there are marked differences, including: cultural values; respect; gratifying parents; food ethics; hierarchy; and family unity. Other differences that emerged from the result of the study among families of the same religious and gender groups include: authority; tolerance; obedience; sharing; freedom of expression; and politeness. This suggests that a minority of the interviewees held both negative and positive views of the impact of tribe in their families' meal behaviour, and that the division in views could largely be due to modernity, civilisation and to the fact that the families are acculturating to urban or western style of living, and this trend is likely to continue in the future. In comparison, the results from businesses reveal that a majority of the interviewees for food retailers and food producers' emphasised respect, preferential treatment, age/hierarchy and politeness as fundamental values that influences the way they market their products to consumers. However, whilst a majority of the food retailers emphasised personality/identity as central tribal influencing factor; a majority of the food producers were more emphatic about product quality as fundamental to the marketing of their products, as most consumers are more concerned about the quality of the products sold to them than associated tribal/customary values, which are inconsequential in their business dealings with customers. The results obtained from businesses also show that even within

food retailers and producers, there are minor divergence in views, including: God is the provider; relationship building; business success; customer ethics; equitable treatment; customer satisfaction; communication style; loyalty; discounting; family beliefs; micro-credit; suppliers; and prayer. Other differences that emerged from the results obtained from businesses include: greetings/salutation; timely payment; customer retention; repeat purchase; frequency of purchase; negotiation; customer satisfaction; and profitability. These values are independent of tribe, custom and religion, which demonstrate that they are becoming less symbolic in the dealings of businesses today than in the past. However, the results suggest that a majority of food retailers and producers are still inclined to incorporate respect, preferential treatment and politeness in their dealings with customers. This further suggests that despite the gradual decline of tribal values among families/consumers, it is imperative that the importance of respect and identity/personality must be inculcated in the training packages of businesses' sales force in order to raise their awareness and foster a better customer relationship, which enhances long-term customer loyalty and retention. As a consequence, it is vital for businesses to take cognisance of these values in their marketing plans/strategy in order to enable them capture a larger share of the market. The use of identity in this study as a tribal instrument is reflective of the views of Peštek and Činjarević (2014); and Zeiders et al (2013), who suggested that tribal values are of particular relevance in explaining the identity of individuals, and that it can also be used as a discriminatory instrument and/or adherence to a group. Displaying its uniqueness and deviating from the generic views of Peštek and Činjarević (2014); and Zeiders et al (2013), this study is the first to highlight the declining significance of tribe or at least supporting the acculturation perspective among families and businesses. The implication of this is that the degree of tribal influence and impact may vary from family to family, from business to business, from social group to social group and from region to region, which may require further study to unravel the reasons for these differences and identify the true impact of tribe on families' meal social interaction behaviour as well as those of businesses. This further implies that despite the declining significance of tribal values among families, ignoring them by businesses can have an adverse effect on the marketing of their products not only to the current generation of families/consumers, but future ones, as the values are transitioned from one generation to another, and identifying and understanding them can be vital to business success. As a consequence, undertaking further study to determine the degree of tribal influences can provide a broader picture of its impacts on families as well as businesses. This study develops on previous ones and demonstrates the declining symbolism of tribe as influencer of families

and businesses and highlights the gaps inherent in previous studies such as: the generic view that tribe influences families and businesses behaviour. These were the gaps this study sought to fill in order to strengthen the argument for future researchers.

6.3.2 The impact of region of origin

In discussing the interviewees' perspectives on region of origin as an ethnic factor, a majority of Muslim females, Christian females and Christian males, and a minority of Muslim males emphasised that respect as a regional factor is the most critical to their families' meal behaviour. However, a significant minority of Christian males emphasised food ethics and meal sharing, the Muslim females were more emphatic about food ethics, and the Muslim males emphasised gender distinction and hierarchy as fundamental regional influencers of the way their families behave at mealtimes. Despite no discriminatory issues or differences in the treatment of gender emphasised by families, it is indicative that males and females eat separately and the roles are also different as females are trained to prepare and serve food. The results of this study also show that regional differences exists even between people of the same gender and religious background, including attitude to: prayers; role definition; dialect; cultural beliefs; gratifying parents; family unity; modernity; cultural values; and family religious values. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees have a positive view about their region of origin, while a significant minority held a negative perspective. This further suggests that despite the symbolism of acculturation or modernity in the lives of a reasonable number of families, a majority of them are still influenced by their regional background due to their concern of losing touch with their cultural lineage and ancestral background. In comparison with businesses, all the food retailers and all the food producers emphasised that region of origin has no influence on the way they market their products to consumers as they are more concerned about their volume of sales than region of origin. This suggests that all the businesses do not consider region of origin as fundamental in the way they deal with their customers, which conflicts with their view on tribe. This further implies that in order to cover a wider range of families/consumers in Sierra Leone, businesses need to learn and understand regional differences that influence their behaviours and use them to their advantage in segmenting and targeting a broader sector of the economy, which may eventually increase their customer and revenue base. This view is consistent with Rampton (2014), who identified region of origin and ethnic social groups as primarily linked to ethnicity. However, this study provides a deeper perspective about the impact of region of origin on families'

meal behaviour in Sierra Leone by highlighting factors such as: respect; food ethics; hierarchy; gender distinction; and sharing as fundamental regional influencers of the way families behave at mealtimes as they help guide the upbringing of children and foster a sense of connectedness with their ancestral background. This implies that families' region of origin is fundamental to their way of life, and they keep tap with their regional values/linkage for fear of being ostracised by their own people and the broader impact such ostracisation may have on their families in the long-term. This further implies that food retailers and producers need to understand families' way of life as a fundamental part of business success and growth, as consumers are more inclined to consume products that mirror their regional values and beliefs. These regional factors are essentially the gaps this study sought to fill.

6.3.3 The impact of cultural beliefs

In evaluating the impact of cultural beliefs as a factor of ethnicity, a majority of Muslim females, Christian females, Muslim males and Christian males emphasised that food ethics such as hygiene/washing of hands, silence, table etiquette, no food wastage, observing food boundaries, and the forbidden use of the left-hand are fundamental to their families' meal behaviour. Despite these similarities, a majority of Muslim males and females emphasised respect for parents, and the type of food and drink consumed by their families as critical to their cultural beliefs at mealtimes; factors considered insignificant by Christian wives and husbands – a significant minority of whom indicated that cultural beliefs do not affect their families' social discourse at mealtimes. It is also implied from the results that a majority of Muslim females and males emphasised prayers as central to their families' meal behaviour. The results of the findings also show that there are differences between interviewees of the same religious and gender groups in terms of cultural beliefs, including: gratifying parents; family norms/values; family religious beliefs; control; family unity; hierarchy; modernity; and sharing. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees have a positive opinion of cultural beliefs as influencers of their families' meal behaviour, while a minority of the interviewees reiterated that cultural beliefs do not affect their families' meal behaviour. This further suggests that despite acculturation or modernity has an impact on families, but it is of a lesser extent as a majority of the respondents, even with urbanisation, are still influenced by their prior family cultural background. In comparing this view of families with those of businesses, the results show that a majority of the food retailers and producers emphasised that identity, prayers, repeat purchase, politeness, communication style, building customer

relationship, respect and preferential treatment are fundamental cultural beliefs that influence the way they market their products to consumers. Despite these similarities in family views, a majority of food retailers suggested that dignity and tribal sentiments are avowed values that affect the marketing of their products to consumers; factors less emphasised by food producers. It was also evident from the results of businesses that food retailers showed divergence in views, which was also reflected in the results of food producers, namely: customary sacrifices; loyalty; hygiene; communication style; food type; free market; discounting; competitors; negotiation; and equitable treatment of customers. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees view identity, prayers, repeat purchase, politeness, communication style, building customer relationship, respect and preferential treatment of customers as symbolic in the way they market their products. This further suggests that businesses' failure to embrace and incorporate these beliefs in their operations by certifying the type of food products they sell and tailor them to the needs of consumers, may adversely affect their customer base and the profitability of their products in the long-term. This is because consumers, especially those from Muslim backgrounds, may have difficulty in discerning whether the food products sold to them are acceptable as consumables at their families' meal tables due to their religious values. Blaydes and Grimmer (2013); Brice (2012); and Halpern (2013) posited that cultural beliefs are norms largely shared within ethnic groups with defined boundaries, which are consistent with the findings of this study. However, this study has been able to detail and specify in the Sierra Leonean context the different components of cultural beliefs such as food ethics, respect, the type of food consumed and prayers as influencers of families' meal behaviour, which was lacking in the findings of studies conducted by Blaydes and Grimmer (2013); Brice (2012); and Halpern (2013) . This implies that irrespective of the type of family and/or business background, differences in cultural beliefs are bound to emerge either due to cultural orientation, cultural upbringing, emigration/migration or religious orientation. This is because families and businesses' cultural beliefs are largely influenced by the ethics of the group they come from, and the groups they belong to, the religion they belong to and/or due to their movement from one geographic location of a country to another. This was the gap that was identified by the researcher, and which this study sought to address, which presents a whole new discussion to the concept of cultural beliefs both in families' meal social discourse behaviour and those of businesses.

6.3.4 The impact of assumptions

In proclaiming the impact of assumptions or 'taken for granted behaviour' as an ethnic influencing factor, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) posited that prayer, respect for elders and food ethics, including basic hygiene/washing hands; silence; table etiquette; no food wastage; forbidden use of left-hand; and appreciation were fundamental to their families' mealtime behaviour. These factors they claimed are unexplained, but known by each and every member of the family and are introduced as part of family socialisation. Despite these similarities, a majority of the Muslim females were more emphatic about the gratification of parents and God as the provider of the food the family eat, whilst a majority of the Christian females were more emphatic about sense of responsibility as essential assumptive practices in their families' meal behaviour. No assumptive distinctions emerged between the Muslim and Christian males. The results also show that there are differences in assumptive practices even between families of the same religious background and gender groups, including: obedience; family unity; moral education; affection; family image; God's protection; family cultural values; hierarchy; conformity; and humility. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees are largely influenced by assumptive practices, which are fundamental to their way of life and defines their families' meal behaviour, and that the symbolism of these practices are ingrained in the Sierra Leonean society. In comparison, all the food retailers and all the food producers emphasised that assumptive practices do not affect the way they market their products to consumers. This suggests that all interviewees view assumptive practices as a non-factor in their dealings with consumers. Despite these aberrations from businesses, the results from families reflects the views of Bejanyan et al. (2014); and Devos and Vu (2014), who emphasised that ethnic traditionalists are held together primarily by assumptive emotional ties as a result of long history and that their children are socialised to internalise these cultural values. Despite the fact that this study is consistent with the conclusion of studies such as Bejanyan et al. (2014); and Devos and Vu (2014), which suggested a generic and broad view of assumptions, the findings of this study offers in-depth and specific assumptive practices, including: prayer, respect for elders and food ethics that influence Sierra Leonean families' meal behaviour - evidences that were lacking in studies conducted by prior researchers. The implication of this on food retailers and producers is that failure to investigate, understand and implement these assumptive practices can affect their relationship with families/consumers, which may affect their ability to retain customers and transform them

into loyal ones, as most of them will seek alternatives when their level of satisfaction is not met. This further implies that despite some of the negative consequences of assumption such as the non-use of the left hand at mealtimes, it is a proclaimed and accepted practice among people of various religious denominations as it defines their behaviour at mealtimes. As a consequence, it is imperative that if businesses (food retailers and producers) want to succeed in the face of these overwhelming assumptive practices, they need to re-evaluate and tailor their marketing and commercial practices in a way that ensures that they are a part of their future plans, policies and strategies.

6.4 Objective 3: Analysing the impact of conformity on families and businesses

Discussion of the impact of conformity on families and businesses is categorised into: togetherness; obedience; conformed behaviour; and meal sharing, each of which is discussed in detail below:

6.4.1 The impact of togetherness

The aspect of togetherness as a fundamental perspective of conformity as suggested by interviewees as influencers of their families' meal behaviour show that a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) were emphatic about the impact of togetherness, including: affection, family cohesion and the opportunity it brings for the family to share ideas together. Despite the symbolism of togetherness across all religious groups, there were dissimilarities between Muslims and Christians, as a majority of the Muslim females and males emphasised respect as central ingredient of togetherness, a factor less emphasised by Christian females and males. The results also reflect differences in opinions among families of the same religious and gender groups, but which are critical to the concept of togetherness, including: prayers; food ethics; forum for families' troubleshooting; forum for reflection; companionship; sense of belonging; confidence building; responsibility; planning; family tradition/values; cooperation; reduces boundary between members of the family; hierarchy/control; and bonding. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees have a positive opinion of togetherness as a unifier of their families at mealtimes, which increases the level of affection they have for each other and promotes companionship and sharing, as they coalesce around a common goal. In comparison, the results from businesses reveal that a majority of food retailers and all the

food producers emphasised politeness, respect, repeat purchase, customer retention and communication style as fundamental togetherness factors that affects the marketing of their products. A majority of food retailers emphasised advertisement/word of mouth, customer satisfaction and relationship building as central togetherness factors that influence their dealings with customers; factors less emphasised by food producers. However, a majority of the food producers emphasised product quality as central influencer of the marketing of their products. The results also show that even within the food retailers and producers, differences emerged including: customer satisfaction; customer retention; impulsive buying; staff training; negotiation; competitors; sharing; free gifts; loyalty; honesty; obedience; age; and gender. Other differences that emerged from the results include: customer relationship; customer retention; customer satisfaction; customer loyalty; and recruitment/training. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees view the symbolism of respect, politeness, repeat purchase and communication style positively in their transaction with consumers, and that only a minority of the interviewees did not emphasise their significance. This reflects the views of Khapoya (2015), who provided compelling evidences of the symbolism of togetherness as an arbiter for social harmony. This study goes further to identify affection, respect and sharing of ideas as primary drivers for families togetherness values at mealtimes and which influences businesses' dealings with customers. The implication of this on food retailers and producers is that adherence to these fundamental family values (respect and displaying affection) through the use of integrated marketing communication can go a long way in building a formidable relationship with families/customers, which may act as a catalyst for a stronger bond and unifying association between the two. This further implies that adherence to the symbolism of togetherness, especially in promoting customer satisfaction, can go a long way in guaranteeing a repeat purchase, as happy customers may eventually be transformed into loyal ones. As a consequence, it is imperative that togetherness is symbolic not just for social harmony; but it also provides a forum for the families to settle their discords, businesses relate with customers, know about the welfare of each other and share ideas as to how to plan for the future. This was succinctly the gap identified by the researcher and which this study sought to fill.

6.4.2 The impact of obedience

The symbolism of obedience as a factor that influences conformity was suggested by a majority of the interviewees, including: Muslim females; Christian females; Muslim males;

and Christian males, who emphasised respect and adherence to authority as the arbiter of their families' meal behaviour. However, a majority of the Christian females emphasised love and moral ethics as fundamental aspects of obedience, factors less emphasised by a majority of the Muslim females. In addition, a majority of the Muslim and Christian females shared common view on the symbolism of family unity and stability as fundamental obedience factors that influence their families' meal behaviour. The results show that no differences exist between Muslim and Christian males, which demonstrate that there are shared commonalities between the two. The results also posited other dimensions to the argument, though with dissimilar perspectives from individuals from the same religious and gender groups, including: promotes individuals' success/progress; fear of God; gratification of parents; responsibility; cultural beliefs; boundaries; humility; advice source; long life; avert accident; God's word; affection; decision-making; the given of incentives/rewards; traditional beliefs; family image; cultural norms; communication; modesty; contribution; protection; and confidence building. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees embraced obedience as symbolic to the way their families interact at mealtimes as it guides members to respect hierarchy and age, and cements the relationship between family members. In comparison, the results of businesses show that a majority of food retailers and producers emphasised respect and politeness as fundamental obedience factors that influenced the marketing of their products. However, there were divergences in views between the two with the food producers emphasising product quality as central to the marketing of their products, whilst food retailers were less emphatic about the symbolism of product quality in their dealings with customers. The results also reveal that there is divergence in views even with food retailers and producers, including: advertisement/word of mouth; staff training; basic morals; tradition; negotiation; honesty; open door policy; repeat purchase; competitors; credibility; relationship; sharing; and personality. Other differences that emerged include: repeat purchase; and customer satisfaction as these are fundamental to retaining customers, guaranteeing better customer relationship and longevity of the business. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees relate positively with obedience as influencer of the marketing of their products. This is consistent with the views advanced by Wallace (2013) and Radcliffe-Brown and Forde (2015) that individuals conform to avoid the institution of discipline and children are expected to respect and obey their elders. It is also consistent with the views of Sigel et al (2014) that obedience is expected from the child in order to foster family harmony. However, this study proposes that ambience of conformity provided moral ethics and adherence to authority as dimensions of obedience that affect families' mealtimes in the

Sierra Leonean context, something previous researchers failed to recognise. This means that there has been transitional shift in the views of families and businesses as to the fundamentals that influence obedience, which may be largely due to acculturation. Furthermore, this study is the first to bring into focus the relevance of obedience to businesses' behaviour. The implication of this is that failure by businesses to adhere and include these symbolic societal/family requirements of obedience in their marketing strategies and plan by raising the awareness of front desk employees about its significance, can impact negatively on future sales volume, customer retention and repeat purchase – this may affect the profitability and survival of businesses in the long-term. As a consequence, an in-depth study of the impact of obedience (as a factor of conformity) on families at meal times and businesses warrants further study to unravel the gap undiscovered by this study.

6.4.3 The impact of conformed behaviour

Displaying conformed behaviour at mealtimes was symbolic for the interviewees as a majority (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) suggested that food ethics, including: hygiene/washing hands; silence; table etiquette; no food wastage; forbidden use of left-hand; and observing food boundaries was central to the way their families socialise. Despite this similarity, a majority of the Muslim and Christian females emphasised respect as an important conformed behaviour expected from every member of the family at the dinner table, a factor less emphasised by the Muslim and Christian males. This may be due to gender roles in relation to socialising, teaching and disciplining children. The results also reflect differences in opinions among families of the same religious denomination and gender groups, but which are critical to the concept of conformed behaviour, including: moral education; family religious beliefs; advice; prayers; politeness; respect; boundaries; and sharing. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees are inclined to expect their families to observe food ethics at mealtimes, and that the dinner table acts as a forum for transferring this family ethos to the children. In comparison, the results of businesses show that a majority of the food retailers and all the food producers reiterated that the symbolism of politeness and respect are vital for conformed behaviour that is expected in their dealings with consumers. However, it is evident from the results that irrespective of the similarities, food producers were more emphatic about business success than their retailing counterparts. The results also show that even within food retailers and producers, differences do emerged about their perspectives or views on certain factors, including: discounting; customer

satisfaction; prayers; repeat purchase; dignity; audience; business expansion; manner of approach; communication style and better relationship. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees relate positively with conformed behaviour as fundamental to the way they market their products to consumers. This further implies that deviation from these conformed practices; for example, lack of politeness and respect to customers can affect relationship and make it difficult for businesses to retain them or gain their loyalty. This argument is consistent with the views of Edwards and Mercer (2013); and Zbenovich and Lerner (2013), who suggested that family mealtime is a site for teaching children general knowledge about the world around them and inculcating basic family norms of respect and politeness into them. It is also consistent with Cohen's (2013) view that family's cultural values or ethics are not only demonstrated at feasts and rituals, but also everyday family meals are rich cultural places for reaffirming moral sentiments of the family and community, emphasising that mealtimes are pervaded by talk-oriented towards reinforcing what is right and wrong both in the family and outside it. The implication of this is that despite the religious and gender commonalities shared by families, it is essential for businesses to understand that inter and intra group distinctions exists and implementing them into the marketing plan can go a long way in guaranteeing not only future growth and larger market share, but the sustainability of the business. This further implies that though conformed behaviour is symbolic in the lives of most Sierra Leonean families at mealtimes as well as businesses, a significant few do not share the invaluable role that norms play in their families/businesses, which indicates that behaviour in the country as a whole is not generic and must be taken on board by businesses in their marketing plans. This was the gap identified by the researcher and which this study sought to fill.

6.4.4 The impact of meal sharing

The emblematic role meal sharing plays as an aspect of conformity, including: affection and relationship building was emphasised by a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) as fundamental to their families' meal behaviour. However, dissimilarities were highlighted by the two religious denominations, as a majority of the Muslim females and their male counterparts emphasised that the main reason for sharing meal with others is the respect it brings to the family. Whilst a majority of Christian males were more emphatic about the unity it brings to their family, it is a factor less emphasised by the Christian females. The results of the study also show that there are

differences in meal sharing perspective even between individuals with shared religious and gender commonalities, but which are essential to the whole concept of meal sharing, including its ability to either promote or foster: love; family image; affordability; appreciation; blessing; unity; religious obligation, charity; enhancement of survival; conflicts; jealousy; word of God; divulge secrets; protection; greed; satisfaction; care; happiness; cooperation; and sense of belonging. This implies that a majority of the interviewees are inclined to share their meal with others as symbolic in building family image and unifying the family with the rest of the community, which suggests that meal sharing, is predominant in the Sierra Leonean society, but that modernity or acculturation has influenced a significant few to renege on the practice. In comparison, the results from businesses show that a majority of the food retailers are inclined to use free gifts or share products with their customers as a way of promoting their businesses, whilst all the food producers reiterated that it has no impact on their businesses. The results also show that even within food retailers, differences in opinion exist, including: awareness raising; customer attraction; sales; profit; respect; obedience; and impulsive buying. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees have a favourable view of sharing as a fundamental promotional instrument that helps to build better customer relationship and loyalty, with a significant number of interviewees holding an opposing view. This argument reflect the views of Ferzacca et al (2013); Spigel (2013); and De Backer et al (2015), who emphasised that socialisation of meal sharing are messages regarding the morality of food distribution and consumption and the rights of adults and children to determine how, when, and how much family members will eat. However, the aspect of respect, affection, promotion and relationship building that meal sharing or sharing promotes in families and businesses in the Sierra Leonean context are unique to this study. The implication of this is that ignoring aspects such as occasional promotional gifts and/or negotiating or discounting the products bought by customers as a way of showing affection and building relationship, can affect sales volume and the marketability of products, which may potentially affect the bottom line and survival of the business in the long-term. This further implies that despite the overwhelming importance attached to meal sharing or sharing among Sierra Leonean families and businesses, there are deterrent factors such as health and resource constraints, which limit the families and businesses' willingness to share with others. These factors have not been identified by any prior researchers in Sierra Leone as influencers of families' meal and businesses' behaviours, and these were the gaps this study sought to fill.

6.5 Objective 4: Determining the impact of reference groups on families and businesses

Discussion of the impact of reference groups on families and businesses is categorised into: age; gender; associates; decision-making; extended families; and identity, each sub-group is discussed in detail below:

6.5.1 The impact of age

In assessing the impact of age on their families' meal behaviour, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) emphasised that respect, hierarchy and authority are fundamental ingredients of age that influences their families' interaction at mealtimes. However, despite these similarities, a majority of the Muslim females and their male counterparts, and Christian females reiterated the symbolic effect of wisdom on their families' meal behaviour. In addition, a majority of Muslim females and males were more emphatic about experience as a major age factor influencing their families' meal behaviour, a factor less emphasised by the Christian females and their male counterparts. The results also show that even within the same religion and gender groups, differences exists in the opinions of interviewees about the impact of age on their families' meal behaviour, including: learning; advice; decision-making; peace/harmony; maturity; love; protection; understanding; contentment; unity/stability; tolerance; contribution; success; blessing; values; affection; and participation. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees are inclined to consider age as influencer in their families' meal behaviour. This further suggests that despite age being central to the meal behaviour of families; a significant minority do not embrace the concept when interacting socially at mealtimes with their families as it is seen as regressive and impacts negatively on the family. In comparison, the views of businesses suggest that a majority of the food retailers and producers were more emphatic about neighbours, decision-making and elderliness/hierarchy as fundamental age factors that affect the way they market their products to consumers. In addition, a majority of the food retailers emphasised competitors, friends, communication style, customer relationship, respect and preferential treatment as central age factors they consider when transacting business with consumers; factors less emphasised by food producers, who were more inclined to emphasise employees as the main influencer of the marketing of their products. The results also show that even within food retailers and producers dissimilarities exists, including: negotiation; discounting; free gifts; politeness; customer satisfaction; repeat purchase; obedience; suppliers; advertisement/word of mouth; customer retention; family

relations; and business success. Other differences that emerged from the results include: quality; discounting; advice; relationship; trust; customers; and visitors. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees relate positively with age as an influencer of the way they market their products to consumers with just a minority of the interviewees holding opposing views. This further implies that businesses need to understand the fundamental role age plays among families in order to foster a better relationship with them. As a consequence, it is essential for businesses to learn and understand the implication age has on the marketing of their products and include them in their marketing plans, in order to know how to deal with each customer, and the peculiarity he/she brings to the business. This reflects the study conducted by Ching (2013) in China, where older-generation family members are seen as a symbol of respect, who take food before the younger generation, and on formal occasions when guests are present children may be excluded from the dining table until the adults are finished, or are seated at a table separate from the adults. However, the study of Ching (2013) is too generic and broad with emphasis only on respect as fundamental age influencing factor. This study also identified and detailed specific age factors that influence families and businesses' behaviours in Sierra Leone, including: competitors; friends/families; hierarchy/elderliness; authority; wisdom; and experience. This implies that businesses need to understand the symbolism of preferential treatment as an affiliate of age and model their communication style to fit into the requirements of the age domain. This further implies that businesses need to conduct thorough research on age, especially among families, and identify in detail the age factors affecting the marketing of their products and implement them in their marketing plans to build better relationship with their customers. This may eventually lead to better customer retention and loyalty. These were the gaps identified by the researcher and which this study sought to fill.

6.5.2 The impact of gender

In proclaiming the impact of gender as a factor of reference group on their families' meal behaviour, a majority of Christian females, Christian males, Muslim males and a minority of Muslim females emphasised that gender has no impact on their families' meal behaviour. This indicates that a majority of Christian females; Muslim males; Christian males; and a minority of Muslim female see gender as a discerning and discriminatory instrument in their families' meal behaviour as females are separated from males at mealtimes. The results also show that there are differences in opinion even among interviewees of the same religious and

gender groups, including: role definition; male supremacy; breadwinner; learning; boundaries; authority; respect; and food quality. This implies that a majority of the interviewees have a neutral opinion of the influence of gender on their families' meal behaviour. This further suggests that as families migrate and acculturate, there are greater tendency for them to ignore the traditional values of their upbringing and embrace new ones, and this trend is likely to continue in the future as more people become oriented about its negative effect. In comparison, the results of businesses show that all the food retailers and all the food producers do not consider gender in the marketing of their products. This suggests that all the interviewees are inclined to ignore gender when transacting business with customers, and therefore it is not considered symbolic in their business dealings. The implication of this is that despite a majority of families and businesses viewing gender as inconsequential, businesses need to employ a cautious approach by being gender neutral and segment their market accordingly, in order to ensure that it engenders favourable outcomes. This is consistent with the views of Bhanot et al (2014); Jamal and Shukor (2014); and Segev et al (2014) that families exhibit differing levels of susceptibility to reference group influences, depending on the gender of the individual. However, this study is unique within Sierra Leone as it is the first to specify the impact of changing perception and expectation of gender roles on families' meal behaviour and identify their implications on businesses. This implies that families and businesses are gradually showing disdain about gender discrimination at mealtimes and/or in businesses, and that there are greater tendencies that this cultural stigma will fade away in the long-term. These factors have never been identified by any researcher prior to now, and these were the gaps identified by the researcher and which this study sought to fill.

6.5.3 The impact of associates

In analysing the interviewees' perspective of the impact of associates on their families' meal behaviour, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) emphasised that associates play a critical role at mealtimes by fostering closer relationship with the family. However, a majority of Muslim females, Christian females and Christian males emphasised idea sharing as a fundamental influencing factor of associates; a factor less emphasised by Muslim males. In addition, a majority of the Muslim and Christian females proclaimed that associates are critical in regulating the behaviour of their children, which may be due to gender roles relating to socialisation and education; a

factor less emphasised by the Muslim and Christian males. The results also showed that even within the same religious and gender groups, differences exists in opinion about the influence of associates on families' meal behaviour, including: respect; troubleshooting forum; demonstrates affection; unity/stability; breed conflict; advice; burden on the families' resources; civility; thieving; demonstrates love; forum for prayers; expectations; source of blessing; family image; family history; identity; politeness; participation; guidance; values; and forum for socialisation. This implies a majority of the interviewees view associates positively as individuals that foster closer bond with the family at mealtimes; while a majority of the interviewees view associates as individuals that their families can share ideas with; and a significant minority of the interviewees view associates as fundamental in helping shape the behaviours of their children. This further suggests that Muslim and Christian females embraced all the three categories, including building closer ties with the family, sharing ideas with the family and shaping the behaviours of the children, as they are more engaged and involved in managing the welfare of their homes than their male counterparts (Muslim and Christian males). In comparison, the results of businesses show that a majority of food retailers and producers were emphatic about the symbolism of competitors and neighbours as fundamental associate factors that affects the marketing of their products. However, it is evident that whilst food retailers emphasised suppliers as central associate factor that affects the marketing of their products; food producers were more emphatic about the effect of government in the marketing of their products. The results also revealed that distinction exists even within food retailers and producers about the effect of associates on the marketing of their products, including: partners; peer group; friends; customers; relations; free gifts; importers; wholesalers; decision-making; price; employees; and customers. The concept of associates is new and no previous study has identified the impact of associates on families and businesses. This suggests that a majority of businesses were emphatic about the symbolic role of associates and view it as central influencers of their business transaction with customers. The implication of this is that, if businesses know the fundamental roles of associates in families as an essential ingredient for increasing market share, they can use them to tailor their marketing strategy, including advertising and promotion to help in influencing family decision-making. This further implies that whilst associate though external to the family and sometimes poses negative consequences; they do play critical role in the way families function at mealtimes, which businesses can use to their advantage to attract more sales. These were the gaps identified by the researcher and which this study sought to fill.

6.5.4 The impact of decision-making

In evaluating the impact of decision-making on their families' meal behaviour, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) emphasised that decision-making is crucial to planning their families' meal purchases and management of their homes, and act as a voice of authority or control, especially in reigning in the behaviour of the children at mealtimes. However, a majority of the Christian females, Christian males and Muslim males emphasised that decision-making plays a fundamental role in unifying the family and symbolic in reinforcing hierarchy/authority at mealtimes; a factor less emphasised by a majority of the Muslim females. In addition, a majority of the Muslim females emphasised that decision-making contributes to their families' development and act as an instrument of respect within the family; factors less emphasised by Christian females, Muslim and Christian males. The results also show that significant differences do exist even within interviewees of the same religious and gender groups, but which are crucial factors to the study, including: consultation; progress/success; prioritising; peace; age; care; organising; task distribution; responsibility; harmony; direction; safeguards; discipline; participation; learning; equality; achievement; choices; obedience; harmony; management; coordination; family image; understanding; waste reduction; consent; judgement; rationality; contribution; collaboration; learning; stability/unity; and democracy. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees embraced decision-making as fundamental in the planning, management and authorisation or control of activities at mealtimes; a majority of the interviewees view decision-making as a unifier at mealtimes; and a significant minority of the interviewees view decision-making as an instrument of development and respect. This further implies that decision-making in most families is collective, though the final decision lies with the breadwinner(s) of the family - usually the husband/dad, but wives and eldest son/daughter also make decisions in the absence of the former. In comparison, the results of businesses show that a majority of food retailers and producers associate the success of their business to making the right kind of decision and ethics surrounding it. The results also show that marked differences exists even within food retailers and producers with regards the effect decision-making have on the marketing of their products, including: profitability; increased sales; advice; free gifts/promotion; loyal customers; negotiation; discounting; price; government; time; employees; customers; family; and friends. This suggests that a majority of the businesses view decision-making as fundamental to the growth and success of their business. The implication of this is that, businesses should understand who the primary decision-

makers are in families and determine whether decision-making in families is done collectively or individually and design/tailor their marketing strategies accordingly, which can play a symbolic role in their business success. This further implies that the food retailers and producers can better understand the decision-makers in families and use advertising and commercial campaigns to target individuals within the family that exercise considerable influence over family food purchases. This is consistent with Giddens (2013) that children learn to take their bearings from others when it comes to decision-making, and that personal decision-making does not exist – they are pre-determined by the group or family. However, the study of Giddens (2013) is too generic and broad, but this study clearly identified and specified the factors that influenced decision-making in families and businesses, including: planning; authority; family unity; business success, family development; and respect. No study within Sierra Leone prior to now have been able to identify these factors as influencers of decision-making both in families and businesses. The implication of this is that failure of businesses to understand that inter and intra religious and gender differences exists in decision-making and tailor their marketing strategies/plan to incorporate these said differences, can fundamentally affect their ability to capture a larger market share or meet customers' satisfaction at an appreciable level. This further implies that if the head of the family is not equipped enough to make the right kind of decisions that may ensure the sustenance of the family on a daily basis, then the chances of survival and better livelihood becomes critical and deprivation can be high due to resource mismanagement. These were the gaps identified by the researcher and which this study sought to fill.

6.5.5 The impact of extended families

In analysing the impact of extended family on their families' meal behaviour, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) indicated that background differences are the major factors extended families have on their families' meal behaviour. However, a majority of the Muslim females, Christian females and Muslim males reiterated that financial and/or economic burden is the major impact extended families have on their families' meal behaviour. In addition, a majority of Muslim females and males emphasised that the primary benefit of extended families is that they help with domestic chores; a factor less emphasised by the Christian females and males. The results also show that even within the same religious and gender groups, differences are evident in opinions as professed in the following factors: backbiting; divulge family secret; breeds hatred; stealing;

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witchcraft; sharing; breeds conflict; advice; jealousy; lineage; knowledge; behavioural challenges; domino effect; obligation; ostracisation; stalls development; malice; income subsidisation; charity; cultural beliefs; strengthens bond; bullying; appreciation/gratification; and gifts. This implies that a majority of the interviewees have negative view of extended families as differences in background do indicate differences in cultural, behavioural pattern and upbringing, which may impact on the family. In comparison, a majority of food retailers and all the food producers emphasised financial burden as a critical factor posed by extended families, which may affect the marketing of their products and the profitability of their businesses. The results also show that differences in opinion exist about food retailers and producers perceptions of the impact of extended families, including: externality; relationship; free gifts; profitability; dependency; competitors; and profitability. This implies that a majority of the interviewees held negative views of extended families as they affect the financial sustainability of the business, but positive impact on socialisation. This view reflects those of Cloward and Ohlin (2013), who emphasised that families in collectivist societies display distinct value attributes completely different from those of extended family members as a result of the variation in backgrounds and culture. However, this study is unique within Sierra Leone in the sense that it is the first to identify the negative and positive effects extended families have on families and businesses by clearly outlining its impacts in terms of the subservient role of extended families' females. The implication of this is that, businesses can use the knowledge acquired about the impact of extended families to make informed decision about the differences in cultural background, number of people in a family, the resource strength of the family and their food needs, and design their marketing plan to capture those differences. This implies that despite the negativity, for example, witchcraft associated with extended family, there are a number of positive benefits, for example, subsidisation of the families' incomes, which facilitate easy access to food and resources and the impending domino effect of helping one member have on others. These inadequacies in prior research findings prompted this study to fill in these gaps.

6.5.6 The impact of identity

In assessing the impact of identity on families' meal behaviour, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) reiterated that identity helps define the position/rank of family members when socialising at mealtimes. However, it is also indicative from the results that a significant number of Muslim females and males see the practice of identity definition at mealtimes as discriminatory and therefore do not

embrace it to define the position/rank of individuals at mealtimes as it may impact adversely on extended families or other social relations living with the family or sharing meal with the family. The results also reflect the differences in views that are predominant among interviewees of the same religious and gender groups, which were emphasised by a minority of the interviewees and are crucial factors for identity definition within families. Examples include: role/responsibility; control; respect; expectations; ethics; unity; boundaries; sense of belonging; priority; age; obedience; orderliness; and learning. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees hold positive views of identity definition within their families at mealtimes, whilst a minority view it as negative and discriminatory. In comparison, the results of businesses show that a majority of food retailers and producers were emphatic about age/hierarchy as a symbol of identity in the marketing of their products. However, whilst a majority of the food retailers pointed to preferential treatment and personality/dignitary as prime identity factors; a majority of food producers were less emphatic about its impact in the marketing of their products. The results also reveal that differences in opinion exist even within food retailers and producers, including: peer group; respect; obedience; advice; wisdom; sales promotion; profitability; experience; and customer relationship building. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees were emphatic about age as an identity factor that affects the way they market their products to consumers, whilst a significant minority identified other identity factors as influencers of the marketing of their products. Sauer (2015) suggests that the complex construct of identity, as one important factor of individual's position in the family, needs to be broken down into different variables of which it is comprised. This was exactly why this study was conducted to identify the components of identity that influences families' behaviour at mealtimes, which is unique to its findings. The implication of this is that it can help businesses understand the symbolism of identity definition in families; and design their advertising/commercial messages accordingly. This further implies that the use of identity in defining the position occupied by individuals in the family can have crucial bearing on their roles, but can also act as a catalyst of behavioural control within the family. These were the gaps identified by the researcher and which this study sought to fill.

6.6 Objective 5: Evaluating the impact of social class on families and businesses

Discussion of the impact of social class on families and businesses is categorised into: income; jobs/occupation; education; and authority, each of which is discussed in detail below:

6.6.1 The impact of income

In emphasising the impact of income on their families' meal behaviour, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) identified food quality, food quantity and happiness as significant role income plays in their families' meal behaviour. Despite these avowed similarities, differences were evident as a majority of the Christian females and their male counterparts, including Muslim females emphasised food variety as fundamental requirements for families with substantial income. In addition, a majority of Muslim females and males view income as instrumental in controlling the behaviour of their children at mealtimes, a factor less emphasised by the Christian females and males. The results also show divergence in views even among a minority of the interviewees of the same religious and gender groups, but which are crucial to the findings of the study, including: affordability; satisfaction; family unity/stability; family image; respect; modern foodstuffs; participation; love; appetite; survival; meal frequency; healthy growth; sharing; lifestyle change; saving; investment; development; relationship building; peace/stability; sustainability; scarcity; planning; understanding; better standard of living; status; and choices. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees view income as a facilitator of their families' accesses to not only abundant food, but also enables them to access variety and a balanced diet, which is fundamental to the stability of the family. In comparison, the results from businesses show that a majority of food retailers and producers were emphatic about affordability, bad debt and profitability as prime income factors that affect the marketing of their products. However, whilst a majority of the food retailers were emphatic about micro-credit scheme as income factor for business expansion and growth, the food producers were more emphatic about product quality and pricing as the main income factors that affect the marketing of their products. The results also show that there were division in views even within food retailers and producers as to how income affect the marketing of their products, including: customer satisfaction; decision-making; discounting; sympathy; free gifts; word of mouth/advertisement; variety; respect; and neighbours. Other

differences that emerged include: price differentiation; politeness; respect; customer retention; price control; production cost; impulsive buying; timely payment; communication; customer satisfaction; customer relationship; and age. This implies that a majority of the interviewees were emphatic about affordability as a factor affecting the marketing of their products. This further implies that the purchasing powers of most consumers are low, which potentially leads to the accumulation of bad debt and eventually affect the profitability of businesses. This is consistent with the views of Peacock et al (2014) that social class is the evidence of income inequality, which determines the kind of food consumed by individuals. However, this study is unique within Sierra Leone as it was able to provide detailed and specific impact income has, including: control; affordability; micro-credit scheme; food quality; food variety; food quantity; and happiness, on families and businesses. The implication of this is that businesses need to understand the different income family categories that exist in the Sierra Leonean society, and produce, price and market their products taking into consideration these income disparities. This further implies that income is symbolic in ensuring families' access to a balanced diet and essential to the stability, unity and happiness as well as for the smooth functioning of the dinner table and profitability of businesses. As a consequence, it is imperative that the increased variation in the incomes of families suggests a need for businesses to pay greater attention when examining their impact on family values, attitudes, preferences and purchasing patterns; understand the differences that exists in religion and gender groups; and use that to standardise their brand names, packaging, advertising and promotions in order to reduce their cost of production. This ensures that the product is affordable to all categories of consumers and are designed and labelled based on their incomes, religious beliefs, gender and reach. These were the gaps this study sought to fill as prior researchers were more generic in defining the impact of income on families and businesses.

6.6.2 The impact of jobs/occupation

In evaluating the impact of jobs on their families' meal behaviour, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) emphasised lateness and time constraints as fundamental job factors that affects their families' meal social interaction behaviour. Despite these similarities, a majority of Muslim females and males were emphatic about absenteeism as the key factor affecting their families' meal behaviour, which was less emphasised by the Christian females and males. In addition, a

majority of Christian females and males, including Muslim males reported loss of appetite as the fundamental job factor affecting their participation at mealtimes, which was less emphasised by a majority of the Muslim females. The results also show that differences in opinion exists among a minority of the interviewees even within the same religious and gender groups, which are crucial factors to the research findings, including: tiredness; participation; family unity; appreciation; stress; hunger; respect; better relationship; control; love; responsibility; peace; and security. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees are adversely affected by time, absenteeism and lateness at their families' mealtimes, which can have a crucial impact on the way they relate with their children and potentially affect proper supervision of the children's meal behaviour. In comparison, the results from businesses show that a majority of the food retailers emphasised loans/credit as the most fundamental job factor that affects the marketing of their products as most of the low income earners tend to take the products on loan, whilst all the food producers indicated that occupation does not affect the marketing of their products. The results also show that differences in opinion exist even within food retailers and producers, including: bad debt; supplies; liquidity; profitability; affordability; product pricing; communication; and respect. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees were emphatic about the impact of occupation in the marketing of their products. This reflects the views of Bales and Parsons (2014) that the family in collectivist societies has been taken as a unit of stratification, and that the family's class can be derived from the occupation of the family head. However, Bales and Parsons' (2014) view is too broad and failed to identify the impact of jobs on families and businesses. As a consequence, this study identified lateness, absenteeism, time and loans/credit as fundamental job factors that affect families and businesses. The implication of this is that since families are constrained by time and absenteeism, food companies should learn to create more ready-made food items with a variety of food product based on the consumers' religious denominations, that are either semi-processed or fully processed to save families from the long and arduous task of food preparation and ease the stress associated with after work food preparation. This further implies that, in a country like Sierra Leone, where work-life balance is inconsequential, families' occupation can have negative impact on their families' meal behaviour and organisational growth. These were the gaps identified by the researcher and which this study sought to fill.

6.6.3 The impact of education

In emphasising the impact of education on their families' meal behaviour, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) echoed hygiene as a fundamental educational factor that affect their families' behaviour at mealtimes. Despite these similarities, differences were evident as a majority of the Christian females, Christian males and Muslim males emphasised the symbolism of moral ethics as a fundamental educational factor that influences their families' meal behaviour; a factor less emphasised by Muslim females. In addition, a majority of Christian and Muslim males were more emphatic about a need for a balanced diet and family cohesion as fundamental educational factor that influenced their families' behaviour at mealtimes; factors less emphasised by Muslim and Christian females. Furthermore, it was evident from the results that a majority of Muslim and Christian females highlighted table etiquette as symbolic educational factor affecting their families' meal behaviour, which may be due to gender roles in socialising, teaching and disciplining children; a factor less emphasised by their male counterparts (Muslim and Christian males). Moreover, it was evident from the results that whilst a majority of the Christian females emphasised civilisation/modernity; a majority of the Muslim males emphasised the knowledge it fosters in the family as symbolic educational factor, which were less emphasised by a majority of Christian males and Muslim females. The results also show differences exists among a minority of the interviewees even those belonging to the same religious and gender groups, but which are pertinent to the findings of this study, including: confidence; societal acceptance; family history; advice; family image; obedience; respect; balanced diet; happiness; control; cultural/traditional values; success/progress; harmony/unity/stability; division of labour; responsibility; decision-making; knowledge; humility; awareness; sharing; tolerance; idea transfer/experience; orderliness/hierarchy; development; planning; direction; religious values; judgement; learning/sharing ideas/enlightenment; affordability; communication/information; rewards; and solution. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees view mealtime education as a transformational tool that can have a positive impact on their families' behaviour at mealtimes, which may help in keeping their families healthy and prevent them from disease. In comparison, the results from businesses show that a majority of the food retailers and producers were emphatic about the symbolism of staff training as a fundamental educational factor that affects the marketing of their products. Despite the similarity, the results also show that there are differences in opinion even within food retailers and producers, including:

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taxation; qualified staff; connectivity, national vocational programmes; employees; basic morals; communication; cost of production; and price control. This implies that a majority of the interviewees were more emphatic about staff training as essential educational factor that can affect the marketing of their products. This reflects the views of Ghosh and Galczynski (2014) that societies place people in strata and emphasised that in economically conscious societies, in the absence of wealth, people are classified based on their educational background. However, factors such as moral ethics/table etiquette, staff training, civilisation/modernity, knowledge transfer, balanced diet, family cohesion and hygiene as elements of education that influences families and businesses in the Sierra Leonean context are unique to this study. The implication of this is that as families become increasingly conscious of food safety and hygiene as well as balanced diet, it exerts enormous pressure on food companies to not only produce better quality food, but to ensure that their products are certified to appropriate standards. This further implies that businesses can use education to gradually improve the poor diet and sanitation conditions associated with the poor packaging and certification of products in Sierra Leone in order to reduce the health hazards among families and prevent the easy encounter with germs and diseases. These were the gaps identified by the researcher and which this study sought to fill.

6.6.4 The impact of authority

In determining the influence of authority in their families' meal behaviour, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) stressed hierarchy/control, and family unity, cohesion and stability as fundamental authoritative factors that influence their families' mealtime behaviour. Despite these similarities, a majority of Christian and Muslim males were emphatic about the symbolism of hierarchy and boundaries as critical authoritative factors that affects their families' meal behaviour; factors less emphasised by the female counterparts (Muslim and Christian females). In addition, a majority of the Muslim females emphasised decision-making as a fundamental aspect of authority, which was less emphasised by a majority of the Christian females, Christian and Muslim males. The results of the study also identified differences between interviewees of the same gender and religious groups, but which are considered symbolic to this study, including: respect; cooperation; development; success; social etiquette; responsibility; discipline; happiness; boundaries; troubleshooting; leadership; rules and regulations; obedience; age; expectations; decision-making; good manners; civilisation; humility;

direction; bonding; fear; receptivity; compliance; family stability/cohesion; governance; centralisation; checks and balances; progress; penalty; and rules. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees were inclined to support control and family unity/cohesion/stability as pivotal aspects of authority that influenced their families' meal behaviour. In comparison, the results from businesses show that all the food retailers emphasised the preferential treatment of their customers as a fundamental authoritative factor affecting the marketing of the products; whilst all the food producers emphasised that it does not affect the marketing of their products. The results also showed that there were divergences in views within food retailers as some associated authority with loyalty, whilst others associate it with personality. This implies that a majority of the interviewees consider authority in their dealings with customers, whilst a minority emphasised that it does not affect the way they market their products to consumers. This is consistent with Hofstede's (2003); and House et al (2013) view of power distance that hierarchy is strong and power is centralised at the top with the power holders granted greater favour, status, privileges, and/or material reward and that a clear distinction between superior and subordinate exists. However, the aspect of family unity, stability, cohesion, peace, personality, loyalty and decision-making as factors of authority that influence families and businesses behaviour in Sierra Leone are unique to this study as no other study prior to now have been able to identify them. The implication of this is that it enables businesses to understand that families/consumers in Sierra Leone are more likely to make food purchase decisions mostly on the authoritative influence of the household rather than information, which can affect advertising and other aspects of marketing communications. As a consequence, it is vital for businesses to focus and tailor their public relations on the building and maintenance of customer relationships, and design their advertising and marketing campaigns targeting the heads of families. This further implies that children in autocratic families have very little say in the decisions made by the head of the family at mealtimes and do not have the freedom to question those decisions and sometimes that can even limit their access to an appreciable quantity and quality of food. These were the gaps identified by the researcher and which this study sought to fill.

6.7 The impact of family behaviour

In assessing families' behaviour at mealtimes, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) emphasised food ethics and respect as

critical mealtime behaviours they expected from their families at mealtimes. However, a majority of the Muslim and Christian females as well as the Muslim males emphasised prayer and authority/control as essential family mealtime behaviours that guide their dinner table; factors less emphasised by the Christian males. The results also showed that there are differences in opinion among a minority of the interviewees even those from the same religious background and gender groups, but which are crucial factors in underpinning the research findings as families' mealtime behaviour, including: happiness; friendliness; love; unity; hierarchy; humility; sharing; jokes/fun; prayer; and open conversation. This suggests that a majority of the interviewees embraced food ethics and respect as essential ingredients of their families' mealtime behaviour, which can act to ensure that the children grow to imbibe the requisite table manners and family ethics. This is consistent with the argument of John et al (2013) and Seifer et al (2014) that family meal social interaction, through behaviour regulation enhances enriched language development and academic achievement of children. It is imperative that the aspects of food ethics, respect and authority within the Sierra Leonean context are unique to this study. The implication of this on food retailers and producers is that they will be able to understand the cultural, religious and gender variations in behaviour that exist among various families/consumers in Sierra Leone and tailor their advertising campaigns and develop, package and introduce new products that meet the needs of the consumers, and potentially increase their companies' turnover in the long-term. This further implies that families' mealtime behaviour despite being generic can vary from family to family. These were the gaps identified by the researcher and which this study sought to fill.

6.8 The impact of communication

In determining the impact of communication on their families' mealtime behaviour, a majority of the interviewees (Muslim and Christian females, and Muslim and Christian males) emphasised that learning and confidence building are the major ingredients of communication at their families' dinnertimes. No distinctions emerged among the different categories of interviewees. The results also show that there are differences in opinion among the different categories of interviewees, including even those of similar religious and sex backgrounds, including: freedom of expression; fluency; respect; assurance; table etiquette; cultural continuity; idea sharing/experience; affection; overcome challenges; ethics; love; understanding; reduce complaints; story-telling; advice; and mould behaviour. This suggests

that a majority of the interviewees view communication as an essential tool at mealtimes for transferring the requisite family food ethics and history to the children growing up as well as a forum for sharing ideas. This is consistent with the views of Zbenovich and Lerner (2013) that, in addressing children's socialisation into family mealtime communication, it is always important to consider both the norms of appropriate mealtime communication and the social positioning of children in mealtime communication, which can be essential in integrating and making the children acceptable not only in the family, but enhances their chances of conforming to the general norms of the society. However, the aspect of confidence building is unique to this study. The implication of this on food retailers and producers is that it can enable them to understand the symbolism and ingredients of communication as enshrined in the Sierra Leonean society, and implement the right kind of marketing communication strategies that will reduce mishaps in their advertising and commercial campaigns. This further implies that communication despite being restricted during mealtimes is fundamentally important in breaking barriers between and among family members at mealtimes as well as enhancing the relationship between businesses and their customers. These were the gaps identified by the researcher and which this study sought to fill.

6.9 Plenary session – Discussion of the results of the two studies – Families and businesses' behaviour

Juxtaposing the impact of collectivism on families' behaviour at mealtimes with those of food manufacturing and retailing companies, showed that there are similarities as well as marked differences not only between the businesses and families, but also between one business and another, as well as one family and another, irrespective of religious, ethnic and social class backgrounds. The collectivist theory of this study posits that themes such as: religion; ethnicity; conformity; reference groups; and social class are the main influencers of families' behaviours. Their implications on businesses showed some evidences of similarities in terms of prayers; food ethics; communication style; politeness, respect and preferential treatment for elders; the recognition of hierarchy when seated with elders or dealing with customers; sharing; tribal sentiment; decision-making; family/consumer type; relationship building; the symbolism of education/training; the financial burden posed by relations on both entities (family and business); and planning. However, remarkable differences emerged between the families and businesses as the former placed emphasis on gender differentiation; traditional practices; the use of authority as a formidable control instrument within the

family; and the task boundaries or distinction, which are fundamental in not only keeping the family together and instilling responsibility in the children, but it imbibed in the children societal and cultural norms that are acceptable across the country. In comparison, businesses were more emphatic about product quality; repeat purchase; customer satisfaction; customer retention; business promotion; micro-credit scheme; bad debt; stakeholders; and profitability as fundamental factors that affect the marketing of their products, guarantee business expansion/growth and rekindle their relationship with consumers. As a consequence, the food retailers and producers reactions to religion; ethnicity; conformity; reference groups; and social class differs from business to business as some are inclined to support them as cultural routines that must be followed and respected, while others were more emphatic about the negative consequences it brings to their business. A detailed discussion of the impact and reaction of the food retailers and producers is summarised and discussed under the various themes in the subsequent paragraphs.

In analysing the impact of religion on families and businesses, it is evident that similarities and differences exist between the two. For example, the factors that affects families' religious beliefs such as: prayers; type of food consumed; God protects the family; type of family; God provides for the family; and God is responsible for the families' success have been shown to have similar impact on businesses (food retailers and producers) as their religious values, including: food product type; business success/growth; prayers; business protection; God's provision for business success; and consumer type. It is evident from the results that food ethics, hierarchy observance and gender differentiation were as predominant as religious values for families. However, contrasting views were presented by businesses as a majority of them highlighted customer relationship as central in their business dealings as it is instrumental for the growth and success of their business. This indicates that despite avowed inter and intra family and business differences, the collectivist values of religion is prevalent in all aspects and spheres of societal functioning in Sierra Leone, whether consumers, families or businesses as the religious cultural setting hinges on one's degree of closeness with God as an instrumental judge of family or business success. As a consequence, most food retailers and producers indicated that it adversely affects their relationship with their customers as they are restricted to sell only products that are demanded by a majority of people within their community, whilst they neglect those of lesser demand due to the societal belief structure. In addition, most of the food retailers and producers emphasised that prayers and prayer times affect their relationship with their customers as most of their customers are

inaccessible at different times of the day, emphasising that they have to wait for them each time they go for prayers, which causes delay in their business transaction. A number of businesses were sympathetic to the course as they believe God guarantees their business success/growth and adhering to prayers and prayer times is fundamental to their lives and livelihoods. This is because reneging on religious obligations triggers ostracisation, alienation and/or less societal acceptability.

On the ethnic perspective, it was evident that commonalities and differences existed within families and businesses. For example, the results show that there are similarities between families and businesses on issues such as: identity; communication style; respect; and politeness; and tribal sentiment as major influencers of their behaviours. This is because society generally attached greater significance to ethnic values such as respect and politeness, which are fundamental communication styles that help determine how individuals deal, treat or relate with other people, especially elders, irrespective of their cultural, family or business background. However, as families emphasised food ethics, hierarchy, affection, and gender differentiation as symbolic ethnic values that influences their families' behaviour, businesses were more inclined to emphasise customer relation, product quality and repeat purchase as fundamental factors in their dealings with customers as that determines the future growth and expansion of their business. This demonstrated that despite aberrational differences between families and businesses there are avowed commonalities that shapes the way they behave, which is reflected in the overall behaviour of individuals in the society. As a consequence, most food retailers and producers are inclined to use these practices in their daily dealings with their customers as they are perceived as obligatory requirements in their business transactions, though issues such as gender distinction, customers' region of origin and assumptions were emphasised by a majority as insignificant in their dealings with customers. This shows that despite families' inclination to embrace these practices, businesses are yet to fully inculcate them.

On the aspect of conformity as influencers of family and business behaviours, evidence of similarities and differences emerged as central to the way they deal with family members or customers. For example, families' perspective of business success, respect, politeness and relationship building as influencers of conformity are reflected in those of businesses as acceptable societal values that guides behaviour whether within families or businesses. However, there were marked differences in terms of factors such as: cohesion; education; participation; affection; idea sharing; responsibility; direction; family religious values;

authority; and food ethics, which were predominant in families, but not reflected in businesses. Reversely, factors such as customer retention, business promotion, communication style, repeat purchase, advertising/word of mouth, and product quality, which are predominant in businesses, are not reflected in families' meal behaviour. This goes to show that conformity is a conscious perspective embraced by many Sierra Leoneans irrespective of their cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds and therefore, shows that deviation from it has cultural consequences resulting in poor relationship with others; whether families, producers or consumers. However, whilst food retailers are more emphatic about the use of sharing or free gifts to customers as a promotional tool, food producers are yet to implement them in their marketing practices either due to their ignorance of its symbolism or to cut down on costs of production.

Reviewing the impact of reference groups on families and businesses, the findings show marked similarities and differences between the two. It was evident from the results that families and businesses shared commonalities on factors such as economic/financial costs, planning, age, respect, decision-making, advice and relationship as major reference groups' influencers of the way individuals within the family deal with one another and businesses deal with their customers. However, there were differences in views between the two categories as families were emphatic about issues such as: hierarchy/authority; role distinction; wisdom; experience; gender differentiation; education; affection; social benefits; stakeholders including: neighbours and family relations, and family cohesion as crucial reference groups' factors that influence their families' meal behaviour. On the other hand, businesses emphasised stakeholders, including: neighbours; employees; competitors; customers; government; and personality/dignitary as major influencers of the way they market their products to consumers as they are instrumental determinants of the degree of success of the business. This indicates that despite similarities shared by families and businesses, differences were evident in their behavioural patterns, which shapes the way they deal with others. As a consequence, food retailers and producers react both positively and negatively to the effect of reference groups on the marketing of their products. On the positive front, they emphasised that age is symbolic in sharing the experiences and wisdom of customers and employees, which affect the right kind of decisions made in their businesses and build a better relationship between them and their customers; and promotes identity definition, which encourages preferential treatment. On the negative front, factors such as

extended families were seen by many as affecting their bottom line due to the increased financial burden they posed, and increasingly limits their business success and expansion.

Comparing the impact of social class on families and businesses, it is indicative from the findings that there were similarities and differences. For example, they shared similarities in the areas of affordability, preferential treatment, education/training, decision-making and food/product quality as fundamental social class factors that influenced their behaviours. Families were more emphatic about food quantity and variety, cohesion, punctuality/attendance, participation, social etiquette, enlightenment, food ethics, self-development, happiness, authority/control and family unity/cohesion as social class factors that influenced their behaviour at mealtimes. Businesses, on the other hand, were more concerned about micro-credit schemes, bad debts, discounting, negotiation, profitability and pricing as fundamental social class factors that influenced the way they market their products to customers as many of them struggle to meet the price charged for products by businesses. This indicates that the concept of social class despite similar; may differ from one family to another and from one business to another due to the social and economic division experienced by the society generally, which affects the purchasing power of the consumer. As a consequence, most food retailers and producers reiterated the adverse effects income and jobs have on the marketing of the products as they are most times obliged to give their products on credit or loan, which has the resultant effect of accumulating into bad debt and eventually affect the profitability of their business.

6.10 Summary of the chapter

The chapter has discussed the relevance of the research findings, evaluated the issues evidenced by the interviewees and compared them with previous research findings, highlighted aberrations from majority of the interviewees, compared and contrasted the commonalities and differences inherent in the behaviours of families and businesses, and their implications. The next chapter of the research will discuss the conclusions drawn from the research findings and provide appropriate recommendations for future research and stakeholders.

Conclusions and recommendations

7.0 Aim of the chapter

The aim of this chapter is to provide concluding statements to the research findings and channel appropriate recommendations for stakeholders and for further studies. The chapter also discusses the contributions of the study, and the implications of the conclusions and recommendations for stakeholders.

7.1 Conclusions

In concluding the outcomes of this research, a number of interesting issues that influenced families' meal social interaction and food companies (food retailers and producers) behaviour emerged. The initial aim of the research was:

To identify and review critical factors, which stakeholders perceived as influencing family meal social interaction behaviour in a Sierra Leonean collectivist context, and assess their implications on food manufacturers and retailers. The structure of the conclusions is based on the issues that emerged from the field, which include:

7.1.1 Conclusion 1: Food ethics is perceived by stakeholders as affecting families' behaviour at mealtimes and in turn influences and is influenced by religion, ethnicity, conformity and social class.

The results of this study builds on the work of earlier researchers, for example, Burton and Clements (2013); and Peštek and Činjarević (2014), by succinctly revealing that food ethics largely influences families' behaviour at mealtimes and in turn influences, and is influenced by, Sierra Leonean families' religion, ethnicity, conformity and social class. Unlike the monolithic approach used by earlier researchers to define these factors, this study has been able to build on these findings and used an intersectional approach to establish that religion, ethnicity, conformity and social class interact with each other in the form of a web in influencing families' food ethical behaviour at mealtimes. The institution of appropriate food

ethics and behavioural standards at mealtimes is part of the Sierra Leonean families' cultural orientation, which plays a symbolic role in defining how families socialise at mealtimes. The importance of this is that it teaches children moral ethics, prevents families from experiencing health hazards (for example, pepper going through the wrong path) and imbibes a sense of responsibility in children. This affects families' meal behaviour by specifically outlining what is expected of each member at the dinner table at mealtimes, including: silence; the non-use of the left hand; food boundaries; hygiene; and the non-acceptance of anti-social behaviour, which are vital to the way families' socialise at mealtimes. The implications of this conclusion are that food ethics helps to condition the character of family members by teaching individuals acceptable conduct at mealtimes and promotes the longevity of the family in a stable and respectful way, which ensures that they are 'God fearing', responsible and respectful, which is the arbiter for a broader societal judgement. Food ethics is now recognised by stakeholders as having a role to play in Sierra Leonean families' meal behaviour. The implications of this conclusion on food retailers and producers are that the need to adhere to the Sierra Leonean government's corporate social responsibility food policy, particularly in relation to how it affects families' meal social interaction behaviour, in terms of hygiene and the quality of food products sold. It further implies that food companies can promote corporate social responsibility by engaging in public education campaigns about the dangers of anti-social behaviour in various local communities to reduce its effects among children and young adults at families' mealtimes.

7.1.2 Conclusion 2: Affection provides an emotional connection between family members at mealtimes and is seen by stakeholders as being the central influencer of religion, ethnicity, conformity and reference groups

The results of this study confirm the conclusion drawn by earlier researchers, such as: Blaydes and Grimmer (2013); and Khapoya (2015), by indicating that affection is influenced by and in turn influences Sierra Leonean families' religious orientation, their ethnic background, conformity requirements and reference groups. Dissimilar to the linear argument presented by earlier researchers such as Blaydes and Grimmer (2013); and Khapoya (2015), this study has contributed to the extension of our knowledge by establishing that there is fundamental connection between religion, ethnicity, conformity and reference groups, and that they interact with each other in influencing the affection shared by families at mealtimes. This is important because a majority of the respondents emphasised that affection can help

foster oneness, happiness, unity and harmony within the family, which is essential for stability, progress and sustainability overtime when interacting socially at mealtimes. This affects families' meal behaviour by ensuring that every family member displays a show of concern for the others around the dinner table as well as exhibiting knowledge of their well-being. This show of affection is symbolic as it is the key determinant of prolonging family lineage and the stimulant for establishing continual bonding and contacts even when families are disintegrated and separated into new ones. The implications of this conclusion are that families' display of affection can have a positive impact on the way they relate with each other, which can have a multiplier effect on the way they share meals and/or sympathise/empathise with other family members. The implications of this conclusion on food producers/manufacturers are that it may help them attract a broader appeal and reach and promote a better marketing and/or customer relationship if they promote how their products and services can assist in developing and shown affection and concern towards their customers whenever they purchase food products, which potentially can increase the level of connectivity and emotional bond between the two (producers and their customers). This may be achieved via new products/services and loyalty incentives and consumer testimonials.

7.1.3 Conclusion 3: Gender differentiation demonstrates the symbolism of social distinction at mealtimes, which is affected by religion, ethnicity and reference groups

The results of this study builds on the conclusions presented by earlier researchers, for example, Bhanot et al (2014); and Jamal and Shukor (2014), that gender differentiation in Sierra Leonean families is largely influenced by their religious orientation, ethnic background and reference groups. This study, unlike earlier studies that used a uniform approach in describing these factors such as: gender separation and role distinction, has been able to use interconnectivity to demonstrate that religion, ethnicity and reference groups network with each other in influencing gender differentiation at Sierra Leonean families' mealtimes. Gender roles are seen in many families as homogeneous socialisation tools in order to showcase male dominance and female subservience, as Sierra Leone is a masculine society. This is because it teaches basic role distinction in the home and helps shape the behaviour of children and enables them to display an image that is befitting of the family in public gatherings and/or when they dissociate their relationship from the parent family in the bid to establish new ones. This affects families' meal behaviour by limiting the level of association between males and females, promotes role distinction and defines responsibility at the dinner

table. The implications of this conclusion are that gender differentiation has an adverse effect on the way males relate with females when interacting socially at mealtimes. The implications of this conclusion on food retailers and producers are that failure to adhere to the policies instituted by government on the promotion of sustainable production and consumption when marketing their products to different gender and religious groups can affect the level of sales and potentially the survival of their businesses in the long-term. It further implies that new products for gender and marketing of producers will be based on gender like flake (female) and Mars Bar (male).

7.1.4 Conclusion 4: Adherence to hierarchy/authority is used to regulate behaviour at families' mealtimes, which can be affiliated with religion, ethnicity and reference groups

The results of this study are in harmony with the views of earlier researchers, including: Hofstede's (2003); and House et al (2013), by emphasising that the observance of hierarchy/authority at Sierra Leonean families' meal times is largely influenced by religion, ethnicity and reference groups. However, this study has been able to provide new insight by highlighting that religion, ethnicity and reference groups intermingle with each other in affecting the use of hierarchy/authority at families' mealtimes. This is because the Sierra Leonean society is highly masculine with the predominance of high power distance, which ensures adherence to control and rules that govern the dinner table. This essentially shapes individuals' behaviour, promulgates the symbolism of observing boundaries and ranks/positions, and highlights the importance of preferential treatment at mealtimes. This affects families' meal behaviour by stipulating the order of preference in terms of seniority as well as act as a determinant of who should be first or last served. The implications of this conclusion are that adherence to authority/hierarchy can help in stream-lining behaviour appropriately by clearly defining the order of command and control, and the level of respect accorded to individuals at the dinner table. The implications of this conclusion on food retailers are that failure to adhere to hierarchy or seniority requirements by segmenting their markets appropriately to meet the needs of the different age and religious groups can adversely affect their sales volume and profit margin. It further implies that product development and marketing will be based on age grouping, for example, family, children and elders.

7.1.5 Conclusion 5: Education imbues the foundation for transferring morals to children at families' mealtimes and it can be affected by and in turn affect religion, ethnicity, conformity and reference groups

The results of this study was developed from the work of earlier researchers, for example, Edwards and Mercer (2013); and Zbenovich and Lerner (2013), who concluded that education at Sierra Leonean families' mealtimes is largely influenced by religion, ethnicity, conformity and reference groups. However, this study has been able to contribute to our extension of knowledge by establishing that religion, ethnicity, conformity and reference groups interact with each other in influencing the educational morals of families at mealtimes. A majority of the respondents emphasised that moral family education at mealtimes is fundamental for knowledge transfer and for instilling appropriate discipline in children. This is important because it can be used as an instrument in refining the thoughts of individuals within a family at mealtimes, which enables them to understand their roles and positions in the family and their relationship with others within and outside the family, especially visitors and extended family members. This affects families' meal behaviour by acting as forum for advice and learning, especially for the younger members of a family and a platform for behavioural refinement. The implications of this conclusion are that moral education at family mealtimes acts as stimulants for maintaining and cultivating an environment that is cordial and habitable for all members of the family. The implications of this conclusion on food retailers are that it can help them to understand families' morals, and learn how to incorporate these into their marketing plan through the use of integrated marketing communication approach.

7.1.6 Conclusion 6: Family religious values limit the choices families make at mealtimes and which can be connected with ethnicity and conformity as a way of controlling the type of food consumed or purchased

The results of this study accentuate the views of earlier researchers, for example, Dobratz (2013); Ferzacca et al (2013); and Ivtzan (2013), by establishing that family religious values are largely influenced by ethnicity and conformity. Contrarily to the singular approach used by previous researchers in explaining these factors such as: prayers; religious beliefs; food type, etc., this study has established new thoughts that show the interconnectivity between ethnicity and conformity, and how they interact with each other in influencing families' religious values at mealtimes. However, it was evident that, unlike ethnicity and conformity,

religion does affect the meal behaviour of Sierra Leonean families differently. For example, Christians were more pragmatic and open to all food choices, whilst Muslims were limited to the kind of food and drinks purchased and consumed at mealtimes. This goes to show that religion despite being symbolic in the lives of many Sierra Leonean families, influences food choice from one religious group to another. This affects families' meal social interaction behaviour by orienting the thinking of certain families towards a specific belief system and restricts their consumption or access to certain type of foods that are considered forbidden or inappropriate. The implications of this conclusion are that family religious values can have an adverse effect on what certain families consume and/or purchase, which significantly restrict their ability to access certain food categories that are deemed inappropriate for their consumption. The implications of this conclusion on food retailers and producers are that adherence to the food policies of government through appropriate certification, labelling and packaging of products can help families to know the kind of products they are purchasing, increase their access to food choices and reduce the effect of diseases. It also creates trust and loyalty if they know foods comply with religious beliefs.

7.1.7 Conclusion 7: Family cohesion can be fundamental to displaying togetherness at mealtimes and which is closely associated with conformity, reference groups and social class as a way of reinforcing unity and oneness at mealtimes

The outcomes of this study mirrors the views of previous researchers, such as: Wallace (2013); Khapoya (2015); and Radcliffe-Brown and Forde (2015) by emphasising that family cohesion is largely influenced by conformity, reference groups and social class. However, this study has contributed to the extension of our knowledge by using intersectional approach in showing that conformity, reference groups and social class are linked, and in fact interact with each other in influencing family cohesiveness at mealtimes. A majority of the respondents stressed that it is vital at mealtimes for family members to display unity when interacting socially as a way of transitioning similar attitude to children and most importantly for enhancing the public image of the family. This is important because it unifies the family around a common goal and promotes a sense of belonging in every member of the family at mealtimes. This affects families' meal behaviour by reducing boundaries and increasing the level of love, care, sympathy, happiness, bonding, tolerance and cooperation within family members at mealtimes. The implications of this conclusion are that cohesiveness provides a common ground for families to share ideas, and identify problems and proffer solutions,

which provides a platform for unified future family meal social interaction. The implications of this conclusion on food producers are that by targeting families as a unit at mealtimes can increase their efficiency through cost and time reduction, which may enhance their chances of attracting the whole family in purchasing their products. This may have implications for product design and development.

7.1.8 Conclusion 8: The frequency of participation in terms of the number of times parents eat together with their children fosters bonding and sharing of ideas between family members, which is allied with conformity and social class as key determinants of how much food is consumed at mealtimes

The results of this study echo the arguments of earlier researchers, for example, Bales and Parsons (2014); and Ghosh and Galczynski (2014), that participation is largely influenced by conformity, reference groups and social class. Unlike earlier researchers such as: Bales and Parsons (2014); and Ghosh and Galczynski (2014), this study has been able to indicate that conformity and social class are interrelated, and that they interact with each other in influencing the frequency of families' participation at mealtimes. The importance of family mealtimes as professed by the respondents is that it increases the frequency of family contacts and interaction, promotes the sharing of ideas, the discussion of pertinent family history, and divulging of family secrets to children, especially for posterity reasons. This essentially promotes happiness, unity and closeness, which increases the level of bonding in the family. This affects families' meal behaviour by stimulating and increasing family members' level of participation at mealtimes, facilitates interaction and socialisation, and enhances individuals' appetites to consume more at mealtimes. The implications of this conclusion are that participation fundamentally increases the level of social interaction and bonding among family members at mealtimes. The implications of this conclusion on food producers are that increased availability of processed and semi-processed food products can increase the frequency of families' participation at mealtimes as it will help reduce the long and arduous time spent by families in preparing meals.

7.1.9 Conclusion 9: Confirming the theoretical arguments of previous studies about the influence of various factors on families' meal social interaction behaviour

In reinforcing the views of previous researchers (Bejanyan et al., 2014; Ching, 2013; Peacock et al., 2014), this study confirmed that responsibility, direction, success and relationship

building are largely influenced by conformity at families' mealtimes. The study further confirmed that factors such as: task distinction; economic/social costs; associates; planning; and social benefits are affected by reference groups when families are socialising at mealtimes. In addition, this study confirmed that affordability, punctuality/attendance; social etiquette; and self-development are largely influenced by social class at families' mealtimes. The study also reiterated that respect at families' mealtimes is largely influenced by religion. The implications of this conclusion are that the findings of this study shared similar perspective with other researchers about the influence of these factors on families' meal behaviour. The implications of this conclusion on food retailers are that securing appropriate micro-credit and loan scheme can enhance the availability of different food types, and provide a regular and secure income source.

7.1.10 Conclusion 10: Contradicting the arguments of previous researchers about the influence of tribe and gender on families' meal behaviour

Averse to the proclamation made by earlier researchers, for example, Blaydes and Grimmer (2013); and Zeiders et al (2013), the results of this study does not support the view that tribe is an influencing factor of ethnicity, especially in the Sierra Leonean context. It was evident that acculturation and/or urbanisation have influenced a majority of the respondents to renege on the traditional significance of tribe in their families' meal behaviour. It can also be due to the increased acculturation experienced by these families, which fundamentally influence the way they socialise at mealtimes. Another logical explanation could be the increased exposure of families to western lifestyles through charitable and social group sensitisations, travel and/or social and electronic media, which may have transformed their mealtime behaviour. The implications of this conclusion are that the declining importance of tribe in Sierra Leonean families' meal behaviour can fundamentally influence their life style and the way they relate with other people outside their homes. The implications of this conclusion on food retailers and producers are that adherence to government policies can help provide a platform for quality improvement and enhancement, and increase awareness about the impact of consumer bias (for example, tribe) on food purchase behaviour.

7.2 Recommendations of the study

This section of the chapter provides appropriate recommendations for the study based on the conclusions and therefore it is categorised into three sub-headings, including: (i) Policy-makers (ii) Food retailers (iii) Food manufacturers. The study also seeks to provide recommendations for future researchers.

7.2.1 Recommendations for policy makers

This section discusses the expectation from policy-makers in improving the livelihood of families and businesses in Sierra Leone

Recommendation 1: Promote the concept of corporate social responsibility among food companies

The aim of this recommendation is to ensure that policy-makers encourage food companies to be socially responsible in terms of the quality of food sold to consumers and enforce appropriate food ethical standards that guarantees healthy consumption. This argument was emphasised by a majority of the respondents that food hygiene and quality are fundamental to good health and well-being. This can be achieved through public awareness, enforcing expected ethical codes of conducts to be followed by food companies, create an environment in which CSR can thrive and government working hand-in-gloves with food companies to ensure that the policies enacted are appropriate for their survival and sustainability in the long-term. The costs of this recommendation are those associated with the broader acceptance of CSR by food companies and the costs of instilling CSR into mainstream food companies thinking. The benefits of this are that companies will be economically, socially and environmentally responsible for their actions, and better community relationship between food companies and neighbouring communities established.

Recommendation 2: Enact laws that promote the increased use of certification, packaging and labelling by food companies

The aim of this recommendation is to enable policy-makers, especially the Ministries of Health and Sanitation, and Trade and Industry, to promote the increased use of certification, packaging and labelling among food companies to reduce the effect of diseases on families,

and enhance access to safe foods by different religious groups. This is fundamental in ensuring the prevalence of a safe and healthy society, and most importantly a productive one. This may be achieved through the enforcement of compliance to the rules and laws governing the production and sale of food products, institute compulsory food certification programmes, launch corporative stores throughout the country, introduce training programmes to raise awareness, public campaigns and the use of the electronic and print media. The costs associated with this recommendation are those related with advertising, building, certification, training, developing appropriate laws and rules, and social costs associated with the accumulation of litters and garbage. The benefits to be derived from this will include: safe foods; access to variety; adequate access to foods by different consumers irrespective of their religious backgrounds or beliefs; reduce contact with diseases and infections; reduce the culture of selling raw farm products on the open streets; and a more productive society.

Recommendation 3: Create an environment that embraces sustainable production and consumption

The aim of this recommendation is to enable policy-makers to regulate the idea of choice editing – the idea that food companies, especially retailers, can 'edit out' non-religious products from their shelves should be controlled in order to ensure access by consumers from different religious backgrounds. This recognises the fact that a majority of food retailers already make decisions about the food choices they want to sell and therefore must be controlled to ensure that the products they select for sale meet the sustainability needs of all families in their communities. As a consequence, the use of this approach by policy-makers will relieve families of the burden of restricted food choices, and free them to act like consumers in the marketplace, focusing on quality, convenience and price, rather than being concerned about the availability of certain products on the shelves of food stores or food market stalls in their local communities. This can be achieved through law enforcement, and education and training to raise awareness among food retailers and producers. The costs of this recommendation are those associated with some food companies relinquishing their trade, training, boycotts and the costs to enact the appropriate food policies. The benefits of this are that more families have access to food choices in their local community stores, reduce distance covered in purchasing food products and less transportation costs.

Recommendation 4 – Institute marketing policies that promote competition

The aim of this recommendation is to help government advance policies that encourage food companies to reduce dumping and customer bias (for example, tribal and gender) through free market mechanism, which enhances competition and promotes efficiency. This can be achieved by identifying growth segments, conduct market research, introduce anti-dumping measures for the promotion of fairer trade, through quality enhancement, promote operational efficiencies, promote the concept of economies of scale, increase customer knowledge/awareness, technological innovation and infrastructure development. The costs of this recommendation are those associated with market saturation, lowering of prices or potential price wars may emerge, poor company image, high production costs, low profits and low sales volumes. The benefits of this are that food companies may gain a larger market share, consumers may benefit from the lower prices, efficiency and productivity will be enhanced, less consumer bias (tribal and/or gender), less dumping, fair competition, and increased access and availability to food products by different consumer groups.

7.2.2 Recommendations for food retailers

This section discusses the expectations from food retailers in improving the food products sold to families in Sierra Leone

Recommendation 1: Introduce micro-credit and loan schemes to promote access to variety of foodstuffs

The aim of this recommendation is to ensure that marginalised and struggling food retailing companies get reasonable access to micro-credit and low interest loans to help them expand their businesses. This is fundamental as a majority of food retailers suggested that it can create an enabling environment for the growth and expansion of their business, and above all provide an avenue for the display of different food product varieties on their shelves. This can be achieved through: the introduction of reforms; training and technical advice to borrowers; including literacy programmes, enterprise management and education; improve credit market opportunities; increase efficacy of finance; the use of collateral free loans at near market interest rates; and the introduction of community-based programmes operated by financing institutions or non-governmental organisations. The costs of this recommendation are those

associated with information asymmetries as food retailers may not have access to equal information sources, low-potential profitability as there are high risks and costs associated with loan recovery, lack of portfolio diversification may affect loan recovery in the event of natural disaster or poor economic outlook. The benefits of this is that it enables an increase in consumers access to affordable products, increase access to food variety on retail store shelves, increase in income for retailers, better business growth and expansion, and poverty alleviation throughout poor community neighbourhoods.

Recommendation 2: Employ integrated marketing communication approach to meet consumer needs and wants

The aim of this recommendation is to give consumers a voice in terms of the food choices and decisions retailing outlets make by ensuring that they are involved in determining the kind of products that are displayed on the shelves of local community stores or open market food stalls. The use of this approach ensures that both the consumers and food retailers are involved in the type of food products sold and consumed. This can be achieved through: community collaboration between food retailers and consumers; generating leads for sales; open public campaigns to raise awareness; press releases; use of telemarketing to sell directly to consumers or make appointment for the sales team; training of employees; promoting frequent community gathering to share ideas; and the use of social events to discuss product ideas. The costs of this recommendation are those associated with training, social events, advertising campaigns (electronic and print media) and staff time. The benefits of this is the establishment of better community relationship, consumers access to food products of their choice, increased affection and closeness between food retailers and the consuming public, increased efficiency, costs saving, brand awareness, competitive advantage, boost morale and foster better understanding and cooperation.

Recommendation 3: Segmenting the market to meet consumers' tastes and preferences (thus allowing for product targeting and new product development)

The aim of this recommendation is to enable food retailing companies to segment their markets taking into account inter and intra group differences in order to meet the needs and wants of the various categories of consumers in their community. This can be achieved by: launching broader public awareness campaigns; the identification of new markets and/or products; better religious and community education; segmenting the market by taking

cognisance of gender, age, religious groups, social class and geographic locations; and the use of more effective marketing promotion. The costs of this recommendation are those associated with lack of sufficient information about different consumer needs, difficulty in predicting and measuring family behaviour and difficulty in reaching the right consumer types. The benefits of this are that better matching of customer needs and wants based on religious backgrounds and/or taste preferences, gain higher market share, more opportunities created for growth and more effective promotion ensured.

7.2.3 Recommendations for food manufacturers

This section discusses the expectations from food manufacturers in improving the food products produced and sold to retailing outlets

Recommendation 1: Encourage the production and marketing of processed and/or semi-processed food products

The aim of this recommendation is to promote the production and marketing of processed and/or semi-processed food products so as to alleviate the stress experienced by working families, which increases their frequency of participation at mealtimes. It may be achieved by food companies becoming proactively engaged in the production and sales of more ready-made food items that are either semi-processed or fully processed to save families from the long and arduous task of food preparation and ease the stress associated with after work food preparation, better food training and education, public campaigns and awareness raising and the launching of food cooperatives throughout the country. The costs of this recommendation are those associated with packaging, labelling, advertising/commercial campaign, electricity, equipment for preserving food items, storage and transportation. The benefits to be derived from this recommendation include – less after work food preparation; reduced stress; more family participation at mealtimes; more family pastime and increased socialisation.

Recommendation 2: Promote the building of better marketing relationship to foster a broader audience appeal and reach (creating product loyalty and affection)

The aim of this recommendation is to create an enabling environment for customers to support the food manufacturers and encourage other potential customers to do the same so as to broaden the target market audience. This is important as a majority of the respondents are

inclined to consider the level of affection displayed in their food purchase decisions, which sometimes can trigger impulsive buying. This can be achieved through frequent face to face contact with customers, promoting advertising programmes on social media, persuasive selling, better service delivery to customers and the quality of products sold. The costs of this recommendation are those associated with high expenditure levels as the cost of attracting new customers is difficult and time consuming, behavioural intentions do not normally reflect purchase behaviour in reality, problems with validity and reliability and requires a lot of effort with too many complexities in implementation. The benefits of this is that it aids in a better understanding of customer needs and wants, which is useful to implement profitable exchanges; better display of affection; better understanding of customers' culture and behaviour; better customer satisfaction, retention and acquisition; and a more stable relationship overtime.

Recommendation 3 – Introduce the concept of target marketing in the marketing plan

The aim of this recommendation is to provide food manufacturers with detailed knowledge of current and potential customers through the use of specialised advertising and/or marketing campaign geared towards targeting family that eat together as a unit. This is important because a majority of families in Sierra Leone eat their food together as a unit, which fundamentally influence the way they behave collectively. This can be achieved through marketing campaigns, undertaking a study on family lifestyle characteristics; conduct research on family religious and cultural backgrounds; conduct a study on family eating habits; undertake concentrated marketing efforts; and conduct marketing opportunity analysis to determine the potential size of the market, profitability and level of competition. The costs of this recommendation are those associated with the expensiveness of the programme/projects especially for small food manufacturers; it can be time consuming as it requires research to be conducted to investigate the nature of the markets to be targeted; it encourages the neglect of potential customers; and it may be exploitative. The benefits to be derived from this recommendation include: cost efficiency; messages tailored to a specific group of consumers/families; increase loyalty through word of mouth; advertising; time efficiency as the advertisement is designed to target groups instead of individuals; better reputation and image of the company; and increased profit margin.

7.2.4 Recommendation for future studies

The previous sections discussed the conclusions, contributions and recommendations of this research, which provides potential avenues for further research in the future. This study may motivate further studies on the use of the concept of intersectionalism/interactionalism in other disciplines. The study of intersectionalism/interactionalism is an unexplored area in today's marketing, consumer behaviour and cultural collectivism concepts. The interpretations of the effect of collectivism on families' meal social interaction behaviour in this research has provided tentative answers to a 'Pandora's box', but nevertheless, it has paved the way for other relevant research to be conducted in the future.

7.3 Summary of the chapter

This chapter has provided concluding statements to the research findings and channel appropriate recommendations for stakeholders and for further studies, the contributions of the study, and the implications of the conclusions and recommendations for stakeholders.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Research Themes: Families

- The influence of religion, conformity, social class, ethnicity and reference groups on family meal social interaction behaviour

- Culture, self-concept and identity

- Social bonding and the African context

- Collectivism and power distance

- Collectivism and individual cultural values

- Collectivism and group behaviour

- Relationship between the individual and the group

- Relationship between collectivism and consumption

- Relationship between collectivism and family decision-making

- Family meal social interaction patterns

Appendix 2: Background of families

Personal Details

Please tick an appropriate box or fill in the blanks for each question

Participant Name: _____ Date:_____

Code:_____

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. You may skip any question you do not wish to answer. All the data collected during this research will be anonymous and confidential.

1. What is your age? _____ years

2. Family size_____

3. What is your gender? Male ☐   Female ☐

4. What is your occupation?_____

5. What is your total annual income (in Sierra Leonean Leones)? Less than Le 100,000 ☐ Between Le 100,000 and Le 1000,000 ☐ Between Le 1000,000 and Le 3,000,000 ☐ Between Le 3,000,000 and Le 5,000,000 ☐ Over Le 5,000,000 ☐ Over Le 10,000,000 ☐

6. What is your religion? Christian ☐ Muslim ☐ Others ☐, (Please specify_____)

7. In an average day, how much money do you have to spend on family food consumption? Under Le 35,000 ☐ Between Le 40,000 and Le 60,000 Between Le 70,000 and Le 90,000 ☐ Over Le 100,000 ☐

8. What is your ethnicity? Creole ☐ Mende ☐ Temne ☐ Others, (Please specify_____)

9. When did you last purchase a food item for the family, which is considered to be a luxury food? Every day ☐ In the last week ☐ In the last month ☐ In the last three months ☐ In the last six months ☐ Longer than one year ago ☐ Never ☐

10. What do you consider to be luxury food?
....
....

11. Give me the names of luxury foods

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………..

12. How often do you eat these luxury foods? Very often ☐ Often ☐
Moderately often ☐ Seldom ☐ Never ☐

13. How expensive are these items you have identified as foodstuffs? Very expens☐
Expensive ☐ Moderately Expensive ☐ cheap ☐ Very cheap ☐

Appendix 3:

Table 5.3: Semi-structured interview protocols of the determinants, parameters and related literature of collectivism and family meal social interaction behaviour

Determinants	parameters	Questions	Related literature (Theorists)
Religion	Spiritual beliefs, cultural values, traditional practices, social bonding	Does your spiritual belief influence the way your family interacts at the dinner table? In what ways does this spiritual belief influence the way your family interact at the dinner table? Why does this spiritual belief influence the way your family interact at the dinner table? What cultural values influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table? In what ways do these cultural values influence your family's meal social interaction pattern at the dinner table? Why do these cultural values influence your family's social interaction at the dinner table? What traditional practices influence your family's meal social interaction pattern at the dinner table? In what ways do these traditional practices influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour? Why do these traditional practices influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour at meal times? Does social bonding influence your family's meal social interaction patterns? In what ways does social bonding influence your family's social interaction pattern at meal times? Why does social bonding influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour at meal times?	Jenkins et al (2013); Posthuma and Guerrero (2013); Thornhill and Fincher (2014); Wald and Calboun (2014); Burton and Clements (2013); Ferraro and Brody (2015); Arsel and Thompson (2011); Dobratz (2013); Ivtzan (2013); and Pompper (2014); Cohen and Hill (2007); Guerrero (2013); Kitayama and Markus (2014); Hofstede (2003); Collar (2013); Cohen and Hill (2007); and Kvande (2014); Cleveland et al (2015); Reeve (2004);
Ethnicity	Tribes, language	Does your tribe influence your family's meal social interaction	Kuczynski and Knafo (2013);

	spoken, region of origin (locational boundary), values and beliefs, assumptions	behaviour at the dinner table? In what ways does your tribe influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table? Why do you think your tribe influence the way your family socially interact at the dinner table? Does the region you come from influence the way your family interact at the dinner table? In what ways does your region of origin influence the way your family interact at the dinner table? Why does your region of origin influence the way your family interact at the dinner table? Does your cultural belief influence your family's meal social interaction pattern at the dinner table? In what ways does your cultural belief influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour? Why do these cultural beliefs influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour? Are there any practices (assumptions) your family is expected to observe when interacting at the dinner table? In what ways do these practices (assumptions) influence the way your family interact at the dinner table? Why do these assumptions influence the way your family interact at the dinner table?	Lorenzo-Blanco and Cortina (2013); Rampton (2014); Moran et al (2014); Serenari et al (2013); Blaydes and Grimmer (2013); Sauer (2015); Brice (2012); Bejanyan et al. (2014); Devos and Vu (2014); Zeiders et al (2013); Peštek and Činjarevič (2014);
Conformity	Cohesiveness, harmony, unity, social bonding, obedience, interdependence	What is the importance of togetherness in your family's meal social interaction behaviour? Do your family watch television when eating? How important is togetherness in your family's meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table? Why do you think togetherness is important in the way your family interact at the dinner table? What is the importance of obedience in your family's social interaction at the dinner table?	Khapoya (2015); Wallace (2013); Radcliffe-Brown and Forde (2015); Sigel et al (2014); Cohen (2013); Miller (2014); Cloward and Ohlin (2014); Smith et al (2014); Ferzacca et al (2013); Kagitcibasi (2013); Koh and Wang (2013); Merrill et al (2014); Segrin and Flora (2014); Edwards

		How important is obedient in your family's social interaction at the dinner table?	and Mercer (2013); Zbenovich and Lerner (2013); Livi et al (2014)
		Why is obedience important in your family's social interaction at the dinner table?	
Reference groups	Age, gender, ethnic background, social relations	What is the importance of age in your family's social interaction at the dinner table?	Ching (2013); Giddens (2013); Bhanot et al (2014); Jamal and Shukor (2014); Segev et al (2014); Cowan et al (2014); De Massis et al (2014); Zarrow (2015); De Mooij (2013); Moran et al. (2014); Sammon and Kwon (2015); Cloward and Ohlin (2013)
		How important is age in your family's social interaction at the dinner table?	
		Why is age important in your family's social interaction at the dinner table?	
		Does your family's gender influence the way they interact socially at the dinner table?	
		In what ways does gender influence your family's social interaction at the dinner table?	
		Why does gender influence the way your family interact socially at the dinner table?	
		What is the importance of social relation in your family's meal interaction behaviour?	
		In what ways does the importance of social relation influence your family's interaction at the dinner table?	
		Why is social relation important in your family's interaction at the dinner table?	
Social status	Income, wealth, occupation, education, age, authority	Does your income/wealth influence your family social interaction patterns at meal times?	Peacock et al (2014); Bales and Parsons (2014); Hofstede's (2003); Yildirim et al (2014); Davidoff and Hall (2013); and Padfield and Procter (2014); House et al (2013); Lau and Young (2013); Ghosh and Galczynski (2014); Usunier and Lee (2009)
		How does income/wealth affect the way your family interact socially at meal times?	
		Why does income/wealth affect the way your family interact socially at the dinner table?	
		Does your job affect the way you interact with your family at the dinner table?	
		How does your job affect the way you interact with your family at the dinner table?	

		Why does your job affect the way you interact with your family socially at the dinner table? What is the importance of education in your family meal social interaction patterns at the dinner table? How important is education in your family's meal social interaction behaviour? Why is education important in your family's meal social interaction behaviour? What is the importance of decision-making in your family's meal social interaction patterns? How important is decision-making in your family's social interaction at the dinner table? Who makes the decision in your family? Why is decision-making important in your family's social interaction at the dinner table? What is the importance of authority in your family's social interaction at the dinner table? How important is authority in your family's meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table? Why is authority important in your family's meal social interaction behaviour?	
Family social interaction behaviour	Family behaviour, communication	Can you provide examples of in-group family behaviours that affect interaction at the dinner table? Prompt: what sort of in-group behaviour does your family display at the dinner table? What do you understand by family meal social interaction? Prompt: how important is family meal social interaction behaviour to your family? Are members of your family allowed to communicate freely at the dinner table? Prompt: how do you feel such communication contributes to	John *et al* (2013); Seifer et al (2014); Zbenovich and Lerner (2013); Fulkerson et al (2014); Marotz (2014); Figley and Kiser (2013); Bott and Spillius (2014); Sigel et al (2014); Henrich and Henrich (2013); Anderson (2014); Mann (2015); Chen and Rau (2013); Hussin (2013); Nguyen and Lwin (2014); Neumark-

		their development? Prompt: is it important whether or not people communicate at the dinner table?	Sztainer et al (2008); McIntosh (2013); Lull (2013); Philips et al (2014)

Appendix 4:

Table 5.4: Personal Data of Families

Family category	Age (years)	Gender	Occupation	Ethnicity	Luxury food defined	Examples of luxury food
01FFI	30	Female	Procurement officer	Creole	Any special food eaten once in a while	Foo-foo + sauce, cassava leaves, vegetable salad, groundnut stew, krain-krain, potato leaves
	36	Male	Banker	Mende	Costly food normally consumed for comfort	Vegetable salad, shrimps +chips
02FFI	35	Female	Business woman	Temne	Luxury food is anything very expensive	Meat, fish, salad cous-cous, joloff rice, juice
	47	Male	Builder	Temne	They are food we mainly buy from the super markets	Wine, juice, fuits and drinks, biscuits, ice cream
03FFI	32	Female	Nurse	Yalunka	It is food provided to the family on special occasions	Rose apple, banana, chicken, salad
	52	Male	Teacher	Kono	Those items that the family needs, but not available at all times	Salad, chicken, meat
04FFI	46	Female	Geologist	Temne	It is anything which you buy with an amount that far exceeds what you will spend on normal food	Pizza, grapes, chicken, macaroni
	48	Male	Banker – Director	Mende	The food which the family wants, but it is not available on a daily basis	Pizza, apples
05FFI	35	Female	Business woman	Mende	They are supermarket foods	Hamburger, salad, sandwich, stew and chicken, meat, sweet potatoes
	40	Male	Inspector of police	Mende	It is ostentatious food	Chicken, snacks, mayonnaise, cocoa
06FFI	28	Female	Teacher	Kono	It is a food that is not prepared every day and are special foods prepared for special days	Salad, dessert, joloff, cous-cous, fried rice, fruits
	38	Male	Civil servant (Technical	Kissy	It is the food we do not normally eat, but eat once in a while with the	Meat, drinks, salad, rice, wine

					appropriate ingredients	
			Coordinator)			
07FFI	35	Female	Business woman	Temne	Food that doesn't get spoilt easily	Vegetables and fruits
	39	Male	Finance Officer (YMCA)	Kono	It is food that has all the nutrients to help the body grow	Ovaltine, cappuccino, milk, sardine, luncheon meat, salad cream, cornflakes
08FFI	46	Female	Social worker	Mende	A food that is not being purchased by everybody	Tin milk, eggs, vegetables, meat, chicken
	50	Male	Social worker	Mende	A food that makes you look special and you can't do without them	Hamburger, roasted chicken, ice cream
09FFI	49	Female	Mid-wife	Temne	It is when a sauce has good fish and meat as condiment	Joloff, fried rice, cassava leaves
	59	Male	Business man (self-employed)	Madingo	Is food containing protein, vitamins to build the body	Fruits, chicken, fish, meat
10FFI	36	Female	Teacher	Koranko	Food which can make the children grow well	Drinks, apple, fruits, meat
	45	Male	Civil engineer	Mende	Food used almost on a daily basis	Rice, foo-foo, cassava, potato, etc.
11FFI	38	Female	Teacher	Mende	Any food not always available to the family and very expensive	Fruits, ice cream, meat, milk, ovaltine
	43	Male	Civil servant	Mende	One though a staple, but not everybody can afford it every day or cannot afford it as a balanced diet	Rice, fish, meat, palm oil
12FFI	52	Female	Teacher/Pastor	Limba	Expensive foods	Meat, chicken, fish, salad, palm oil
	59	Male	Lecturer	Mende	It is something I eat and get good feeling from	Salad, meat, chicken, fish, rice
13FFI	26	Female	Nurse	Creole	Food that is needed at home for the daily sustenance of the family	Rice and provisions
	39	Male	Lecturer	Limba	Food that goes beyond your normal expenditure	Snacks

14FFI	42	Female	Teacher	Temne	It is food that is very expensive for the family to buy frequently	Salad, drinks, fruits
	50	Male	Agricultural Officer	Temne	Food that the family cannot prepare at home and the ingredients are not locally available. It is well balanced	Pizza, can foods, drinks
15FFI	59	Female	University Administrator	Creole	Very expensive foods that the family eat once in a week	Salad, hamburger, pizza, foo-foo and bitters
	64	Male	University Administrator	Creole	Foods that you don't eat ordinarily	Ice cream, sausages, bacon, pies
16FFI	42	Female	Principal	Mende	Any food that is expensive for a normal family to buy and it is usually outside the reach of a normal family	Pizza, meat, salad
	45	Male	Deputy Director (EPA)	Yalunka	They are delicacies eaten by the family	Meat, tin food, salad
17FFI	35	Female	Business woman (self-employed)	Temne	Food consume by the family with the right types of condiments	Stew Rice, salad, fruits, meat, chicken
	50	Male	Medical lecturer/tutor	Fulla	It is food that we eat every day at home	Rice and sauce, eba and okra, krain-krain
18FFI	43	Female	Teacher	Mende	It is everything you use as a family, including staple food	Rice, palm-oil, groundnut oil, onion, season, tomato, provisions
	52	Male	Businessman	Madingo	Food we eat in the home infrequently	Salad, fruits, drinks, sandwich
19FFI	45	Female	Housewife	Mende	Food that is purchased outside the home and are normally very expensive	Hamburger, sandwich, fruits
	52	Male	Civil Servant	Mende	Food that the family needs, but can only be provided on an infrequent basis	Meat, fish, drinks, salad
20FFI	40	Female	Social worker	Mende	Food that people buy from restaurants and stores	Milk, chicken, ovaltine, mayonnaise

	48	Male	Social worker	Madingo	Food that is needed by the family, but difficult to buy on a daily because it is expensive	Roasted chicken and meat, salad, provisions,

Appendix 5:

Table 5.5: Sample representation and demographic information of families who participated in the face to face semi-structured interviews

Families		Demographic	
Family 001	Wife	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Creole	**Type of occupation**: procurement office
		Family size: 3 **Religion**: Christianity	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Banker
		Family size: 3 **Religion**: Christianity	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 002	Wife	**Location**: HQ03 **Ethnicity**: Temne	**Type of occupation**: Businesswoman/self-employed
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP
	Husband	**Location**: HQ03 **Ethnicity**: Temne	**Type of occupation**: Constructor
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Christianity	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP
Family 003	Wife	**Location**: HQ04 **Ethnicity**: Yalunka	**Type of occupation**: Nurse
		Family size: 12 **Religion**: Christianity	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP
	Husband	**Location**: HQ04 **Ethnicity**: Kono	**Type of occupation**: Teacher
		Family size: 12 **Religion**: Christianity	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP
Family	Wife	**Location**: HQ04	**Type of occupation**: Geologist

004		**Ethnicity**: Temne	
		Family size: 7

Religion: Muslim | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP |
| | Husband | **Location**: HQ04

Ethnicity: Mende | **Type of occupation**: Banker |
| | | **Family size**: 7

Religion: Christianity | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP |
| Family 005 | Wife | **Location**: HQ02

Ethnicity: Mende | **Type of occupation**: Businesswoman/self-employed |
| | | **Family size**: 5

Religion: Christianity | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: SP |
| | Husband | **Location**: HQ02

Ethnicity: Mende | **Type of occupation**: Police Officer |
| | | **Family size**: 5

Religion: Christianity | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: SP |
| Family 006 | Wife | **Location**: HQ02

Ethnicity: Kono | **Type of occupation**: Teacher |
| | | **Family size**: 5

Religion: Christianity | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: SP |
| | Husband | **Location**: HQ02

Ethnicity: Kissy | **Type of occupation**: Civil servant |
| | | **Family size**: 5

Religion: Christianity | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: SP |
| Family 007 | Wife | **Location**: HQ02

Ethnicity: Temne | **Type of occupation**: Businesswoman/self-employed |
| | | **Family size**: 4

Religion: Christianity | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: SP |
| | Husband | **Location**: HQ02 | **Type of occupation**: Finance Officer |

		Ethnicity: Kono	
		Family size: 4	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: SP
		Religion: Christianity	
Family 008	Wife	**Location**: HQ02

Ethnicity: Mende | **Type of occupation**: Social worker |
| | | **Family size**: 10

Religion: Christian | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: SP |
| | Husband | **Location**: HQ02

Ethnicity: Mende | **Type of occupation**: Social worker |
| | | **Family size**: 10

Religion: Christian | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: SP |
| Family 009 | Wife | **Location**: HQ03

Ethnicity: Temne | **Type of occupation**: mid-wife |
| | | **Family size**: 4

Religion: Muslim | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: SP |
| | Husband | **Location**: HQ03

Ethnicity: Madingo | **Type of occupation**: Businessman/self-employed |
| | | **Family size**: 4

Religion: Muslim | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP |
| Family 010 | Wife | **Location**: HQ03

Ethnicity: Koranko | **Type of occupation**: Teacher |
| | | **Family size**: 10

Religion: Muslim | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP |
| | Husband | **Location:** HQ03

Ethnicity: Mende | **Type of occupation**: Civil engineer |
| | | **Family size**: 10

Religion: Muslim | **District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP |
| Family | Wife | **Location**: HQ01 | **Type of occupation**: Teacher |

011		**Ethnicity**: Mende	
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Civil servant
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 012		**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Limba	**Type of occupation**: Teacher/Pastor
		Family size: 6 **Religion**: Christian	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
		Location: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Lecturer
		Family size: 6 **Religion**: Christian	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 013	Wife	**Location**: HQ04 **Ethnicity**: Creole	**Type of occupation**: Nurse
		Family size: 4 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP
	Husband	**Location**: HQ04 **Ethnicity**: Limba	**Type of occupation**: Lecturer
		Family size: 4 **Religion**:	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP
Family 014	Wife	**Location**: HQ03 **Ethnicity**: Temne	**Type of occupation**: Teacher
		Family size: 5 **Religion**: Christian	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP
	Husband	**Location**: HQ03 **Ethnicity**: Temne	**Type of occupation**: Agricultural Officer
		Family size: 5	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: NP3

		Religion: Christian	
Family 015	Wife	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Creole	**Type of occupation**: University Administrator
		Family size: 4 **Religion**: Christian	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Creole	**Type of occupation**: University Administrator
		Family size: 4 **Religion**: Christian	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 016	Wife	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Principal
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**:Yalunka	**Type of occupation**: Deputy Director (Civil Servant)
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 017	Wife	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Temne	**Type of occupation**: Businesswoman/Self-employed
		Family size: 9 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Fullah	**Type of occupation:** Medical Lecturer
		Family size: 9 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
Family 018	Wife	**Location**: HQ01 **Ethnicity**: Mende	**Type of occupation**: Teacher
		Family size: 8 **Religion**: Muslim	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01	**Type of occupation**: Businessman/self-employed

		Ethnicity: Madingo	
		Family size: 8	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
		Religion: Muslim	
Family 019	Wife	**Location**: HQ01	**Type of occupation**: Housewife
		Ethnicity: Mende	
		Family size: 12	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
		Religion: Muslim	
	Husband	**Location**: HQ01	**Type of occupation**: Civil servant (Deputy Director General)
		Ethnicity: Mende	
		Family size: 12	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: WA
		Religion: Muslim	
Family 020	Wife	**Location**: HQ04	**Type of occupation**: Social worker
		Ethnicity: Mende	
		Family size: 3	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP
		Religion: Muslim	
	Husband	**Location**: HQ04	**Type of occupation**: Social worker
		Ethnicity: Madingo	
		Family size: 3	**District/Provincial headquarter town**: EP
		Religion: Muslim	

Codes:

Freetown: HQ 01; Western Area: WA; Bo: HQ 02; Southern province: SP; Makeni: HQ 03; Northern Province: NP; Kenema: HQ 04; Eastern province: EP

Please note that, HQ means – Headquarter town

Appendix 6: Participant Invitation Letter (Families)

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is ShekuKakay. I am a student at the University of Salford in the School of Business Studies. As a part of my study, I am conducting research on the effect of collectivism on family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone. I would like to invite you to take part in my research. The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between collectivism and family meal social interaction behaviour of Sierra Leoneans, and to develop an understanding of the association between the two.

A one-to-one semi-structured face to face interview approach will be used to ask you questions on the influence of collectivism on family meal social interaction behaviour, family decision-making, social bonding, consumption, and individual and group behaviours in your family. It is my hope that the information obtained from you can be beneficial in demonstrating the collectivist behaviour of Sierra Leoneans and outline family meal social interaction patterns, which is vital for the socio-economic development of the family, depicts family decision-making and enhances attitudinal change among adults, young adults and children as conversationalists.

If you agree to participate, I will visit you to review any questions and concerns you may have and seek advice from you whether or not other staff should be interviewed from your organisation. All interviews will be conducted at your home and in person. I will be scheduling an in-person interview commencing on the (date). The interview will last for about an hour and will be arranged at a time convenient to your schedule. To ensure that the information obtained from you are accurate, I would like to ask your permission to audio record our conversation, and your participation will be anonymous, as no one will be allowed access to the conversation or the answers you provide.

Participation in the interview process is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks associated with your participation in this study. You may decline to answer any question(s) you are not convenient or comfortable in answering. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from the interview process at any time without any negative consequences or actions by simply communicating your decision in earnest. All the information provided by you will be treated with strict confidentiality, except where otherwise agreed to, and the data collected will be kept in a safe and secured location and confidentially disposed of in three years after the study has been completed.

Your name, family and that of the organisation you work for will not appear in any part of my thesis. If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information about participating in this, please contact me on: 0044-(079) – 440-65-325 or by e-mail: s.kakay@edu.salford.ac.uk.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and has received ethical approval by the University of Salford Ethics Committee. However, the final decision to participate in this study rests with you. If you have any comments or concerns following your participation in this research, please contact my supervisor, Dr.GrazynaRembielak of the University of Salford on: 0044 (0) 161-295-5594, or e-mail address: G.Rembielak@salford.ac.uk

Thank you in advance for the interest shown to participate in this study.

Yours Sincerely,

ShekuKakay.

Appendix 7: Participant Invitation Letter (Food retailers and manufacturers)

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is ShekuKakay. I am a PhD. research student at the University of Salford in the School of Business and Law. As a part of my study, I am verifying the outcomes of a previous research conducted on families on food manufacturing and retailing companies in Sierra Leone. I would like to invite you to take part in my research. The purpose of the study is to validate the outcome of a previous research conducted on family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone, and to assert the results obtained during that study.

A one-to-one semi-structured face to face interview approach will be used to ask you questions on the influence of religion, ethnicity, conformity, reference groups and social class on the food you manufacture or retail. It is my hope that the information obtained from you can be beneficial in demonstrating the collectivist behaviour of Sierra Leoneans and reinforce the outcomes of my previous research, which is vital for the socio-economic development of the families and businesses.

If you agree to participate, I will visit you to review any questions and concerns you may have and seek advice from you whether or not other staff should be interviewed from your organisation. All interviews will be conducted at your convenience in any preferred location and in person. I will be scheduling an in-person interview commencing on the (date). The interview will last for about an hour and will be arranged at a time convenient to your schedule. To ensure that the information obtained from you are accurate, I would like to ask your permission to audio record our conversation, and your participation will be confidential, as no one will be allowed access to the conversation or the answers you provide.

Participation in the interview process is entirely voluntary and there are no known or anticipated risks associated with your participation in this study. You may decline to answer any question(s) you are not convenient or comfortable in answering. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from the interview process at any time without any negative consequences or actions by simply communicating your decision in earnest. All the information provided by you will be treated with strict confidentiality, except where otherwise agreed to, and the data collected will be kept in a

safe and secured location and confidentially disposed of in three years after the study has been completed.

Your name, family and that of the organisation you work for will not appear in any part of my thesis. If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information about participating in this, please contact me on: 0044-(079) – 440-65-325 or by e-mail: s.kakay@edu.salford.ac.uk.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and has received ethical approval by the University of Salford Ethics Committee. However, the final decision to participate in this study rests with you. If you have any comments or concerns following your participation in this research, please contact my supervisor, Dr. James Mulkeen of the University of Salford on: 0044 (0) 161-295-2066, or e-mail address: j.mulkeen@salford.ac.uk

Thank you in advance for the interest shown to participate in this study.

Yours Sincerely,

ShekuKakay.

Appendix 8: Participant Information Sheet

Before you decide to participate in this research, you need to understand why the research is being conducted and what your involvement will be. It is vital for you to read this information carefully and ask questions on issues unclear to you. Take your time to read through and decide whether or not you want to participate in the research.

Study Title

The effect of collectivism on family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone

Invitation

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. The aim of the research is to examine the relationship between collectivism and family meal social interaction behaviour of Sierra Leoneans, and to develop an understanding of the association between the two. I am a PhD. candidate studying at the University of Salford, who wishes to conduct a research on the effects of collectivism on family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone. This research has been ethically approved by the University of Salford Ethics Committee.

What will happen?

In this study, you will be asked to answer questions on the influence of collectivism on family meal social interaction behaviour, family decision-making, social bonding, consumption, and individual and group behaviours in your family. A one-to-one face to face semi-structured interview approach will be used to ask you questions on the effect of collectivism on family meal social interaction behaviour. The conversation or interview will be audio recorded, and your participation will be anonymous, as no one will be allowed access to the conversation or the answers you provide. The interview will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy of your input and to serve as a reference, which the researcher can go back to when certain issues are unclear to him.

Time commitment

The entire interview process will take about an hour and would be arranged based on the convenience of your schedule and availability.

Participant rights

The interview is entirely voluntary and you may decide to withdraw from it at any time without explanation. You also have the right to request that any data you have provided to a certain point to be withdrawn or destroyed. Please also note that there are no remunerations for participating in the interview.

 You have the absolute right to request for the omission or reject to answer certain questions that you think are inappropriate for the interview or infringe on your personal life.

You have the right to request for answers to questions raised by you about the procedures, except where answering such questions interferes with the outcome of the study. As a result, if you have any questions, it is but prudent to ask the researcher those questions or raise any concerns about the procedures prior to the interview.

Benefits and risks

There are no known risks associated with this study. There are no known direct benefits to you as an individual, but the study would contribute significantly in demonstrating the collectivist behaviour of Sierra Leoneans and outline family meal social interaction patterns, which is vital for the socio-economic development of the family, depicts family decision-making and enhances attitudinal change among adults, young adults and children as conversationalists.

Cost, reimbursement and compensation

Your participation in this study is free and voluntary; and therefore, it is important to note that your participation will not be compensated or paid for.

Confidentiality/anonymity

All the information provided by you will be treated with strict confidentiality, except where otherwise agreed to, and the data collected will be kept in a safe and secured location and confidentially disposed of in three years after the study has been completed. Your identity will also be kept anonymous throughout the research.

For further information

If you have any further questions about this study or would like additional information about participation, please contact me on: 0044 (079) – 440 – 65 – 325 or e-mail: s.kakay@edu.salford.ac.uk

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and has received ethical approval by the University of Salford Ethics Committee. However, the final decision to participate in this study rests with you. If you have any comments or concerns following your participation in this research, please contact my supervisor, Dr.GrazynaRembielak of the University of Salford on: 0044 (0) 161-295-5594, or e-mail address: G.Rembielak@salford.ac.uk

Appendix 9: Participant's Consent Form

I…………………………………………. agree to participate voluntarily in the study of "The effect of collectivism on family meal social interaction behaviour in Sierra Leone". I would also like to assert that I have given the interviewer the permission to tape-record our conversation.

I understand that I have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time, either before or during the research without intimidation or repercussions.

I understand that if for any reason I decide to pull out of the study within two weeks of the interview, the data I have contributed will not be used, and as a result will be deleted.

I understand that anonymity will be ensured during the data collection and the write-up phase of the study to disguise my identity.

I understand that concealed excerpts from my interview may be quoted in the thesis undertaken by the researcher if I consent for him to do so.

(Please mark X in the selected box)

☐   I agree to quotation of extracts from my interview

☐   I disagree to quotation of extracts from my interview

Signed………………………………. Date…………………………..

Appendix 10:

Table 5.6: Factors affecting interview protocols

Interview Theme	Source
The families' perspective of religion as related to spiritual beliefs, cultural values, traditional practices and social bonding and how these factors affects the meal social interaction behaviours	Jenkins et al (2013); Posthuma and Guerrero (2013); Thornhill and Fincher (2014); Wald and Calboun (2014); Burton and Clements (2013); Ferraro and Brody (2015); Arsel and Thompson (2011); Dobratz (2013); Ivtzan (2013); and Pompper (2014); Cohen and Hill (2007)
The families' perspective of ethnicity in relation to tribe, language spoken, region of origin, assumptions, their belief systems and identity and how that affects their interaction at the dinner table	Kuczynski and Knafo (2013); Lorenzo-Blanco and Cortina (2013); Rampton (2014); Moran et al (2014); Serenari et al (2013); Blaydes and Grimmer (2013); Sauer (2015); Brice (2012)
The families' perspective of conformity in relation to cohesiveness or togetherness, obedience, norms and meal sharing and how these affects their interaction at mealtimes	Khapoya (2015); Wallace (2013); Radcliffe-Brown and Forde (2015); Sigel et al (2014); Cohen (2013); Miller (2014); Cloward and Ohlin (2014); Smith et al (2014); Ferzacca et al (2013); Kagitcibasi (2013); Koh and Wang (2013); Merrill et al (2014); Segrin and Flora (2014); Edwards and Mercer (2013); Zbenovich and Lerner (2013); Livi et al (2014)
The families' perspective of reference groups in relation to age, gender, social relations, decision-making, extended families and how these affects their interaction at mealtimes	Ching (2013); Giddens (2013); Bhanot et al (2014); Jamal and Shukor (2014); Segev et al (2014); Cowan et al (2014); De Massis et al (2014); Zarrow (2015)
The families' perspective of social class in relation to income/wealth, occupation, education, and power/authority and how these affect their family's meal interaction	Peacock et al (2014); Bales and Parsons (2014); Hofstede's (2003); Yildirim et al (2014); Davidoff and Hall (2013); and Padfield and Procter (2014); House et al

behaviour	(2013); Lau and Young (2013); Ghosh and Galczynski (2014); Usunier and Lee (2009)
The families' perspective on meal social interaction behaviours on issues like communication, control and family behaviour at mealtimes.	John *et al* (2013); Seifer et al (2014); Zbenovich and Lerner (2013); Fulkerson et al (2014); Marotz (2014); Figley and Kiser (2013); Bott and Spillius (2014); Sigel et al (2014); Henrich and Henrich (2013); Anderson (2014); Mann (2015); Chen and Rau (2013); Hussin (2013); Nguyen and Lwin (2014); Neumark-Sztainer et al (2008); McIntosh (2013); Lull (2013); Philips et al (2014)

Appendix 11:

Table 5.7: Sample data summary sheet

> A. **Sample analysis of Families' meal social interaction behaviour**

> 1. **Main Research Question: What is the influence of religion on family meal social interaction behaviour?**

Question 1. In what ways does this spiritual belief influence the way your family interact at the dinner table? (Muslim Wives)	
7	Prayer, respect, boundaries, belief, religious beliefs, heredity, silence, presence of God, cultural beliefs, concentrates on the food; no eating and talking.
17	Prayer, silence, Heredity,
19	Prayer (bismillahi), invoke the presence of God, heredity, protect you from any evil, ask God for mercy and protection
21	Prayer, food type, God is the provider, no eating of anything uncleaned such as pork, monkey or other bush animals, inherited practice, strengthen my faith, blessed by Allah
25	Prayer, silence, younger ones to bring water and clear the table, religion, God is the provider,
31	Prayer, family unity, God is the provider, thank God, inherited practice, peaceful life, grateful to God
33	Prayer, religion, provider, Islamic religion, God is the provider, presence of God, inherited practice
35	Prayer, thank God, God is the provider, respect, fasting, obedience,
37	Prayer, thanks and praise to Allah, God is the provider, Inherited practice, presence of God,
39	Religious beliefs, religion, food type, spiritual beliefs, respect elders, men eating separately from the women, prayer (bismillahi), wash hands, no eating of pork or drink alcohol, sit proper, dress properly
(Christian wives)	
1	Prayer, learning the word of God, praying, God is the provider, thanking God, family unity, eat together,
3	Religious beliefs, Christian, prayers, religious faith, relationship building, happy home, religious faith, religion, religious principles, spiritual beliefs
5	Prayer, religion, food ethics, food wastage, defined responsibilities, religious beliefs, inherited practice, way of life, beliefs, training, guidance, proper and responsible life
9	Prayer, God is the provider, ask God to promote my business, appropriate behaviour, religious beliefs, thanking God, respect, silence, guiding principles, religious practices, God fearing,
11	Prayer, family unity, silence, Pray brings us closer to God, God is the provider, Thank God, religious beliefs, family unity, respect, prayer is the key to success in life, direction, keep the family together, teach

	responsibility, respect,
13	Prayer, chatting, jokes, harmony with God, thank God, God is the provider, religious beliefs, religion, humble, inherited practice, God fearing, brings one closer to God
15	Prayer, sharing meal together, respect, thank God, inherited practice, prayer brings family closer to God,
23	Prayer, communicate with each other, hand of God upon our lives, love in the family, respect, authority, religious beliefs, family unity, inherited practice, spiritually, happy,
27	Lord's prayer, thanking God, God's credence, respect, inherited practice, sense of fear, humble,
29	Prayer, spiritual beliefs, God is the provider, presence of God, religion, refrain from certain food type, inherited practice, abide by religion, religious belief, sense of responsibility, values, Christian faith, principle.
(Muslim Husbands)	
8	Spiritual beliefs, prayer, presence of God, God is the provider, thanking God, Humble, respectful to others,
18	Islam, show love to one another, truthfulness, respect, Muslim, prayer, shake hands, religion, brings people together, tribe, culture, live together,
20	Muslim, religion say bismillah, God's intervention, cultural values, quietness, respect,
22	Spiritually; religiously; Muslims; abstains from certain foods - chimpanzees, monkeys, pigs, alcohol; a mode of dressing; religion, prayer
26	God is the provider, religion, certain foods that are prohibited - pork, monkey, call God first,
32	spiritual beliefs, refrain from certain types of foods, inherited practice,
34	Prayers, God is the provider, respect God, God's power, presence of God,
36	say bismillahi, love, respect God, God is the provider, presence of God, Muslims, Islamic teachings, inherited practice, religious practices
38	Muslims, say bismillahi, God is the provider, thanking God, tradition, worshipping, praising Allah, God removes poison or bad
40	Islamic teachings, Quran, my spiritual belief, say bismillahi, Muslims, God is the sole provider, thanking God, prayers, shake hands, believe in the greatness of God,
(Christian Husbands)	
2	Spiritual beliefs, Prayer, believe in God, presence of God provides protection, fasting, blessing, thank God, God provides,
4	Spiritual beliefs, prayer, faiths, parents asking God for spiritual issues, God is the saviour, God provider,
6	Spiritual beliefs, prayer, Calling lord, thankful to God, God is the provider, praise God, God is the source of daily bread,
10	spiritual belief, prayers, raises awareness about the importance of God,

	God is the provider, thankful to God, humility, respectful to others, religious beliefs, presence of God, spiritual growth, moral beliefs, peace, stability, responsibility, respect, fear, praise God
12	Togetherness, prayers, love for one another, love for God, God is the provider, God strengthens the bond, prayer brings the family closer to God, Prayer builds cohesion, religion,
14	Prayer, spiritual beliefs, humble, thankful to God, God is the provider, prayers bring the family closer to God, thanking God, grace of God, commune together, praise God, abide by rules,
16	God is the provider, religiousness, Thanking God, presence of God, religious beliefs, effort of God, God's blessing, prayer,
24	Prayer, God is the provider, beliefs, spiritual being,
28	Prayer, God is the provider, heavenly father, presence of God, religious beliefs, thanking God, God's command, divine responsibility, quietness, cultures, religion, religious background, Christian family, blessings of God,
30	biblical perspective, prayer, religious bearing, upbringing, religious tradition,

B. Sample analysis of the impact of the results obtained from families on Food Manufacturers and Retailers

Question 1: In terms of religion, which of the following factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing business: Food Retailers	
1	religion, prayers, family religious values, Muslim, no Christians, neighbourhood, acceptability, luncheon meat, alcohol drinks, sales drops, customers, other faiths, business location, different people
2	Prayers, success, believe in God, business positively, business prospers, customers are Muslims, types of food items, reach more people, share the same taste, current customers, attract new customers,
3	religion, prayers, Muslims, attend prayers, customers, time of prayer, business, daily returns, peak sales period, revenue generated, reduce the number of prayers, comfortable
4	religion, prayers, business, belief system, structure of society, type of food products, Muslims, Christians, acceptability, public education, communication, variety, guarantees sales
5	None of the factors affect my business. Sierra Leone is a cosmopolitan country and we do things in common.
6	Muslim, prayers, pray to God, number of customers, business, God's mercy, direction, create more attraction, growth, God guides, God protects
7	spiritual beliefs, family religious values, prayer, business, guarantees spiritually business succeeds, closing of shops, affects relationship, customers, affects income generated, business success, level of commitment, community, neighbours
8	Prayer, relate with customers, prayer time, closing of shop, business,

	God comes first, prayer safe guard business, God is important
9	spiritual beliefs, family religious values, Christians, Muslim, competitors, customers, customer base, treat all customers the same, talk to customers in a good manner, negotiation techniques, persuasion, family beliefs, culture, Allah promotes business success, prayers, business expansion
10	cultural value, business, customer shares the same cultural values, tribe, discounting, customers belong to your tribe, share the same values, patronise, sales volume, competitors' tribe, larger share of the market, target customers, business expansion, guarantee profits, guarantees sales, turnover
11	Religious Muslims, prayers, community, business location, type of food products, consumers, alcoholic products, pork products, Islamic religion, profitable products, groceries, sales fall, low income earners, bad economy, unemployment rate, consumer base, target middle and high income earners, non-religious groups, Christians, community structure, inhabitants,
12	Prayer, business, do business normally, God is the provider, God responsible for business success, God promote business
13	Religion, prayers, prayer times, closing of business, level of sales, relationship with customers, God is responsible for business success, God promote business
14	Prayer, business, seek God first, almighty boost business, prayer promotes business, believe in God, pray before opening shop, customers, God is ever present,
15	Religion, prayers, beliefs, Muslim customers, volume of sales, broaden customer base, educating customers, forbidden by religion,
16	Prayers, religious values, Christian customers, Muslim, type of product sold, number of customers, sales volumes, profit, relocation, variety, sales
Food Manufacturers	
1	Heredity, proprietor, family, poultry business, chains of food values, inherited, business expansion, success, follow footsteps,
2	spiritual beliefs, Muslims, Christians, time for prayers, customers are inaccessible, prayers, bread supply, delay business transaction, incentives, re-branding, attractive to consumers, society is structured, education, level of business
3	It has no influence on my business, I target Sierra Leoneans, I do not target Christians or Muslims, neither do I look at cultural or religious practices
4	Inherited, transfer of skills, sustainable, loan to promote business,

Appendix 12:

Table 5.8: Personal details of food manufacturers in Sierra Leone

Code	Job title	Length of employment (years)	Responsibilities	Type of food manufactured	Number of workers	Age of the company (years)	Type of ownership
001	Manager	3	Purchase of operational items	Bread	6	3	Private
002	Farm Manager	7	Human resource and planning	Poultry factory – table eggs and chicken	10	51	Private (family business)
003	Manager	4	General operations	Drinks	21	4	Private
004	Manager	2	Human resource and operations	Bread and cake factory	7	2	Private

Appendix 13: Table 5.9: Personal details of food retailers in Sierra Leone

Code	Job title	Length of employment (years)	Responsibilities	Type of food	Number of workers	Age of the company (years)	Type of ownership
001	Manager/proprietor	4	Selling to customers on a daily basis	Provisions	1	4	Private
002	Trader/proprietor	5	Selling quality foods to customers	Provisions	1	5	Private
003	Manager/proprietor	2	Selling food items to customers	Provisions	1	2	Private
004	Manager/proprietor	5	Selling to customers on a daily basis	Provisions	1	5	Private
005	Trader/proprietor	2	Selling quality foods to customers	Provisions	2	2	Private
006	Manager/proprietor	5	General overseeing of the restaurant	Variety of cooked food	24	5	Private
007	Manager/proprietor	4	Selling to customers on a daily basis	Provisions	2	4	Private
008	Trader/proprietor	2	Selling quality foods to customers	Provisions	2	2	Private
009	Manager/proprietor	15	Selling food items to customers	General foodstuffs	3	15	Private
010	Manager/proprietor	5	Selling to customers on a daily basis	Provisions, rice and drinks	3	5	Private
011	Trader/proprietor	2	Managing the affairs of the business	Provisions	3	2	Private
012	Manager/proprietor	5	Managing the affairs of the business	General foodstuffs	5	5	Private
013	Manager/proprietor	4	Selling to customers on a daily basis	Provisions	1	4	Private
014	Trader/proprietor		Selling quality foods to customers	Provisions			Private
015	Manager/proprietor	4	Selling food items to customers	Provisions	2	4	Private
016	Manager/proprietor	4	Managing the affairs of the business	Provisions	5	6	Private

Appendix 14: Glossary

Practical definition and explanation of terms used in this study

Section A: Family

Family religious beliefs: practices associated with religion that influenced families' behaviours at mealtimes, including: prayer; God's presence; cultural/moral beliefs; God's word; faith; fearing God; God's intervention; God is the saviour; way of life; and family success

Food ethics: are the rights and wrongs expected to be observed by every member of the family when the before, during and after meals, including: silence; washing of hands before and after meal; manner and posture of sitting at the dinner table; dress code; the non-use of the left hand; no food wastage; and no anti-social behaviour

Respect: stipulated humble behaviours expected from younger members of the family towards senior ones, including: obedience; observing boundaries; humility; kneeling down when serving food or drinks; and not steering into the eyes of elders.

Boundaries: are the limitations expected to be observed especially by the younger members of the family when eating with elders at the dinner table, including: no taking of meat or fish on top of the rice whilst eating with elders

Affection: emotion, benevolence, concern and sympathy expressed by one member of the family towards others at the dinner table, especially when they need help or are absent at mealtimes.

Cultural beliefs: standards and expectations held by families as convictions or set requirements for every member of the family at mealtimes, which are transmitted from one generation to the other over a period of time including: the non-use of the left hand and children not expected to take meat or fish on top of rice.

Moral beliefs: concerns the cultural education of rights and wrongs of expected family behavioural pattern that guides individual conducts at mealtimes, including: no talking; respect for elders at the dinner table; etc.

Relationship building: ability to foster close ties with others at the dinner table, including: family and non-family members

Bonding: socialisation with others, including family and non-family members, either at the dinner table or outside it in order to build a better understanding and cordiality

Gender differentiation: separation of males from females at the dinner table, the distinction of role/responsibility between males and females; and the prioritisation of males over females

Hierarchy: observing the position, seniority and ranks of individuals at the dinner table either as a result of age or contribution, as key determinants in prioritising sitting position, meal served and respect accorded

Authority: the degree of command and control exercise by a senior member of the family at mealtimes, including parents, eldest son/daughter, etc. in order to reign in the behaviour of the younger ones.

Stakeholders: Individuals with vested interest in the family or are affected by the family, including: neighbours; extended family relations; friends; colleagues; etc.

Modernity/civilisation: the change or deviation in the families' behavioural patterns at mealtimes from original cultural-oriented background practices to more westernised approach due to the influence of urbanisation or education

Acculturation: the adoption of urban and western lifestyles or traits by family members at mealtimes at the expense of their original family background, values or cultural practices

Prayer: a solemn appeal from family members at mealtimes as an expression of appreciation for the food provided to the family by God

God provider: belief espoused by family members at mealtimes that God in his infinite mercy provided the food consumed by them on a daily basis

Food type: food and drink restrictions or limitations imposed on families at mealtimes as a result of their religious beliefs or doctrines

Gratification: expected behaviour from families saying thank you to God for the meal provided or the expected behaviour from children saying thank you to parents for the food provided after meal

Task distinction: division of roles and responsibilities before, during and after meal between males and females

Meal sharing: act of benevolence shown by a family to a less privileged member of their community or neighbourhood by allowing him/her to join their dinner table at mealtimes or the act of eating together with members of one's family at mealtimes.

Sense of responsibility: imbibing good cultural values at mealtimes into the upbringing of children that results in raising their awareness of future obligations

Sympathy: expression of concern or care about the suffering of a family member at mealtimes

Moral education: inculcation of good family values at mealtimes into children, including: the impact of talking at mealtimes; respect for elders; etc., which transforms their behaviour positively

Togetherness: symbolism a family associates with unity, oneness, cohesion, harmony and sharing as a way of demonstrating affection and respect for others at the mealtimes.

Identity: the position or rank occupied by an individual within a family that distinguishes them from others either as a result of hierarchy, authority, birth or age at mealtimes.

Acceptance: expected behaviour of children at mealtimes that falls within the ambit of appropriateness, which is acknowledged and considered right by society generally

Role definition: assigning responsibility to members of the family before, during and after meal based on their gender.

Dialect: language spoken by a family at mealtimes based on their ethnic/social groups and/or region of origin

Family cohesion: the ties established between members of a family at mealtimes as a show of unity, oneness and stability, which guarantees connected for generations

Idea sharing: knowledge derived from common discussions held by families after meal as a way of transferring past experiences and family history in order to provide guidance for the future well-being of children

Wisdom: insight provided by elders to younger members of the families at mealtimes to guide their future behaviour

Experience: the transfer of knowledge gained by elders over a considerable period of time to children as a guide to their future behaviour

Troubleshooting forum: solution obtained by sharing problems of daily encounter experienced by family members either at work or elsewhere at the dinner table, usually after meal

Breed conflict: problems or squabbles that emerges as a result of harbouring extended family members as part of a family unit

Regulation/control: instrument used by parents to shape or govern the conduct of their children at mealtimes

Planning: the act by the breadwinner of the family to make appropriate decision at mealtimes or outside the dinner table that engenders reasonable outcome or proper organisation of family expenditure

Development: the act by the breadwinner of the family to make the right decisions at mealtimes that leads to family growth and success

Economic/financial constraints: incorporation and inclusion of extended family in normal family budget that leads to overshooting of expenditure and excessive resource burden

Background differences: the cultural and behavioural distinctions that emerges as a result of harbouring an extended family member in a household

Domestic chores: assigned home tasks that extended family members helped in performing when co-existing with a specific family, including: cooking; laundry, fetching water, etc.

Position/rank: the emblem of seniority at the dinner table usually defined by age, gender or contribution to the family

Food quality: the ability of families to access a balanced diet at mealtimes as a result of their income position

Food quantity: the ability of the family to access abundance of food at mealtimes as a result of their income position

Food variety: the ability of a family to access different kinds of foods at mealtimes as a result of their income position

Happiness: the elation shared by families at mealtimes as a result of access to quality, quantity and variety of foods at the dinner table

Lateness: the inability of parents to join their families at the dinner table on time as a result of their job schedules

Time constraint: the limitations experienced by parents in either preparing meals on time or joining their families at mealtimes due to their busy work schedule

Absence: the inability of parents to join their families at mealtimes due to the location of their jobs or as a result of mandatory overtime requirements

Participation: the social experience derived from partaking, sharing and interacting with family members at mealtimes

Table etiquette: observed table conducted expected from every member of the family at mealtimes, including: silence; no coughing; no anti-social behaviour; etc.

Hygiene: expected behaviour of cleaning the dining table and both hands before and after meal to prevent the family from getting in contact with germs and disease

Knowledge: facts, ideas, skills and information transferred to younger members of a family by parents, elder siblings or relatives when sharing meal together

Moral ethics: the expected behaviour of what is right or wrong when children are sharing meal with elders

Learning: the transfer of knowledge either historical or personal from parents, relatives or elder siblings to younger children at mealtimes

Confidence building: the ability of children to express themselves freely either at the dinner table or outside it due to being allowed to openly communicate with elders after meal

Preferential treatment: the priority accorded to individuals of the family in terms of being the first served or getting the larger share of the food at the dinner times either as a result of their age, gender or contribution

Section B: Food retailers and manufacturers

Business success: the belief shared by food retailers and producers that God is responsible for the success of their business

Prayer times: the disruption caused to businesses as a result of prayer, which normal requires their closure during active and busy business period during the day

Inherited practices: the proclivity of the business being transferred from one generation to the other

Skills transfer: the proclivity of transferring the tacit knowledge acquired by business owners to their descendants as a way of guaranteeing business continuity

Preferential treatment: the priority accorded to consumers by businesses either as a result of their age, social standing or personality in society

Politeness: the practical demonstration and application of good manners or behaviour by businesses when dealing with customers in order to gain their loyalty

Personality/identity: the social standing of consumers in society that allows businesses to treat them preferentially

Product quality: the features inherent in a product that fulfil customers' needs and expectations, which increases their attractive to buy from the same business over a considerable period of time

Repeat purchase: the tendency for consumers to buy the same brand of product previously bought on subsequent occasions either due to the politeness, manner of approach of the sellers or product quality

Communication style: gentle/subtle approach of respectful and polite tone used by businesses when negotiating with customers in order to guarantee a repeat purchase

Advertisement/word of mouth: the act of being polite, kind and respectful to customers that triggers their behaviour positively in telling other consumers in the community about your business.

Neighbours: the inhabitants of a community that purchases the products of businesses

Decision-making: the ability of businesses to take the correct course of action that is beneficial for their business and potentially leads to growth

Competitors: rivals of businesses that potentially affect their sales or profitability

Customer relationship: the ability of businesses to foster a good tie with consumers in their community, which guarantees increased sales

Friends: social actors close to the business owners, who may or may not influence their decisions

Age/elderliness: the proclivity of businesses to treat their customers preferentially based on how old they are

Stakeholders: individuals who have interest in the business or are affected by it, including: neighbours; employees; customers; friends; relations; suppliers; importers; wholesalers; etc.

Respect: stipulated humble behaviour expected from businesses when dealing with their customers in order to retain them overtime

Negotiation: the discussion held by businesses with their customers in order to reach a consensual agreement about the price of the product sold

Discounting: the deduction given to customers by businesses in order to attract more sales and guarantee their loyalty and retention

Affordability: the ability of consumers to buy products based on the price charged by the sellers without requesting for loan

Micro-credit schemes: an institution established to help business owners secure loans to expand their business

Customer retention: the ability of businesses in ensuring that their customers willingly come repeatedly to buy their products either as a result of how they were treated or the quality of the product sold.

Bad debt: amount of money owed to businesses by customers, which are unlikely to be paid due to the customers' precarious financial situation or their inability/willingness to do so

Business religious values: spiritual practices that influence the way businesses market their products to consumers, including: prayers; prayer times; etc.

Consumer type: the individual preferences or choices made by consumers either due to their religious or cultural background to consume or purchase specific food products

Customer food ethics: the tendency of consumers to make certain food choices or limit their selection of certain products as a result of religious and/or cultural beliefs

Tribal sentiment: the tendency of consumers buying food products from specific food retailers or producers because they belong to the same tribe or hailed from the same region

Hierarchy: the societal positioning of consumers either due to their age, authority, identity or personality that influence food retailers or producers to treat them preferentially

Customer satisfaction: the happiness consumers derived by either being served in a respectable and dignified manner or from consuming a product.

Business promotion: the use of free gifts or other incentives to attract customers, families and other members of the community to buy more of a retailer or producer's products

Business ethics: the institution of decisions or policies by businesses geared towards determining what is right and wrong in the choices they make

Financial burden: the burden inflicted on businesses as a result of caring for extended family members

Dignitary: important personality in society that influences businesses behaviour positively towards the individual and serve him/her preferentially

Profitability: the amount of returns the food retailers or producers obtain from selling products after the deduction of costs and bad debt

Staff training: the vocational skills improvement employees go through in learning the rudiments of how to treat a customer with respect, politeness and dignity

Product pricing: the prices charged by food retailers and producers that is considered appropriate for consumers or expected to meet the consumers' purchasing power

Wholesalers: individuals that sell the food products in large quantities and who retailers buy from to sell in smaller quantities

Importers: individuals that bring the food products sold by retailers from overseas

Peer groups: consumers with the same age group with the retailers, who converse with them informally and in a more relaxed manner compared with the formal conversation held with adults

Appendix 15:

Table 5.10: Thematic Analysis and schematic summary diagrams of families and food companies

Interviews with Families			
Literature	**Questions**	**Field Themes**	**Sub-themes**
Religion	In what ways does this spiritual belief influence the way your family interact at the dinner table?	Family religious beliefs	Prayer (MW, CW, MH, CH), religious beliefs (MW, CW, MH, CH), God's presence (MW, CW, MH, CH), cultural/moral beliefs (MH, CH), protection (MW), food type (MW, MH), provider (MW, CW, MH, CH), gratifying God (MW, CW, MH, CH), fasting (MW, CH), gender distinction (MW), God's word (CW), religious faith (CW), fearing God (CW, CH), God's intervention (MW, CH)), saviour (CH), way of life (CW), success (CW)
		Food ethics	Silence (MW, CW, MH, CH), washing hands (MW, CW, MH, CH), posture (MW), dress code (MW, MH), food wastage (CW),
		Respect	Boundaries (MW), obedience (MW), humble (CW, MH, CH), values (MH), responsibility (CW, CH), kneeling down (MW)
		Affection	Togetherness/family unity/cohesion (MW, CW, MH, CH), relationship building (CW), harmony (CW), love (MH, CW, CH), sharing (CW), bonding (CH), family unity (MW, CW, CH)
	What cultural values influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table?	Food ethics	Quietness (MW, CW, MH, CH), food boundaries (CH), wash hands (MW, CW, MH, CH), anti-social behaviour (MW), food wastage (MW, CW, MH, CH), left-hand forbidden (MW, CW, MH, CH), hygiene (MW, CW, MH, CH),
		Respect	Gratifying parents (MW, CW, and CH), respect (MW, CW, MH, and CH), and politeness (MW. MH), kneeling down (MW), responsibility (MW, MH, CH), obedience (CW, CH),
		Gender differentiation	Gender separation (MW), tasks distinction (CW),
		Affection	Sharing (MW, CW, MH, CH), togetherness (MW, MH, CH), peace (MW, CW), stability MW, CW, MH, CH), comportment (MW, CH)), family unity (MW, MH, CH), greetings (CW), sympathy (CW, MH), love (CW, MH, CH), understanding (CH), responsibility MW, MH, CH), cordiality (CH), friendliness (CH)
		hierarchy	Authority (MW, MH), preferential treatment, hierarchy (MW, CW, CH)), lion share (MW, CW), self-identity (CW), control (MW, MH), orderliness MW, CW, MH, CH),
		Family religious beliefs	Prayer (MW, CW, MH, CH), gratifying God (MW, CW, MH, CH), food type (MW, MH), God's command (CW, CH), spiritual growth (CW, CH), revered God (CH), blessing food (CW, CH)
	What traditional	Affection	cordial relationship (MW), understanding,

	practices influence your family's meal social interaction pattern at the dinner table?		togetherness (MW, CW, MH, CH), oneness (MW, CW, MH, CH), love (MW, CW, MH, CH), sympathy (MW, CH), sharing (CH), cooperation (MH), family unity (MW, MH, CH), truthfulness (MH)
		Food ethics	Hygiene (MW, CW, MH, CH), silence (MW, CW, MH, CH), food wastage (MW, CW, MH, CH), food boundaries (MW, CW, MH, CH), left-hand forbidden (MW, CW, MH, CH), wash hand (MW, CW, MH, CH), dish holding (MW, CW, MH, CH)
		Modernity	Education (CW, MH, CH), western lifestyle (CW, MH, CH), acculturation (CW, MH, CH), western culture (CW, MH, CH), civilisation (CW, MH, CH)
		Respect	Gratifying parents (MW, CW, MH, CH), obedience (MW, CW, MH, CH), politeness (MW, CW, MH, CH), kneeling down (MW, CW), sharing (CH, MH), responsibility (MW, CW, MH, CH), humble (CW), appreciation (CH)
		Family religious beliefs	Prayer (MW, CW, MH, CH), food type (MW, MH), gratifying God (MW, CW, MH, CH), code of dressing (MW), fear of God (MH), Islamic norms (MW, MH), God provider (MH), witchcraft (CH), Islamic values (MW)
		Gender differentiation	Gender separation (MW, CW, MH, CH), tasks distinction (MW, CW, MH, CH),
		Hierarchy	Family head (MH), control (CH, MH)), lion share (CH), kneeling down (MW)
	In what ways does social bonding influence your family's social interaction pattern at meal times?	Socialisation	Participation (MW), social bonding (CW), social group (MH), social events (CH), community gathering (CH)
		Deference	Responsibility (CW), family image (MW, MH), morals (MW), Advice (MW), respect (MW, CW, MH)
		Affection	Happiness (MW), sympathy (CW), love (CW), togetherness (MH, CH), sharing (CW, MH, CH), oneness (CH), understanding (MH), peace (MH), cordiality (CH), obedience (CH), sense of belonging (CW, CH), family unity (CW, MH, CH)
		Education	Training (MW), preaching (MW), learning (MW), sharing ideas (MW), modern approaches (MW), direction (MW), success (MH),raising awareness (CH), communication (CH)
		Food ethics	Hygiene (MW), wash hands (MW), silence (MW), behavioural refinement (MW), food boundaries (MW), food wastage (MW),
		Family religious beliefs	Food type (MW, MH), dress code (MW), prayers (MH, CH), God fearing (MH), provider (CH)

Figure 5.3: The effect of religion on collectivist families' meal behaviour

Spiritual beliefs
- Family religious values
- Food ethics
- Respect
- Affection

Cultural values
- Food ethics
- Respect
- Gender differentiation
- Affection
- Hierarchy
- Family religious values

Religion

Traditional practices
- Affection
- Food ethics
- Modernity
- Respect
- Family religious values
- hierarchy

Social bonding
- Affection
- Respect
- Affection
- Education
- Food ethics
- Family religious values

Ethnicity	In what ways does your tribe influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table?	Identity	Tribe, dialect, language, ethnic background, Social group, region, sense of belonging (CH), cultural group, tradition, cultural values (MW), tribal values, kinsmen, social integration, acceptability (MH)
		Religious beliefs	Prayer, gratifying God (MW), Godly family, religion, provider, gratifying parents (MW)
		Food ethics	Hygiene (MW, CW, MH, CH), wash hands (MW, CW, MH, CH), silence (MW, CW, MH, CH), table etiquette (MW, CW, MH, CH), food wastage (MW, CW, MH, CH), food boundaries (MW, MH), left-hand forbidden (MW, CW, MH, CH)
		Education	Modernity (MW, CW, MH, CH), western culture (MW, CW, MH, CH), training, tribal education, tribal learning, freedom of expression (CH)
		Hierarchy	kneeling down, respect (MW, CW, MH, CH), preferential treatment, authority (CW, MH), lion share, politeness (CH), discipline, obedience (CH)
		Affection	Sharing (CH), eating together (CW, MH), unity CW, MH), tolerance (CH),
	In what ways does your region of origin influence the way your family interact at the dinner table?	Food ethics	Quietness (MW, CW, MH, CH), gratifying parents (CW), appreciation, food boundaries, dish holding, modernity (CH)
		Religious beliefs	Prayer (MW, MH), provider, revered God, gratifying God, cultural beliefs ((CW, CH), religious values (CH)
		Affection	Sharing (CW, CH), unity (MH, CH), harmony, eating together
		Gender differentiation	Female subservience , gender separation (MW, MH), domestic chores, role definition (MW)
		Hierarchy	Respect (MW, CW, MH, CH), boundaries, kneeling down, rules and regulations, hierarchy (MH,)
		Ethnic group	Region, traditional practices, dialect (MW, CW), language, tribe, provinces, cultural practices, cultural beliefs, female circumcision, mother tongue, modernity,
	In what ways does your cultural belief influence your family's meal social interaction behaviour?	Family religious beliefs	Food type (MW, MH), taboo, norm, religion, witchcraft, prayers (MW, MH), gratifying God (MW), God's existence, provider, way of life, Christian values (MW), religious practice (MW)
		Food ethics	Wash hands (MW, CW, MH, CH), hygiene (MW, CW, MH, CH), food boundaries, gratifying parents (MW), left-hand forbidden, modernity, table etiquette, acculturation,
		Gender differentiation	Domestic chores, gender separation, Female subservience ,
		Affection	Family unity (CW, MH), oneness, togetherness, sympathy, eat together, cordiality, friendly, peaceful co-existence, tribal belongingness, family belongingness, cooperative, modesty, sharing (CH),
		Hierarchy	Respect (MW, CW, MH, CH), sitting space, behaviour guidance/control (MW), responsibility, family image, family head, greetings, role definition, boundaries, rules and regulations, behavioural guidance, hierarchy (MH)
	In what ways do these practices (assumptions) influence the way your family interact at the dinner table?	Family religious beliefs	Prayer (MW, CW, MH, CH), gratifying God, God provider (MW), God fearing, way of life, God's protection (MH), God's presence, traditional practices, family cultural values (MH),
		Food ethics	Gratifying parents (MW, CW), basic hygiene (MW, CW, MH, CH), morals, wash hands (MW, CW, MH, CH), quietness (MW, CW, MH, CH), sitting posture, table etiquette(MW, CW, MH, CH), food wastage, left-hand forbidden(MW, CW, MH, CH), appreciation,
		Gender differentiation	Female subservience, domestic chores, gender separation,

		Affection	peace, love, care, sympathy, belongingness, family unity (MW, CW, MH, CH), modesty, humility (CH), bonding, understanding, affection (CW), family image (CW), conformity (CH)
		Hierarchy	Respect (MW, CW, MH, CH), obedience (MW), kneeling down, eye contact, family image, behavioural guidance, role definition, hierarchy (MH)
		Education	Responsibility (MW, CW), behavioural conduct, politeness, basic norms, awareness raising, morals, adaptation, management, hygiene, learning culture, build confidence, education (MW)

Figure 5.4: The effect of ethnicity on collectivist families' meal behaviour

Tribe
- Identity
- Religious beliefs
- Food ethics
- Education
- Hierarchy
- Affection

Cultural beliefs
- Religious values
- Food ethics
- Gender differentiation
- Affection
- Hierarchy

Region of origin
- Food ethics
- Religious beliefs
- Affection
- Gender differentiation
- Hierarchy
- Ethnic group

Ethnicity

Assumptions
- Religious beliefs
- Food ethics
- Gender differentiation
- Affection
- Hierarchy
- Education

Conformity	What is the importance of togetherness in your family's meal social interaction behaviour?	Education	Discussion forum, solution forum, rights and wrongs, reflection, sharing ideas (MW, CW, MH, CH), confidence building (CW, CH), knowledge, family lineage, learning forum, communication, family history, experience, share stories, awareness, food ethics (MW), troubleshooting (MW, CWMH, CH), reflectivity (MW), Tradition/values (MH)
		Family cohesion	Love, care, sympathy, happiness, bonding (CH), unity/cohesion (MW, CW, MH, CH), patience, tolerance, harmony, togetherness, stability, cooperation (MH), understanding, oneness, smooth relationship, honesty, cordiality, close ties, peace, happiness, affection (MW, CW, MH, CH), companionship (CW), sense of belonging (CW), friendliness, motivation, boundary reduction (CH)
		Family development	family growth, family enhancement, progress, planning (MH), sustainability, prayer (MW, CH)
		Authority	Respect (MW, CW, MH, CH), control (CW, CH), contentment, good behaviour, fairness, responsibility (CW), behaviour regulator, corrections, boundaries, self-discipline,
		Meal Participation	Appetite, absences, socialisation
	What is the importance of obedience in your family's social interaction at the dinner table?	Authority	Obedience, respect (MW, CW, MH, CH), comportment, boundaries, instruction, submissive, control, rules, orders, command, family head, correct behaviour, incentive/rewards (MH), provision, greeting, contribution (CH), normality, discipline, punitive measures, position, decision-making (MH), protection (CH), confidence (CH), authority (MW, CW, MH, CH), gratifying parents (MW)
		Responsibility	learning curve, image building, raises awareness, expectation, contentment, cooperation, family image (MH), role definition, character definition, God fearing (MW), responsibility (MW, CW), moral ethics (CW), God's word (MH)
		Family unity	Love (CW), care, stability/unity/cohesion (MW, CW, MH, CH), appreciate, acceptance, togetherness, humility (CW), build relationship, happiness, sympathy, peace, patience, modesty (CH), understanding, cooperation, affection (MH), cultural norm (CH)
		Direction	Guidance, communication (CH), benchmarking, shape behaviour, steering, role definition, conflict resolution, behavioural code, advice (CW), best practices, cultural/traditional beliefs (MW, MH), avert accident (CW)
		Success	Blessings, achievement, upbringing, progress/success (MW, CW, MH, CH), sacrifice, longer lifespan (CW), prosperity, eternal life, perseverance, development, family growth, survival,
	What sort of conformed behaviour is expected from members of your family when interacting at the dinner?	Food ethics	Quietness (MW, CW, MH, CH), gratifying parents, wash hands (MW, CW, MH, CH), hygiene (MW, CW, MH, CH), food wastage, anti-social behaviour, left-hand forbidden (MW, CW, MH, CH), food boundaries, sitting posture,
		Affection	Politeness (CW, MH, CH), sharing (CH), obedience, listening, sense of belonging, hospitality,
		Authority	Respect (MW, CW, MH, CH), acceptance, correct behaviour, control, instructions, corrective measure, boundaries (CH),
		Family religious beliefs	Prayer (CW, MH, CH), food type, religion, superstitious beliefs, family religious beliefs (MW)
		Moral education	Advice (MW), learning forum, social norms, good manner, timeliness, comportment, meal covering, moral education (MW, CW)
	How does meal sharing affect your relationship with other people outside your home?	Affection	Love (MW, CW, MH, CH), sharing/affection (MW, CW, MH, CH), respect (MW, CW, MH, CH), affordability (MW, CW), commonality, support, jealousy (CH), resentment, mingling, greed (MH), backbiting, Divulge secret (MH), kindness, gesture, satisfaction (MH), caring (MH), charity (MW, CW, CH), religious beliefs (MW), survival (CH), conflict (CH), word of God (CH)

		Relationship building	Cordiality, friendliness, bonding, understanding, friendship, image building (MW, CW), closer ties/unity (MW, MH), admiration/ appreciation (MW, CW, MH, CH), gap bridging, likeness, relationship building (MW, CW, MH, CH), blessing (MW),
		Unity	Togetherness, eating together, happiness (MH), oneness, coordination, collaboration, protection (MH), sense of belonging (CH), cooperation (CH)

Figure 5.5: The effect of conformity on collectivist families' meal behaviour

Meal sharing
- Affection
- Relationship building
- Unity

Togetherness
- Education
- Family cohesion
- Family develop-ment
- Authority
- Participation

Communication
- Education
- Self-Development

Conformity

Obedience
- Authority
- Responsibility
- Family unity
- Direction
- Success

Conformed behaviour
- Food ethics
- Affection
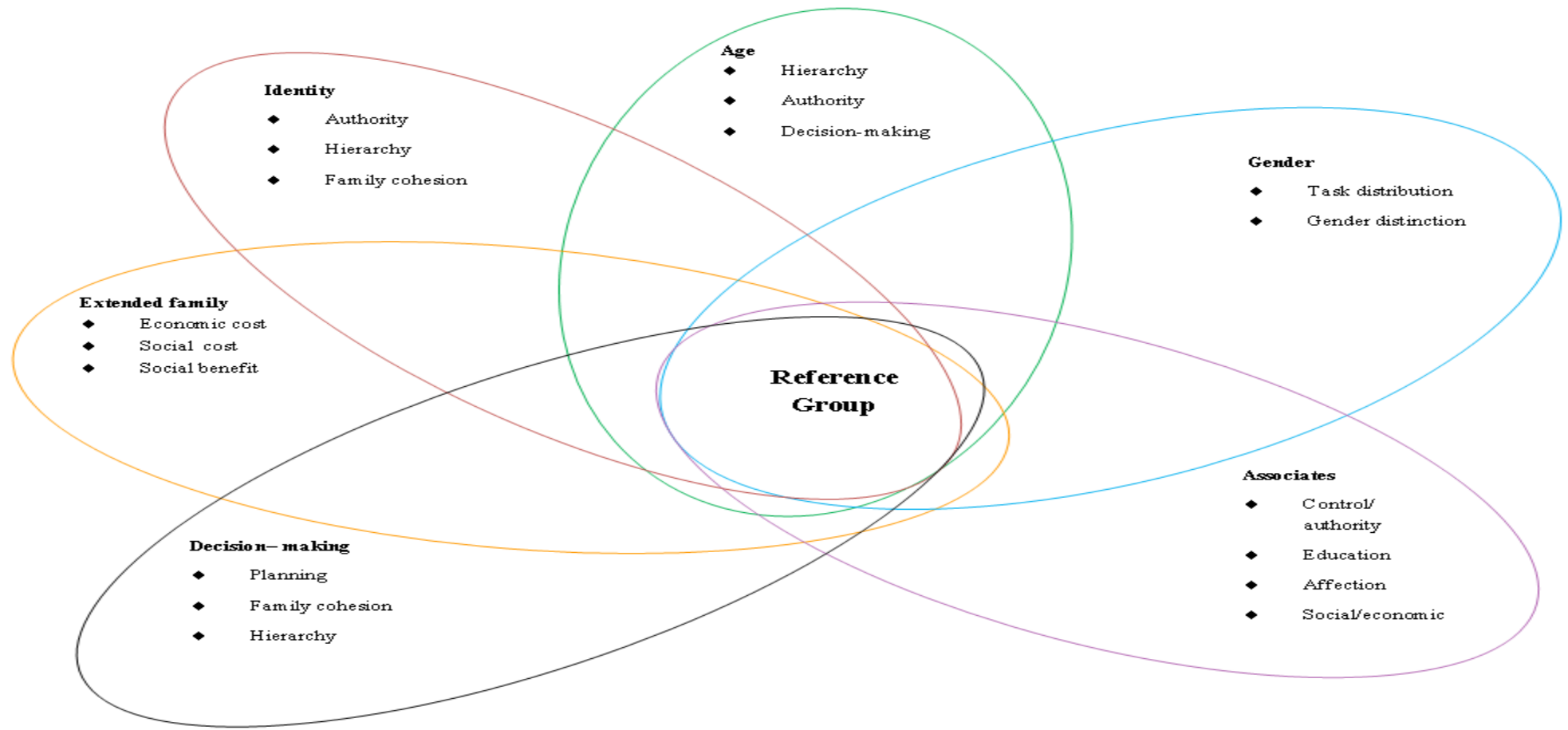- Authority
- Religious values
- Education

Reference groups	How important is age in your family's social interaction at the dinner table?	Hierarchy	Position, ranking, expectations, respect (MW, CW, MH, CH), obedience, roles, maturity, responsibility, assistance, contribution (MH), Preference, seniority, maturity (CW), family head, elderliness, hierarchy (MW, CW, MH, CH)
		Authority	Shapes behaviour, control behaviour, boundaries, peace/harmony (MW, MH), command, love (CW), protection (CW, MH), rules, regulations, understanding/tolerance (CW, MH), unity/stability (MH), authority (MW, CW, MH, CH), guidance,
		Decision-making	Wisdom (MW, CW, MH, CH), experience (MW, CW, MH), advice (MW, MH), information/communication (MH), responsibility, learning (MW), commonality, direction, contentment (MH), success (MH), decision-making (MW, MH, CH), blessing (MH), values (CH), affection (CH), participation (CH)
	Why does gender influence the way your family interact socially at the dinner table?	Task distribution	Domestic chores, role definition (MW, MH, CH), responsibility, food quality (CH)
		Gender distinction	Eating boundaries (MW, CW), position, breadwinner (MW), food quality, respect, food preparation, male supremacy, (MW), learning (MW), gender distinction (MH, CH), gender separation (MH, CH), authority (MH, CH), respect (CW, MH),
	In what ways does the importance of associates influence your family's interaction at the dinner table?	Control/regulation	Guidance (CH), correct behaviour, direction, shape behaviours, behaviour improvement, rules, identity (MH), politeness (MH), control/regulation (MW, CW, MH), respect (MW, CW, MH)
		Education	Solution, cultural learning, social etiquette, advice (MW, CH), idea sharing/education (MW, CW, MH, CH), civility (CW), table manners, idea generation, values (CH), beliefs, social learning, family history (MH), knowledge sharing, training, troubleshooting (MW, CH)
		Affection	Understanding, bonding, love/affection (MW, CW, MH), care, social relationship/building relationship (MW, CW, MH, CH), unity/stability (MW, CW, CH), closeness, togetherness, happiness, help, trust, meal sharing (MW, MH), socialisation (CH), connectivity, family image (MH), compassion, oneness, sympathy, cordiality, sense of belonging, prayer (CW), expectation (CW), blessing (CW), participation (CH)
		Social/economic costs	Resource overburden (MW, MH), conflict (MW, CW), thieving (CW), anti-social behaviour,
	How important is decision-making in your family's social interaction at the dinner table?	Planning	Guidance, direction (CW, MH), family interest, development (MW, CW, MH, CH), right path, solution, growth, prioritisation (MW), idea generation, character moulding, responsibility, family safety, consultation (MW, CW, MH, CH),learning (MH, CH), reduce wastage (MH), consent (MH), achievement (MH), choices (MH), right track, organising(MW, MH), management/coordination (MH), view sharing, prosperity/progress/success (MW, CW), rationality (CH), projection, conscientiousness, judgement (CH), planning (MW, CW, MH, CH), task distribution (CW), collaboration (CH)
		Family cohesion	Unity/cohesion/stability (MW, CW, CH), peace/tranquillity (MW),happiness, love, understanding (MH, CH), relationship building, harmony (CW, MH),equality (MH), fairness, togetherness, socialisation, collaboration, collectiveness, care (MW), participation (CW), family image (MH),
		Hierarchy/authority	Respect (MW), shape behaviour, authority/control/guidance (MW, CW, MH, CH), maintain order, age (MW), seniority, role definition, discipline (CW), orderliness, correct behaviour, rules, obedience (MH, CH), family head, command, dictatorship, listening, regulation, contribution (CH), responsibility (CW),

			safeguards (CW), democracy (CH)
	How do extended family members affect your family's meal social interaction behaviour?	Economic costs	Economic and financial constraints (MW, CW, MH), Resource, expenditure, food quantity, food quality,
		Social costs	Gossip, different background (MW, CW, MH, CH), cultural variation, divulge family secret (MW, CW, MH), breed hatred (MW, CW, MH), stealing/thieving (MW, CW, MH, CH), witchcraft/evil spirit (MW, MH), quarrels, conflict/misunderstanding (MW, CW, MH, CH), envy, feud, animosity, jealousy/comparison (MW, CW, MH, CH), stalls development (MH, CH), ostracisation (MH), bullying (CH), obligatory (MH, CH), misunderstanding, backbiting/gossip (MW, CW, MH), behavioural challenges (MH), malice (MH)
		Social benefits	Sharing (MW, CW, MH), domestic chores (MW, CW, MH, CH), advice (MW), shape behaviour, lineage knowledge (CW), bonding (MH), reduce workload, Domino effect (MH, CH), love, share ideas, cordiality, subsidise income (MH), appreciation, gifts (CH), gratification/gratification (CH), charitable act (MH), cultural beliefs (MH)
	What is your opinion of the definition of identity within the family when interacting at the dinner table?	Authority/hierarchy	Position/rank (MW, CW, MH, CH), control (MW, CW, MH), respect (MW, MH, CH), roles/responsibilities (MW, MH, CH), boundaries, seniority, shape behaviour, priority (MH), age (MH), headship, obedience (MH), guidance, Orderliness (CH), law and order, right and wrong (CW)
		Family cohesion	Discrimination (MW, CH), togetherness/unity (CW), relationship definition, sense of belonging (CW), love, distinction/differentiation (CW), discord, learning (CH), expectations (MW), boundaries (CW)

Figure 5.6: The effect of reference groups on collectivist families' meal behaviour

Age
- Hierarchy
- Authority
- Decision-making

Identity
- Authority
- Hierarchy
- Family cohesion

Gender
- Task distribution
- Gender distinction

Extended family
- Economic cost
- Social cost
- Social benefit

Reference Group

Associates
- Control/ authority
- Education
- Affection
- Social/economic

Decision– making
- Planning
- Family cohesion
- Hierarchy

Social class	How does income/wealth affect the way your family interact socially at meal times?	Affordability	Happiness (MW, CW, MH, CH), food quantity (MW, CW, MH, CH), food quality (MW, CW, MH, CH), food variety (MW, CW, CH), participation/appetite (MW, CW, CH), accessibility, satisfaction (MW, CW, MH, CH), finance, money, cash, funds, survival (CW), meal frequency (CW, CH), healthy growth (CW, MH), earnings, salary, lifestyle (MH), scarcity (MH), living of standard (CH), sustainability (MH, CH), choices (CH), affordability (MW, CW, CH), family image (MW), modern foodstuffs (MW, MH, CH), savings (MH), investment (MH), status (CH)
		Family cohesiveness	Family unity/stability/peace (MW, CW, MH), continuity, love (CW), sharing (CW, MH), relationship building (MH), understanding (CH), planning (CH), development (MH),
		Authority	Control (MW, MH), respect (MW, CW), confidence, responsibility, management
	How does your job affect the way you interact with your family at the dinner table?	Punctuality	Timeliness (MW, CW, MH, CH), lateness (MW, CW, MH, CH), absenteeism (MW CW, MH, CH),
		Participation	Sharing, fatigue/tiredness (MW, CW, CH), stress (MW), happiness (CW, MH, CH), food quality (CW, CH), encouragement, togetherness/unity (MW, CW), relationship (CW, MH), peace (MH), love (MH), control, responsibility (MH, CH), friendliness, security (CH), hope, variety, interaction/participation/appetite (MW, CW, CH), appreciation (MW), hunger (MW), respect (CW), food variety (CH)
	How important is education in your family's meal social interaction behaviour?	Social etiquette	table manners/table etiquette/moral ethics (MW, CW, CH), hygiene (MW, CW, MH, CH),food quality/balanced diet (MW, CW, CH), affordability (CH)
		Enlightenment	Awareness (CW, MH), civilisation (MW, CW, MH), family history (MW), advice, mould behaviour, knowledge (CW, CH)), idea sharing/learning/enlightenment (CW, MH, CH), experiences, planning (MH), information/communication (CH), development (MH), direction (MH, CH), modernity, judgement (CH), better life, talent, rewards (CH), understanding, confidence (MW, CW), advice (MW), cultural/traditional values (MW, MH), division of labour (CW), decision-making (CW), religious values (MH), solution/troubleshooting (CH)
		Family cohesion	Meal sharing, happiness (MW), success (CW, MH, CH), humility (CW), harmony/stability/unity/cohesion (CW, MH, CH), decision-making, understanding, bonding, relationship, appreciation, tolerance (MH), peace, societal acceptance (MW),
		Authority	Guides behaviour/shapes behaviour (MW), refine character, family image (MW), obedience (MW), respect (MW, CW, MH), boundaries, correct behaviour, power, hierarchy/orderliness (MH), priority, responsibility (CW, MH, CH),
	How important is authority in your family's meal social interaction behaviour at the dinner table?	Control	Guidance (MW, CW), receptivity (CH), obedience (CW, MH, CH), rules/regulations (MW, CH), limitations, boundaries (MW, CW), headship, breadwinner, direction (MH), humility (MH), hierarchy, development/progress (MW, CH), law, responsibility (MW, CW, MH), Enforcement, respect (MW, CW, MH, CH), unity of command, subordination, orderliness (MH), appropriate behaviour, confidence, instruction, fear (MH), boss, progress, contribution, governance (CH), compliance (CH), leadership (MW, CW), success (MW), accountability, checks and balances (CH), control (MW, CW, MH, CH), good manners (CW), discipline (MW), age (CW), expectations (CW), centralisation (CH), penalty (CH)

		Unity	Unity/stability/peace (MW, CW, MH, CH), decision-making (MW, CW, MH, CH), bonding, peace, love, understanding, humility, cohesion, cooperation (MW), social etiquette (MW), happiness (MW), troubleshooting (MW), bonding (MH)

Figure 5.7: The effect of social class on collectivist families' meal behaviour

Income
- Affordability
- Family cohesion
- Authority/control

Job
- Punctuality
- Participation

Authority
- Control
- Family unity

Social class

Education
- Social etiquette
- Enlightenment
- Family cohesion
- Authority
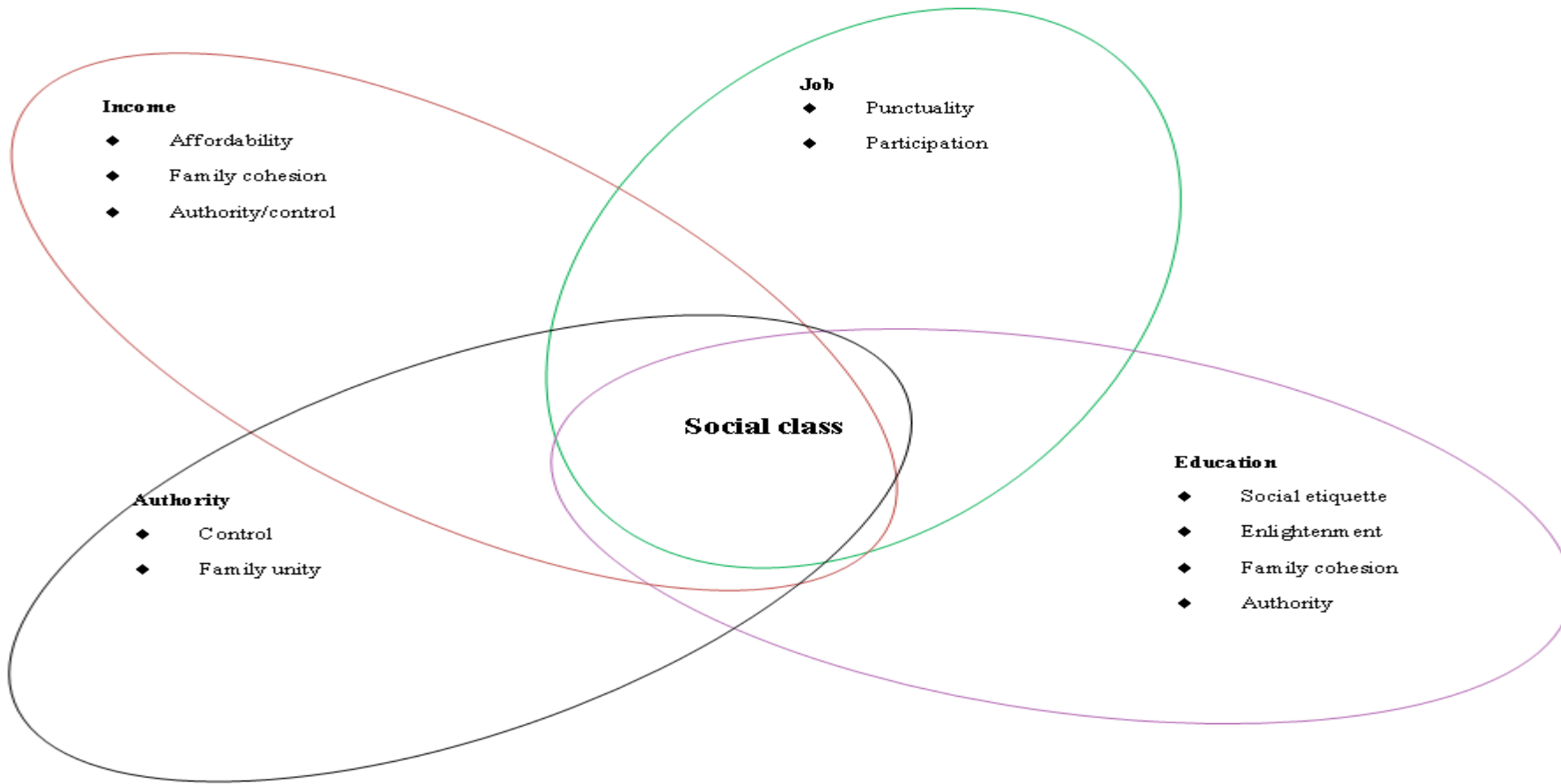
Family meal behaviour	What sort of behaviour does your family display at the dinner table?	Family religious beliefs	Prayer (MW, CW), food type (MW. MH)
		Food ethics	Silence (MW, CW, MH, CH), washing hands,
		Authority	Control (CW), respect (MW, CW, MH, CH), humility (CW, MH, CH), authority/ hierarchy (MW, CW)
		Family cohesion	Happiness (MW, MH), friendliness (MW), love (MW, MH), unity (MW, MH), open conversation (CH), sharing (MH), jokes/fun (MH, CH)

Figure 5.8: Family meal behaviour

Family religious beliefs
- Prayer
- Food type

Food ethics
- Silence
- Hand washing

Family meal behaviour

Family cohesion
- Happiness
- Friendliness
- Love
- Unity
- Sharing
- Jokes/fun
- Open conversation

Traditional practices
- Affection
- Food ethics
- Modernity
- Respect
- Family religious values
- hierarchy

Communication	How do you feel communication at mealtimes contribute to your family's development?	Education	Learning forum (MW, CW, MH, CH), solution, family history, knowledge expansion, acceptance, experience sharing (CW), family values, share ideas, direction, information sharing, advice (CH), correct behaviour/mould behaviour (CH), reduce/eliminate complaints (MH), story-telling (MH, CH), freedom of expression (MW)
		Self-Development	Confidence building (MW, CW, MH, CH), boldness, cultural continuity (MW), sympathy forum, fluency (MW), overcome challenges (MH),
		Ethics	Silence, table étiquette/ethics (MW, MH),
		Respect	Affection, love (MH), understanding (MH), respect (MW, CW, CH), assurance (MW)

Figure 5.9: The effect of communication on families' meal behaviour
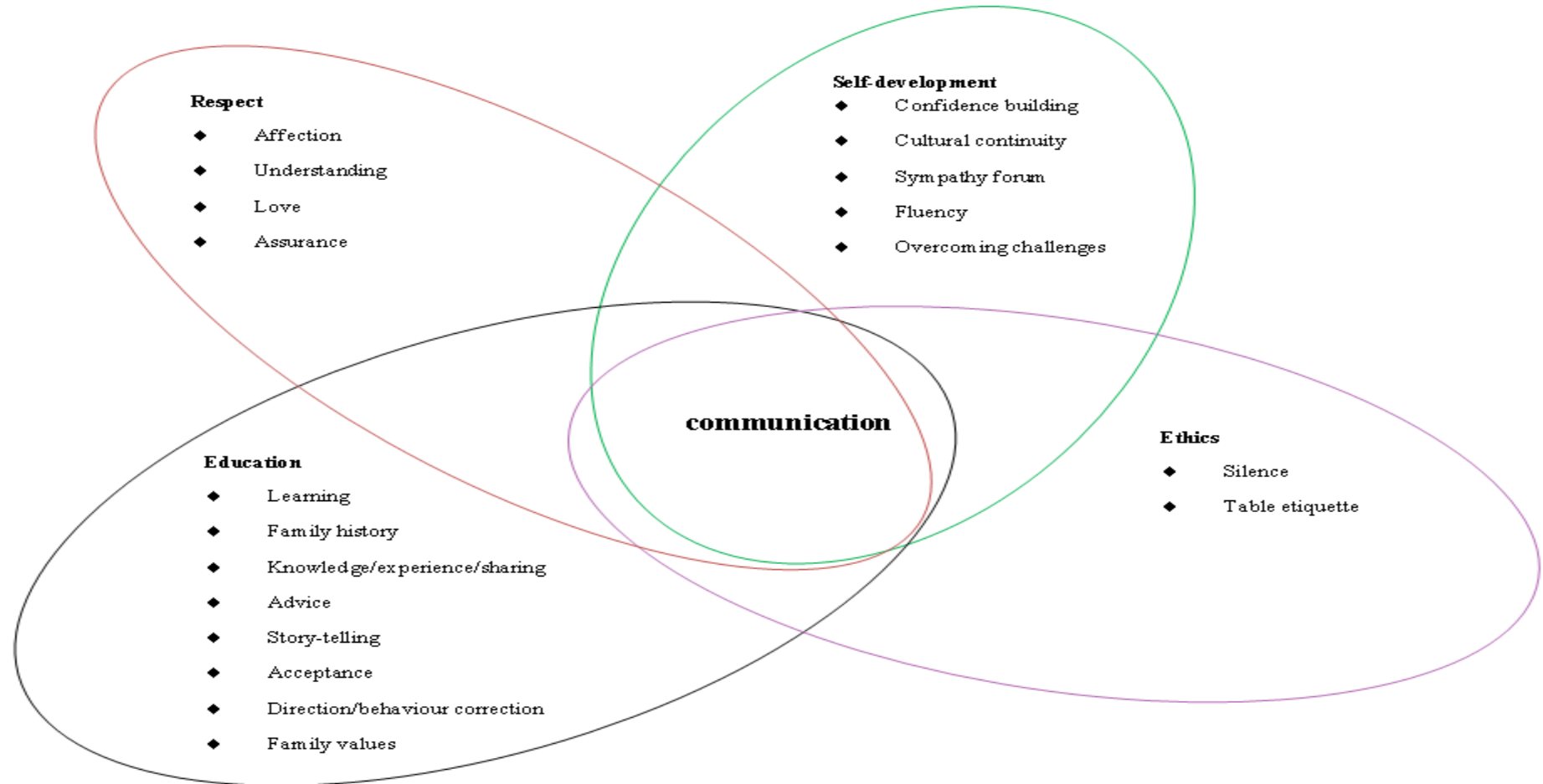
Table 5.10: Thematic analysis of food companies

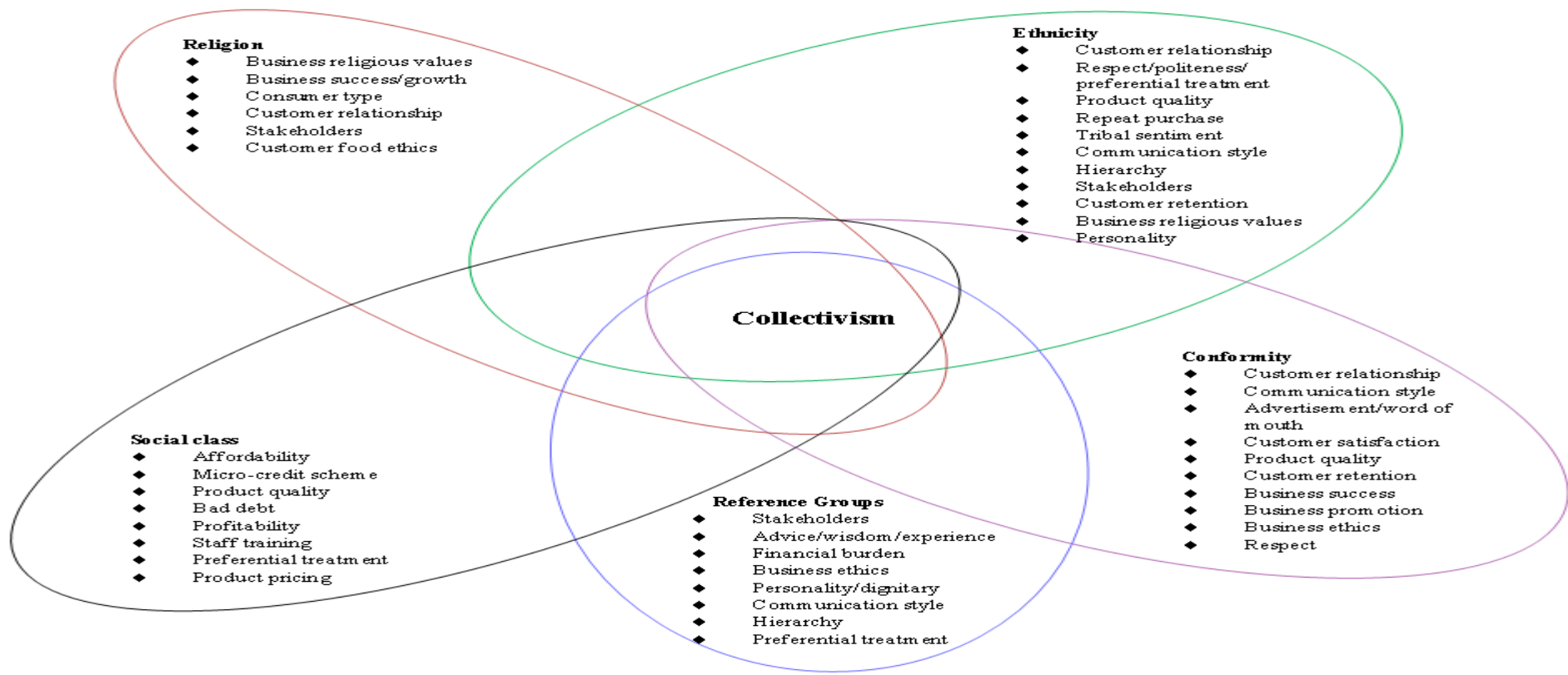| Interviews with businesses (food producers and retailers)			
	Questions	**Themes**	**Sub-themes**
Religion	How does religion influence your food manufacturing or retailing business?	Business religious values	Prayers (FR, FM), faiths, prayer times (FR, FM), God's mercy (FR), guidance, protection (FR), spiritual beliefs, prioritising God, business safeguard (FR), provider (FR), promoter (FR),
		Communication style	Public education (FR), direction, manner of approach (FR), negotiation (FR), persuasion, discounting (FR), customer education, skills transfer (FM), targeting (FR), relationship (FR), timely payment (FM), incentives (FM)
		Customers' food ethics	Food type (FR), food variety (FR), taste, groceries, food acceptability
		Stakeholders	Tribesmen (FR, FM), banks, suppliers (FR), wholesalers, retailers, 'ghetto' boys, Neighbours, competitors, friends, relations, consumers/customers, employees, business owners, managers
		Customer relationship	Expressing affection, concern, interest, sympathy
		Consumer type	Muslim consumers, Christian consumers, non-religious consumers, etc.
Ethnicity	How does ethnicity influence your food manufacturing or retailing business?	Hierarchy	Personalities/identity (FR), elderly people, respect (FR, FM), politeness (FR, FM), preferential treatment (FR, FM), societal position, societal standing, dignitaries,
		Respect	Politeness, preferential treatment
		Product quality	Product quality,
		Tribal sentiment	Tribal affiliation, ethnic group,
		Communication style	Public education (FR), direction, manner of approach (FR), negotiation (FR), persuasion, discounting (FR), customer education, skills transfer (FM), targeting (FR), relationship (FR), timely payment (FM), incentives (FM)
		Business religious values	Prayers (FR, FM), faiths, business prosperity/expansion/success (FR, FM), prayer times (FR, FM), God's mercy (FR), guidance, protection (FR), spiritual beliefs, prioritising God, business safeguard (FR), provider (FR), promoter (FR), heredity (FM)

		Customer retention	Equitable treatment (FR, FM), loyalty (FR), food product types, closeness, discounting (FR, FM), relationship building (FR, FM), communication style (FR, FM), repeat purchase (FM), word of mouth, customer satisfaction (FR, FM), collegial environment, greetings, salutation, quality (FR, FM), negotiation (FM), greetings/salutation (FM), timeliness (FM), customer retention (FR, FM), purchase frequency (FM), profitability (FM)
		stakeholders	Tribesmen (FR, FM), banks, suppliers (FR), wholesalers, retailers, 'ghetto' boys, Neighbours, competitors, friends, relations, consumers/customers, employees, business owners, managers
		Personality	Identity, personality, societal position, type of job, authority
Conformity	How does conformity influence your food manufacturing or retailing business?	Communication style	Approach, verbal negotiation (FR), word of mouth (FR), advertisement, awareness raising, image promotion, recruitment/training (FR, FM), communication style (FR, FM)
		Business ethics	Credibility, respect (FR, FM), politeness (FR, FM), audience, obedience (FR), sharing (FR), free gifts (FR), honesty (FR), good conduct, good behaviour, simplicity, age (FR), gender (FR), right, wrong
		Customer satisfaction	Quality, happiness,
		Product quality	Product quality
		Business promotion	Free gifts, social events, word of mouth
		Business success	God's will, business prosperity, business expansion, business success (FR, FM),
		Respect	Politeness, preferential treatment
		Advertising/word of mouth	Free gifts, promotion, better treatment
		Customer retention	discounting, customer loyalty (FR, FM), bonding, relationship building (FR, FM), happiness, recommendation, repeat purchase (FR, FM), quality, age, customer retention (FR, FM), impulsive buying (FR)
Reference groups	How do reference groups influence your food manufacturing or retailing business?	Hierarchy	elder people, age/elderliness (FR), advice (FM), experience
		stakeholders	Neighbours (FR, FM), competitor (FR), staff/employees (FM), families (FR), friends (FR), peer groups, suppliers (FR), female visitors, customers (FR, FM), visitors (FM)
		Advice	Wisdom, experience
		Financial burden	Relations, friends, extended families

		Preferential treatment	preferential treatment (FR), age/elderliness (FR)
		Communication style	Decision-making (FR, FM), negotiation (FR), discounting (FR, FM), loyalty, word of mouth/advertisement (FR), customer satisfaction (FR), advertisement, customer relationship (FR, FM), repeat purchase (FR), customer retention (FR)
		Business ethics	Obedience (FR), respect (FR), equitable treatment, benevolence, free gifts (FR), humanitarian gesture, cordiality, sympathy, politeness (FR), quality (FM), trust (FM)
Social class	How does social class influence your food manufacturing or retailing business?	Staff Education/Training	Training/education (FR), micro-credit loan (FR), right skills, vocational programmes,
		Affordability	Low price, cheap product,
		Profitability	Income/economic (FR, FM), profit, expensive, taxes levied, return, deposit, advance payments, money, liquidity, credit, interest rates, earning, timely payment (FM), cash flow
		Bad debts	bad debt (FR), non-payment of loan
		Preferential treatment	Age, personality, authority
		Product pricing	import prices, price reduction, price control (FM), discounting (FR), price differentiation (FM), costs of production (FM), decision-making (FR)
		Customer retention	Customer happiness, customer satisfaction (FR, FM), respect (FR, FM), advertisement, relationship (FM) fairness, sympathy (FR), word of mouth (FR), approach, communication (FM), friendly atmosphere, good manner, product quality (FM), targeting reliable customers, free gifts (FR), variety (FR), neighbours (FR), politeness (FM), customer retention (FR, FM), impulsive buying (FM), age (FM)

:
Figure 5.10 : The effect of collectivism on food retailing and manufacturing companies

Religion
- Business religious values
- Business success/growth
- Consumer type
- Customer relationship
- Stakeholders
- Customer food ethics

Ethnicity
- Customer relationship
- Respect/politeness/ preferential treatment
- Product quality
- Repeat purchase
- Tribal sentiment
- Communication style
- Hierarchy
- Stakeholders
- Customer retention
- Business religious values
- Personality

Collectivism

Social class
- Affordability
- Micro-credit scheme
- Product quality
- Bad debt
- Profitability
- Staff training
- Preferential treatment
- Product pricing

Reference Groups
- Stakeholders
- Advice/wisdom/experience
- Financial burden
- Business ethics
- Personality/dignitary
- Communication style
- Hierarchy
- Preferential treatment

Conformity
- Customer relationship
- Communication style
- Advertisement/word of mouth
- Customer satisfaction
- Product quality
- Customer retention
- Business success
- Business promotion
- Business ethics
- Respect

Appendix 17: Sample semi-structured interviews for food retailers and manufacturers

Section A: Background Questions

Personal Details

Please tick an appropriate box or fill in the blanks for each question

Interviewee information

Participant Name: _____ Date:_____

Code:_____

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. You may skip any question you do not wish to answer. All the data collected during this research will be anonymous and confidential.

What is your job title/designation _____

For how long have you worked for this company? _____

What are your responsibilities?
_____
_____
_____
_____

Company information

What type of food is manufactured or retailed by your company? _____

How many people are employed by your company? _____

How old is your company? _____

What is the ownership type of your company?

Private [____] Public [____] others, please specify_____

Section B – Semi-structured interview self-verification questions – Food Retailers and Manufacturers

Listed below are a number of statements related to the collectivist behaviours of families when interacting socially at the dinner table at mealtimes, which needs verification to assert the outcome of a previous research conducted. Please indicate which of the following factor(s) influence or affect your food retailing or manufacturing company:

A. Religion

1. In terms of religion, which of the following factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing business:

    (a) Spiritual beliefs (e.g. prayers)
    (b) Cultural values (e.g. gender distinction)
    (c) Family religious values (e.g. unity/honesty)
    (d) Social bonding (e.g. networking/closeness)
    (e) Heredity (e.g. religious practices transferred from parents to children)

How does the selected factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing company?

Why does the selected factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing company?

How will your company use these results in promoting its business successfully?

B. Ethnicity

2. In terms of ethnicity,which of the following factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing business:

    (a) Social group/tribe
    (b) Family beliefs (e.g. taboo)
    (c) Region of origin (e.g. location/community)
    (d) Norms (e.g. prayers)
    (e) Assumptions (e.g. taken for granted practices)
    (f) Identity (e.g. position/rank in society)

How does the selected factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing company?

Why does the selected factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing company?

How will your company use these results in promoting its business successfully?

C. Conformity

3. In terms of conformity, which of the following factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing business:

   (a) Respect
   (b) Obedience (e.g. Good behaviour)
   (c) Norms (e.g. observing boundaries/control)
   (d) Sharing or giving out freely to others
   (e) Politeness
   (f) Togetherness (e.g. unity)

How does the selected factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing company?

Why does the selected factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing company?

How will your company use these results in promoting its business successfully?

D. Reference group

4. In terms of reference groups, which of the following factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing business:

   (a) Age
   (b) Gender
   (c) Neighbours/friends
   (d) Extended family (uncles, aunts, etc.)
   (e) Decision-making

How does the selected factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing company?

Why does the selected factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing company?

How will your company use these results in promoting its business successfully?

E. Social class

5. In terms of social class, which of the following factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing business:

(a) Economic (e.g. Earning of consumers)
(b) Occupation (e.g. job of consumers)
(c) Education (e.g. better hygiene practices)
(d) Authority (e.g. Orderliness/control)
(e) Ethnic/family background
(f) Religious position/ranking in society

How does the selected factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing company?

Why does the selected factor(s) influence your food manufacturing or retailing company?

How will your company use these results in promoting its business successfully?

Appendix 18: Sample Scanned copy of ethical approval

University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

College of Arts & Social Sciences
Room 626 Maxwell Building
The Crescent
Salford, M5 4WT
Tel: 0161 295 5876

02 January 2014

Sheku Kakay
University of Salford

Dear Sheku

Re: Ethical Approval Application – CASS130008

I am pleased to inform you that based on the information provided, the Research Ethics
Panel have no objections on ethical grounds to your project.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Woodman
On Behalf of CASS Research Ethics Panel

Appendix 19: Family size per household in Sierra Leone

The SLIHS report (2011) estimated a mean family size of 5.9 persons per household across Sierra Leone with a population of about 48 percent males and 52 percent females, suggesting that 39 per cent of the population lived in the urban areas whilst 61 per cent lived in the rural settlements. As a result, the 20 families (20 husbands and 20 wives) from the various households, who participated in the research, 50 per cent were females, and 50 per cent were males and all of them were recruited from the urban areas of Sierra Leone due to the limitations (money, time, transport and good road network) in accessing the rural areas. This was due to the fact that women and men contribute almost equally in the running and sustenance of the homes. This argument was stressed by Harris (2014) that females are the backbone of the Sierra Leonean labour force. He suggested that the relative status of females is a bit paradoxical as on the surface, they seem to have low status—females technically live under the authority of the males they marry, have fewer legal rights, less formal education, and lower literacy rates, but yet in reality, the wife's relationship to the husband is more complementary than subordinate. The majority of families selected were between the age bracket of 18 and 64 years, as this is the speculated age at which individuals are active contributors in the family. This argument fits with SLIHS report (2011) that the age structure of the working class families in Sierra Leone is between 15 and 64 years. As a result, the families were classified into three groups based on the incomes earned by each family (husband and wife) – primary (high-end families), secondary (middle class families) and tertiary (lower class families) to ascertain the social class they belong to, which was based on their incomes/wealth, power/authority in their settings, level of education and the type of job they do, which eventually helped the researcher to determine the meal social interaction behaviour of each category, and which is reflective of the true picture of the country. McFerson (2011) suggested that 4 per cent of the population of Sierra Leonean families belong to the upper class, 26 per cent belongs to the middle (working) class, while the remaining 70 per cent consists of those that subsist below the poverty line (lower class). This implies that the bulk of the population in Sierra Leone belong to the lower income group. However, in this study 10 per cent (i.e. 2 out of 20) of the families interviewed were considered upper class, 30 per cent (i.e. 6 out of 20) were considered as middle working class, whilst the remaining 60 per cent (i.e. 12 out of 20) were considered as lower working class, which reflects the picture of the bulk of the population. This is depicted in figure 4.4.

This ensured that families of the different social classes participated in the semi-structured interviews and participant observations. Irrespective of the urbanisation of the research, the researcher ensured that this does not affect the outcome of the research by consciously selecting families that display both rural and urban sentiments.