Investigating the Prospects of Enacting Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Ghana; A Case of a Rural Local Government District

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Abstract
This study investigates children's aspirations to motivate broader theoretical discussion on the prospects for enacting culturally responsive pedagogy in Ghanaian Basic School to improve the education outcomes for rural school children and contribute to community sustainability. The study uses a collaborative case study design. The lead researcher collaborated with four teachers and twenty students in a rural Basic School, serving as both informants and co-researchers to gather ethnographic data on students' inculcated images about their community, aspiration, and home cultural capital, as well as teachers' experiences shaping rural school success. The research instruments used were a researcher-made student take-home student assignment worksheet, teachers' focus group discussion guide and an open ethnographic observational guide. Scaffolded by Bourdieu's socio-cultural theory of habitus, thematic and summative analysis of qualitative data found that the participating rural students' aspirations appeared low and were limited to few opportunities they see in their immediate environment. The rural students researched school success was influenced by their significance social others, including their parents, teachers, extended family member and community members in that order. The study is concluded that inspiring rural children's higher educational aspirations and school success would require socio-cultural and place sensitive teachers who can leverage the rich cultural capital in rural spaces and form collaboration with local and national education stakeholders to stretch their learners' cultural assets and aspirations into local and global opportunities to raise productive citizens for sustainable rural futures.

Keywords: student aspiration; rural school success; ethnographic imagination; cultural capital; culturally responsive pedagogy; place-based pedagogy

Background
Ghana's aspiration is to create a just, free, learning nation, full of optimistic and self-confident people who are critical thinkers, creative, and problem-solvers able to contribute to community sustainability (MoE-Ghana, 2018a). However, the West African country's education system is challenged by twin problems of low educational outcomes and regional inequality in educational opportunities. A recent education sector analysis revealed that some 60% of Ghanaian school-aged children (4-18 years) fail to achieve success in Pre-Tertiary Education (PTE), and about two-thirds of these students come from the country's rural areas (MoE-Ghana, 2018b; Anlimachie 2019 ; 2022). According to a recent report on Ghana Accountability on Education Outcomes (GALOP) "*out of the average years of schooling in Ghana (11.6), the number of* quality adjusted learning years is just 5.7 – children are in school but not learning for nearly six years" (World Bank's2018, p4).

The low educational outcomes in Ghana generally are having consequential effects on Ghana's socio-economic development. Notwithstanding its abundant natural resources, modern Ghana is still a developing country, heavily reliant on global trade in the export of raw materials including cocoa, minerals and, recently, crude oil. There is very little processing of Ghana rich raw materials to enhance value addition. Therefore, Ghana has high unemployment rate (MoE-Ghana, 2018b). Specifically, the poor learning in rural communities have created an intricate chain of problems, including low rural productivity, high rural poverty, high rural-urban migration, and overcrowded cities (Amoako-Mensah, Anlimachie, Adu, & Elorm, 2019). Although the agriculture sector employs about 52 % of the rural workforce and 46% of the entire Ghanaian workforce, it accounts for only a quarter of Ghana's GDP (GLSS7, 2018). The low rural productivity is linked to the fact that only 15% of rural farmers have attained secondary school education (Adjei, Anlimachie, & Ativi, 2020). Agriculture continues to be rain-fed, characterised by smallholding farming and outmoded methods (Diao, Hazell, Kolavalli, & Resnick, 2019). Rural Ghana thus account for about 80% of Ghana's poverty incidence. Rural smallholding farmers, who constitute 80% of the agricultural workforce, are among the poorest in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service- GSS, 2020).

These educational and economic inequalities point to a mismatch between schooling and community sustainability. The inequality in Ghana also suggests that most Ghanaian young rural Ghanaian children are not inculcating higher educational aspirations. In the latest attempt to address these gaps, educational reforms have been ongoing in Ghana since 2018. The reforms have introduced a new 'Curriculum for Change and Sustainable Development' that seeks to link the classroom to learners' lifeworlds and connect schooling to community sustainability (MoE-Ghana, 2018a, p.22). The reforms envisage that by 20130 all Ghanaian young people by age 18 would have at least completed pre-tertiary education up to Grade 12, become functional citizens in reading, writing, arithmetic and creativity, and acquire intermediate work competencies to fully participate in the development process (MoE-Ghana, 2018a). The challenge is how teachers can implement the new curriculum in geographically and culturally responsive ways to enact aspirational schooling of success for rural Ghanaian children who are the most socio-economically marginalized.

A growing body of research literature has found that educational aspiration, either at the individual, family, community or school level, is a strong predicator of educational outcomes (Guenther et al., 2017; Homel & Ryan, 2014; Khoo & Ainley, 2005; Zipin, Sellar, Brennan, & Gale, 2015). Drawing on longitudinal survey data of Australian youth regarding aspirations at age 15 to complete Year 12 and post-school study, Homel and Ryan (2014) found that educational outcomes are substantially influenced by educational aspirations in terms of students' school completion and transition rates, and a significant interaction between aspiration and academic performance.

Family aspirations have also become a significant research and policy focus as evidence suggest that it is the most central in shaping individual, community and school cultural capital and practices that drive school success (Allen & McDermott, 2018; Coleman, 1988; Khattab, 2015).

Guenther, Lowe, Burgess, Vass, and Moodie (2019) systematic review on rural and remote educational outcomes in Australia, citing several emprical studies including (Benventiste, 2015, Hunter 2015, O'Bryan 2016) found that dominant narative in education policy literature framed educational aspirations and outcomes around literacy, numeracy, rentention, transition to higher education and transition to jobs. Another set of frame literatures have reconised that need to frame eudcational aspiration and outcomes around equity health and wellbeing, aspirations, participation, identities and relationships in tune with rural remote amd indegepunous communities where attachement to family and country (land) is paramount to their (Daniels-Mayes, 2016; Guenther, Bat, & Osborne, 2014).

Zipin et al.'s (2015) study of educational aspirations in marginalised regions identified a growing policy focus on increasing human capital investment globally to raise the aspirations of young people educational success. However, there appears to be a gap in policy in addressing the difficulties in social, geo-cultural, economic and political contexts for aspiring within the structural changes ignited by globalization and social change. Zipin et al. (2015) thus bring into focus the need to re-construct aspiration beyond its simplistic outlook to unravelling what informs the formation of people sense of variable futures, and the people and the contextual factors that drive children's aspirations. Similarly, Homel and Ryan (2014) identified an 'endogeneity' problem of the difficulty in measuring and analysing the correlation between aspirations and realization (outcomes), amidst the effect that the other factors have on both aspirations and outcomes (Homel& Ryan, 2014, p. 8). Further, Homel and Ryan (2014), also identified learners' motivation, ambition, perseverance, and plans to remain in and complete higher levels of education, and the influence that the family, community and government have on the individual internal dispositions as crucial set of factors shaping students learning aspirations that need further analysis.

Kubow and Fossum (2007) identified school–community and local–the global dialectic as crucial factors shaping educational aspirations. Community–school relationship, reflected in the school curriculum, represents a society's idealised hopes and visions for its citizens (Kubow & Fossum, 2007). Therefore, the school curriculum as the rallying point of power control shapes society' aspirations, in tune with local and global processes. Therefore, any social disequilibrium of school–society and the local– global relationships can lead to unintended educational outcomes in addressing community sustainability. Equally, a growing body of culturally responsive pedagogy and place-based education scholars, including (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Daniels-Mayes, 2016; Khalifa, Gooden, & Davis, 2016; Prosser, 2010; Wallace & Boylan, 2009) analyses culture and place as crucial foci for understanding educational aspirations and outcomes.

The peculiarity of a place and culture induces different educational needs and thus aspirations. Rural communities' closeness to nature, attachment to land, remoteness, agrarian livelihoods, indigenousness, cultural conservatism, multi-ethnicity, low access to social services tend to impose additional unique characteristics, then those in urban areas, that can induce different educational aspirations which needs close understanding (Shaw, 2009; Wildy & Clarke, 2011). While some extensive research in Australia has shown that rurality, especially remoteness and cultural distance, is associated with lower educational aspiration and outcomes others did not (Guenther et al., 2019 p.335). Baxter, Hayes, and Gray (2011) and Stone, Walter, and Peacock (2017) found that rurality is associated with lower levels of parental' expectations for their children's educational attainment, lower participation of children in extracurricular activities and lower physical, socio-emotional and learning outcomes.

In investigating indigenous children's perspectives about in the Philippines, Arbiol, Gura, Jan, and Cece (2020) also identified children contribution to family livelihood, local culture and social services as crucial factors impacting rural children's educational aspirations.

Significantly Ryan (2014) found that regardless of demographic background and geo-locations, aspirations tend to induce a similar impact on educational outcomes across individuals, suggesting that the aspirations court by an individual, a family, a school or community is a basic cultural capital which both the advantage and the disadvantage have in common that can spur school success regardless of socio-economic status if school become spatially sensitive (Comber, 2021; Guenther et al., 2019).

Zipin et al. (2015) delignated three logic of aspirations that are dominant in research on young people and their families to include a doxic logic, grounded in populist–ideological mediations; and a habituated logic grounded in biographic embodied as habitus. A third 'logic' is the emergent senses of future potential, grounded in lived cultures, which hold possibility for imagining the futures.

The concept of aspirations are thus complex social-cultural phenomena which theorization require individual-community, school-community, community-policy environment holistic relational and fine-grained analysis. Therefore, this study is approach to aspiration transcends individual, family, policy and historical imperatives. The study conceives educational aspirations as society's idealised values, hope and expectations for its people (Kubow & Fossum, 200). From the Ghanaian Basic school context, educational aspirations entail the individual, home, school government's motivation and determination for students to enter, remain and complete school up to Grade 12, then transition to tertiary education and vocational training or other life-long learning opportunities, or to the world of work to enable the individual to contribute positively to community sustainability (MoE-Ghana, 2018a).

The purpose of this study is to understand rural families' aspirations for their children's schooling from students' ethnographic imaginations, and how teachers' knowledge of leaners' background shape their pedagogies. The study contributes to culturally and geographically responsive scholarship in general. Specifically, it unearths the culturally responsive strategies for uplifting Ghanaian rural children's learning outcomes towards sustainable rural futures. The key research questions under investigation are:
1. What factors or process shape children's educational aspirations in low-income rural communities?
2. What strategies work best in lifting children's learning aspirations and success in low-income rural communities?
3. How do rural children's cultural assets, including inculcated ethnographic imaginations shape teachers' pedagogies?

Theoretical framework
This study was inspired by Bourdieu's socio-cultural theories of habitus (Bourdieu, 1986; Mills, 2008) and place-based education theorization (Comber, 2021; Prosser, 2010; Wallace & Boylan, 2009). Bourdieu's habitus explains the regularities of social behaviors within a given social structure and context, and their interactions with the individuals dispositions that shape individuals' perceptions, actions and practice (Mills, 2008). Habitus is both external and internal. The external habitus encompasses social structure such as the family, class, ethnicity, school, peers, and social or cultural capital like values and norms. On the other hand, internal habitus also relates to the individual dispositions and the inculcated values develop through immersion into the external habitus. The interconnectedness between external and internal habitus acts together that shape

individual actions and aspirations. Suffice to say that this study adopts Mills (2008) transformational view to Bourdieu's habitus, by opposing to its latently deterministic understanding and, instead, emphasizing the voluntary role of the individual as rational being to recreate habitus.

Likewise, the place-based theorisation of education seeks for improving local relevance in education that addresses local community sustainability. Place-based education entails leveraging local community input and cultural capital into the teaching and valuing the significance of place in children learning to ensure education is contextually relevant to their place and culture (Anlimachie, Badu & Acheampong, 2023; Hasnat & Greenwood 2021; Wallace & Boylan, 1999). Place-based education is viewed by Prosser (2010) as 'connecting lives and learning' infusing local practices and resources to enhance curriculum and classroom practices. Place-based theorisation of education seeks for strategies that link teaching and learning to community culture, resources and economy to make learning culturally sustaining and relevant to local needs while promoting educational justice for the underpriviledge (Anlimachie, Abreh, Acheampong, Badu, Alluake & Newman, 2023).Conceptually, both habitus and place-based theorizations elevate the significance of place and culture in learning, especially among rural and indigenous community whose attachment to land or country is very strong.

Methodologically, habitus and place-based education theorizations seek for culturally responsive ways of doing, knowing, and have been regarding what works best in each milieu. Therefore, the study proceeded on the hunch that where learners' home and school are located, are potent determinants of learners' learning aspirations and school success. Therefore, understanding the learners' ethnographic imagination of their home/community, as well as teachers' socio-cultural sensitivity to their leaners' background is important in theorizing educational aspirations in low-income rural communities. Ethnographic imagination is conceptually used to explain the knowledge of ones' community and how local environment or habitus shape individual nurtured cultural assets, aspirations and practices (Comber, 2021; Hattam, Brennan, Zipin, & Comber, 2009). From Mills' (2008) transformational view of habitus, this study debunks the deficit narrative to rural education and approaches rural setting as rich site of cultural assets, and rural teachers as agent of transformation.

Methodology

This study was designed as small-scale pilot case study seeking to motivate broader theoretical discussion of educational opportunities for investigating into and enacting culturally responsive pedagogy in the Ghanaian Basic School system. The study micro-focused on students and teachers live-experiences about learning aspiration in a rural geo-cultural context (Creswell, 2021; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The study elicited participants 'ethnographic imaginations of their locality and how that shapes children's learning aspirations.

The study adopted a collaborative participant observation approach (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Preissele & Grant, 2004). The researcher collaborated with a local school in a school-community based enquiry to immerse students into their community as ethnographers to documents aspirations and household fund of knowledge. Furthermore, teachers also acted as co-researchers participating in the designing, administering, and analyzing students documented life experiences, while sharing experiences about their pedagogies in line with their students' background in group discussion. The full participant observation role of the participants complemented the researcher's partial participant observation to offer insider-outsider lenses to document life experiences from a near ethnographic lens. Colton and Langer (2016) observed that collaborative community-based learning mutually shifts teachers and community's perspective towards the discovery of responsive practices that support and challenge disadvantaged students to improve and reach their maximum

potentials. According to Kincheloe, McLaren, Steinberg, and Monzó (2018) such collaborative school-based research contributes to staff development in the critical culture of schooling which ensures schooling takes on the form of a real learning community by producing firsthand knowledge that is locally applicable and shared (Kincheloe et al. 2018).

The study site was Asuadai, a rural community in the Asunafo North Municipality of Ghana, and its community and its only local Basic School, Asuadai Municipal Assembly Basic School. The school provide kindergarten, primary and lower secondary education up to grade 9. In this study, twenty (20) sixth grade students, averaging 12 years, from eight different ethnic backgrounds, and two major religious persuasions, Christianity, and Islam and, four teachers, two males and females, were selected based on interest, to participate in this study as both participants and co-researchers.

The data collection which spanned from October through to December 2019 was part of a bigger project investigating culturally sustaining strategies to improving education and development outcomes in Ghanaian rural communities. The data collection was guided by rigorous ethical considerations with ethical approvals, informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, cultural responsivity, navigating the study limitations toward achieving credible results (Bryman, 2012).

Methods
The research instruments used included a researcher-made take-home student assignment, interview guide for the focus group discussion and an open ethnographic observational guide. The deployment of the research instruments is detailed as follows.

Student Take-Home Assignment
The researcher-made student take-home assignment worksheet allowed student participants to act as ethnographers and biographers and with support of their family document home and school experiences, cultural assets and aspirations. The students were tasked to draw a picture to depict their future aspirations, state their role models, complete relational maps tracking the important people to their learning success, state what will or might not help them to achieve their aspirations and state the home values, skills and things they like about their community. The task was planned to take about 40 minutes, but students were given three days to work and return the completed worksheets. Only the gender was indicated on the worksheets and parental consent forms were attached to the worksheets. Researcher-made student assignment worksheets were distributed to all the 36 students of the grade six class and their families and 30 were retuned. The returned worksheets were clustered into male and female categories. Simple random sampling was used to select ten from each category for the analysis. The selection of 20 from the 30 worksheets was to facilitate an in-depth analysis and a follow-up deeper discussion with the participating teachers.

Focus Group Discussion and Interview notes
The focus group discussion with the four teacher informants, who also doubles as research team members or co-researchers, analysed and discussed the implication of the students' documented experiences on teachers' strategies. The discussion with the teacher participants were also documented with pen a notebook in the form of interview note.

Field notes
Important incidents observed afield were also documented in the form of field notes.

Data Analysis
A summative write-up was used to analyze the data from the students' take-home assignment, interview notes and the field notes. The key focus of summative analysis focus on tracking the essential text regarding context, personal experience, significant social others, aspiration, families'

values and human thoughts (Rapport, 2010). According to Rapport (2010), the summative analysis method is a group collaborative analytic technique to embrace the research subjects by involving teams of co-researchers to join in with the researcher in the analysis process to enhance data context, representation, replicability and presentation. Therefore, the analysis was done and discussed jointly with the participating teacher co-researchers in line with the collaborative design to highlight the issues in the data. The qualitative data was thematically and inductively coded and analysed in such a way that allowed the key sensitizing concept to emerge to further aluminate students documented ethnographic imaginations in line with the research questions and the literature. The analysis treads together key sensitising concepts emerging inductively from systematic gathering and analysis of qualitative data. The key themes highlighting the essence of informants' experiences were captured (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021).

Results and Discussions
Student participants were asked to draw how they wish to see themselves in the future. The drawings elicited nursing, teaching, medicine, professional driving, security service, professional footballer, banking, and priesthood in order of significance [frequency] as the career aspirations nursing by the children and their families. Instructively, none documented a career aspiration in technical or vocational-based professions such as ICT, engineering or building and construction, which have a growing demand globally. Also, none documented a career aspiration in agriculture or agri-business, although students documented agriculture and local food processing as the dominant skills possessed by their families. Student-documented aspirations therefore point to: a) a dominance of students' career aspirations for health care and teaching professions; b) a dominance of students' career aspirations in white-collar jobs at the expense of vocational and technical related jobs; and c) a mismatch between students' aspirations and community sustainability, evidenced by the lack of career aspirations for agriculture related business, although agriculture was the main economic activity in the school community.

Students' aspirations were explored with the teacher co-researchers in group discussion. Regarding students' career preference for health-care related and teaching professions, the teachers attributed them to their students' familiarity with and accessible to these two professional groups. The teachers commented that their students were always in touch with teachers on a daily basis. Also, the teachers linked students' familiarity with health-care professionals to the high incidences of outpatient cases of malaria and diarrhoea among children in the school district. The high incidence of malaria and diarrhoea is linked to the tropical and forested environment of the areas that fester the breeds mosquitoes and worm infestations (Ethnographic field notes, December 2019). Generally, the teacher participants acknowledged that the students' aspirations were moderate and less diversified, and thus were greatly shaped by professionals they often come into contact within their immediate community and school district.

Also, regarding the dominance of the students' career aspirations for white collar jobs, the participating teachers attributed this to the legacy of colonial education system and its white-collar privileging orientations. The discussion with the teachers elicited explanation that the colonial education system introduced in Ghana by Christian missionaries and later by the British crown colony in the 16th century focused mainly on reading and arithmetic skills. The goal was to train few people for missionary work and to aid colonial trade as trade assistants. The colonial development project also sought to extract raw materials, adding value to the raw material through processing, hence required low-skilled labour (Ethnographic field note). The colonial mode of production thus laid the foundation for the de-emphasised Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Ghana (Amedorme & Fiagbe, 2013; Amoako-Mensah et al., 2019; Awuah-Nyamekye, 2010; Goura, 2012). The colonial education system which persisted into the post-colonial era had failed to link schooling to local livelihoods and affirm the African indigenous

apprenticeship-based learning (Anlimachie, 2019). From the place-based educational lens this is a fundamental gap to achieving local sustainability. The above data and analysis therefore show that historical context of colonised countries has crucial impact on their later years inculcated educational aspirations.

The teachers commented further that whilst the new curriculum had detailed a renew focus to promote TVET, Information and communication Technology (ICT) and Creative Arts education, it appeared more aspirational than real. For example, I observed in the field that the study school lacked the required infrastructure, laboratories and workshops, forcing teachers to improvise without the needed equipment (Ethnographic field notes, December 2019) .The lack of practical learning experiences run counter to the indigenous apprenticeship-based or guided participation learning approach in Ghanaian indigenous society (Nukunya, 2016). The teachers further linked the low interest in TVET related pathways to the fact that it is erroneously associated with low SES in the research community and country at large (Ethnographic field notes, December 2019). Therefore, the ongoing educational reforms in Ghana require adequate decolonialisation mindset and adequate investment into TVET to achieve local relevance in education outcomes.

The participating teachers also commented that culturally, families in the school community want their young people to acquire skills in agriculture to contribute to family sustainability. Yet families were sceptical of their younger people going into agriculture as a full-time work since their involvement in agriculture over the years had not seen much improvement in their SES, except producing food on subsistent basis (Ethnographic field notes, December 2019). Agriculture had little appeal to the youth as a viable employment avenue in the community. The study therefore identified a gap between schooling and community livelihood needing address by the school curriculum (Adjei et al., 2020; Anlimachie & Avoada, 2020; Anlimachie, Avoada & Amoako-Mensah, 2022). The teachers noted that as part of their strategy to transform agriculture in the community, the school had backyard garden where practical agricultural lessons are learnt. In addition, teachers regularly took children to farms for practical lessons on modern innovative agricultural practices and encourage student to pass on the knowledge to their families. The teachers further commented that they give free extension and business advise to the local people to improve their farming work. Through these strategies the teachers strived to contribute to the community sustainability, while raising younger generation with the requisite entrepreneurial skills to transform their community livelihood (Interview note).

Students' experiences regarding groups crucial to achieving their educational aspirations were elicited via the completion of relational maps. Student participants were asked to identify four groups each that were most important 1) to their learning success in general, 2) in assisting their schoolwork at home, 3) in assisting in their learning of home skills, and as well as 4) their role models. The results identify parents, teachers, older siblings and peers, and uncle and aunties in that order as the most significant social others. Also, older siblings were identified as the group that best assisted young children's school learning at home. However, mothers, grandmothers, senior female siblings and aunties & nieces were mentioned in that orders by the students as the most significant groups who best assisted children's informal learning activity at home, an indication of the crucial role of women in children learning (Student Assignment). The role of families and their approaches to child-rearing were thus identified as crucial to children learning success of which teacher must acknowledge and utilise to improving students learning in school. Instructively, aside student identifying teachers as the second most important group to their learning success in general, they also mentioned teachers as their number one role models. The significance in which the teachers are held by the students is thus a crucial resource that teachers can leverage to build trustful relationship to inspire student learning success.

Also, students' views on home values, as well as attitudes and behaviours that can help them in achieving their educational aspirations were also elicited. Student participants documented reverence for God, respect, obedience, handwork, teamwork, resilient, punctuality and reading as crucial to achieving their educational aspirations (Student assignment). The students' view on what makes a successful learner was thus greatly influenced by the core values in their families. Home cultural assets are thus crucial to promoting students learning success.

Furthermore, the student-participants' experiences regarding the exciting things about their community were also elicited via the take-home student assignment. The student documented the rich forest resources, the serenity and the peaceful nature of the environment, the rich cultural values of collective care, neighbourliness, we-feeling, diversity, and the rich social activities and rituals including religious services, local festivals, marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies, communal labour, play and games, and traditional music and dance as some of the things they like most about their community (Student assignment). The student participants demonstrated high ethnographic imaginations of their community and possession of rich cultural assets. From the ensuing data, inspiring rural children's higher learning success require teachers to appreciate the crucial role of;

- the extended family system in indigenous rural children's learning;
- home cultural assets [including values, practices, and skills] to indigenous children's learning, hence the need for teachers to build local cultural competencies to better integrate learners' home cultural assets into classroom learning;
- women in children's learning at home ;
- older siblings in younger children school learning at home and;
- teachers as role models to rural children's learning aspirations.

In discussing the crucial role of family in children's learning, the participating teachers commented that at the base of the social organization in the study community was a strong extended family system and its compound housing system that promoted collective responsibility for children caring. All family members in the study community collectively contributed resources, time and expertise towards their children's learning. The family guide children to learn requisite home, livelihood and social skills activities by participating in family activities, community rituals, children play and explorative intimacy with the natural environment. The extended system in the research community provided strong social buffer, diverse skills, and natural laboratory for children's learning (Interview notes). The home cultural context in the study community resonated with (Nsamenang, 2008, 2010) observation that child rearing in Africa indigenous context is social constructively constructed, pluralistic, involving the combine roles of the local communities and families where parents, grandparents, older siblings and peer play complementary roles at various stages of children learning through guided participative learning to prime children to emerged and to just to decree. Therefore, enacting culturally relevant pedagogy of success in the study school requires that families are made central stakeholders in children's school learning through collaborative and trustful relationships with the teachers to better integrate local content into school curriculum and extend schooling to learners' home.

Also, the participating teachers affirmed the rich cultural assets of the school community documented by the student-participants. The teachers commented that the responsive social values of respect, unity and diversity, hospitality, inclusiveness and communal spirit have contributed to the resilience of the community in caring for their children, notwithstanding their low SES (Interview notes). The teachers further revealed that they leveraged the communal spirit of the local people to initiate school infrastructural development and maintain safe learning spaces for children's learning to thrive. The teachers' commented further that the community values of

collectiveness made it easier for them to enact cultures of sharing, caring and trust filled relationship in the school to that derive collective responsibility for learning success. As a teacher co-researcher posited; "we are one another keeper and if one person gets it right, we all get it right" (Interview notes).In addition, the teachers also acknowledged the cultural diversity of the school community, hence they tapped into the community's cultural values of respect, and unity in diversity to enact pedagogies of inclusiveness and belongingness to create generative learning environment for fair learning experiences for all students. In tracking how teachers integrate local context, content and epistemologies into their pedagogies in a classroom lesson, we (the researchers) observed that the teacher instructor's deployed classroom management strategies that were attentiveness to the diversity in the class. There was roundtable group seating that took into consideration gender, ethnic and religious mix of the class. Also, the teacher used group and participatory learning approaches to elicit student's participation and diverse home experiences. Teachers also called students by their names and linked them to their cultural heritage to ignite sense of belonging and pride in the students. The teacher instructor also allowed the students to express themselves freely using their local language when they face difficulties in articulating specific taught in the English language although the official medium of instruction in the school was English. The teacher used slogans and local songs that conveyed messages of hope, abilities and success as starter to arouse students' curiosity and learning confidence and expectation for success (Field notes)

The community cultural assets served as crucial 'linking and bonding social capital' (Oyefuga, 2020) that drive collective responsibility for children's learning success. Therefore, whereas the school and its local community were limited by their low-income, they possessed alternative forms of capital- their rich cultural capital that promoted children learning. Thus, the participating teachers were found to be socio-culturally conscious, tapping into the school community rich cultural capital to advance responsive schooling.

The participating teachers also commented on the significant of building their cultural capacity to enhance their teaching work in the community. A participating teacher explained that the teachers regularly participate in the community's social activity like funerals, marriage and naming ceremonies, cultural and sports festivals to learn and build relationships. Teachers in the school were in constant touch with the community. They learn the local culture and mobilise community support for school development. The teachers frequently visit students' families to follow-up on relating to the children's learning and wellbeing. The teachers learn about students' background to have a better understanding of students' need. Teacher collaborated with families how best they can support children's learning (Interview notes).

The participating teacher explained further that they used the local people as experts in school based in-service trainings and Professional Learning Community activities. Through such engagement they learnt local cultural values, local languages, histories and artistic skills to enhance their cultural skill and forge trustful relationship with the community to better advance responsive pedagogies. The teachers also acknowledged that their students as possessing rich cultural assets, and thus prior learning capability of which they affirmed, build on, and infused with 21-century skills to raise aspirational learners who can fit in two worlds of becoming local and global citizens (Interview notes).

Furthermore, the crucial role of women in children learning in the community was further probed from the participating teacher co-researchers' ethnographic lens. Participating teachers commentated that that female household members in the school community best support children informal learning activity because they spent more time with the children than the men. Also, the females were culturally flexible, jovial, welcoming and liberal in their instructional approaches.

females tended to give children enough space to freely express themselves, make mistakes and be corrected repeatedly till they become perfect. Also, the females usually reward children's learning successes, no matter how little they were. In contrast, participating teachers observed that the men in the community were culturally strict, disciplinarian, resort to canning, and less rewarding of children competencies, except those relating to superior artistic skills, bravery and advanced cultural competencies. Being aware of children preference for females as instructors and the traditional care giving role by Ghanaian women, the school strategically staffed the lower grades with more female teachers to enhance the responsiveness of the classrooms to the children (Interview notes).

The participating teachers recognised the role of older siblings in younger children reading activity at home in the study rural community as crucial in filling the gap in children reading at home created by the low educational attainment of the adult population in the community, which limited the adult parents support to children's school learning. The younger population [within the age cohort 13-18] were more educated than the adult population due to government introduction of free education up to grade 12 in recent times. The older siblings also tended to spend more time with their younger ones at home as the adult population which spent greater part of the day on farms and travelling longer distances to and from farms. Therefore, older siblings were crucial school partners in young children's school learning in the community. In acknowledging this, a teacher co-researcher explained that promoting beyond school-gate formal learning in this community was not an easy task due to the high illiteracy level. In the past, when we [teachers] give out homework, some students fail to complete them because there was no educated person in the family to assist them. So as a strategy we decided to form after-school learning groups to facilitate children's learning during weekends and school vacation. The students have been grouped based on the proximity of their homes. In each group, we have mixed students across grade levels so that the younger ones can benefit from the tutelage of their senior colleagues in the upper grades in their homework (Interview notes). Therefore, teachers in the study school utilised older children as partners and co-instructors to support after-school gate learning of the young children. Similarly, in studying child-rearing in African Croker(2007), Nsamenang, (2010) and Swadener, Kabiru, and Njenga (1997) identified the important role of older siblings in traditional caregiving, suggesting the need for teachers to identify, motivate and boost the capacity of older siblings to support the school learning of their younger ones at home.

Also, the crucial role of teachers as the number one role model for the children in the research community was discussed with the participating teachers. According to Johnson et al. (2009), teachers' ability to raise students learning aspirations is dependent on what students perceived of them, and teachers' level of expectations for their students' learning success. Participating teachers' views were elicited on how they leveraged the high confidence that their students had reposed in them as crucial role models. A participating teacher affirmed that children and families in this community see us [teachers] as role models, so we live exemplarily lives... we practice what we preach through that we can set high moral and behavioral standards for our students and guide them to succeed in school (Interview notes).

According to the teachers, through the setting, living and guiding students' high moral and behavioral standards, they were able to reduce the high incidences of school dropout, absenteeism and teenage pregnancies which were common issues curtailing students school progression in the community in the past. The participating teachers also demonstrated high expectations for their students learning. The teacher co-researchers trust in theirÍÍÍÍÍlll students' abilities to succeed in school and their students becoming prominent persons in the society and able to contribute their quota to the community and national development (Interview notes).

According to Comber (2021) and Daniels-Mayes (2016), successful teachers of marginalised students use responsive strategies to stretch their students' possibilities beyond the limitation of their immediate environment. Likewise, the participating teachers also deployed fair competition, meritocracy, teamwork, and reward system as strategies to nurture aspirational students and stretch and linked students' home skills with school skills. From my school observation and subsequent discussion with the teachers, the daily expectations and activities of the school including punctuality to school attendance, observing environmental and personal hygiene, sports and games, quizzes, art and culture [such as singing, dance, cultural play, and craft making competitions] among others were tracked and graded by the teachers based on a set standard (field notes). Thus, the school used diversified ways of measuring and rewarding students' learning success, transcending academic, artistic, cultural, collaborative, and personal and environmental hygiene competencies. Through that the teachers stretch students' cultural skills and infused them into global skills to aspire student learning success. Thus, the teachers debunked the deficit purview to rural education that limiting school success to only test scores. But they rather include learner culture competencies which resonate with indigenous children.

The participating students were further asked to document the challenges to their educational success. Financial problems, lack of digital learning infrastructure, teenage pregnancies, bad peer influence and child delinquency were noted by the students as the potential threats to their educational aspirations (Student assignment). The challenges to educational success in the school community was further elicited from teachers' perspectives. First, the participating teachers identified the problem of low education attainment level as a challenge to beyond school gate formal learning in the community. As a teacher co-researcher noted: "Parents are willing to help their children school learning, but they are incapacitated by their low educational level" (Interview notes). The low educational attainment in the community also meant that there were paucity of highly educated family members and professionals to serve as role models for the children. Apart from the school there were no government institution or private industry in the school community, making teachers the only professionals in the community, explaining why teachers were identified as the main role model for the children in the community. To bridge this gap, the participating teachers explained that they regularly invited professionals like doctors, nursing, engineer, and entrepreneurs from the district capital to dialogue with the students to inspire them. The school also organised regular community meetings in which invited social workers and professionals form the district capital educate the community on the dangers of child- related problems like child-labour, teenage pregnancies and child marriages which use to be endemic in the study community but had reduced significant through the school staff interventions.

Additionally, the teacher co-researchers identified poverty, poor infrastructure, low access to social services, low grant finding, poor rural housing, and long travelling distance as other factors limiting children's learning aspirations in the community. The teachers commented that in navigating the challenge of the long travelling distance on school attendance, for example, the school had adapted its timetable to the students disadvantaged by long travelling distance who used to miss the first two lessons due to long travelling distance. A teacher-co-researcher explained that some of their students walk about 10km to and from school under trying conditions, including enduring persistent rainfall and crossing swampy areas. So, we appreciate, celebrate, and encourage such children. Also, the school timetable has been made more friendly to such children. We start and close school one hour late compared to other schools in the urban areas to accommodate such students. (Interview notes).

In discussing how to improve the apparently low students' aspirations, and their limitation by their immediate environment, the participating teachers commented that the best strategies to stretch their students to see the vast opportunities within and beyond their immediate environment were

via digital and industrial visits, but for the lack of ICT infrastructure and grand funding in the school. The lack of ICT infrastructure and digital learning tools in the school and learners' home limited the opportunity for the school to form collaboration with other schools and industry across the world, limiting student's exposure to diverse professions and learning opportunities. In a post-field work discussion with a participating teacher, it was noted that children in the school community were not able to take advantage of the online learning platforms rolled out by the Ministry of Education, Ghana, during the COVID 19 pandemic due to the lack ICT infrastructure in the community (Field notes).

However, being resourceful and innovative teachers, they staff in the study school strive to give their students some level of digital learning experience through collaboration with the private sector. The participating teachers explained that through their collaborative effort, the school had lobbied the private ICT centre at the district capital for two days slots per academic term (13week) where they take the students to for practical ICT lessons. The teachers in the study school were thus found to be geographically responsive and innovative. As argue by Comber (2021), successfully teacher for low-income community do not use the low socio-economic background as lazy excuses to reproduce educational deficit, rather they adopt spatially rethinking to "reframe educational environments as spaces of care and belonging" and possibilities of transforming education (Comber, 2021, p.3).

The key findings from the data and analysis above identified:
- that the participating rural children's educational aspirations were moderate, less diversified, mostly shaped and limited by the immediate environment.
- the lack of ICT learning opportunities was one of the significant barriers to rural children courting higher and diversified learning aspirations;.
- a tension in the study rural communities' educational aspirations in meeting both local learning needs and preparing young people to participate in global economy evidenced by gap between schooling and rural livelihood;
- lack of local relevance in education outcomes in the research rural community was linked to colonial legacies in the Ghanaian education systems that erroneously associated TVET with low SES;
- identified the extended family system and its collective care, and teachers as crucial partners in children's learning success. Therefore, culturally responsive school cultures that promote collaborative relationship with families and communities, and facilitate the pedagogies of belonging, inclusiveness, and collectiveness can stretch students to aspire higher learning aspirations and;
- that successful teachers for children in rural remote or marginalised communities are geographically responsive, socio-culturally sensitive to their leaners background, debunk the deficit purview to rural education , build local cultural competences, think innovatively integrate local epistemologies into their pedagogy to affirm learners' cultural assets and stretch their students cultural assets and aspirations beyond the limitation of their local environment into new educational possibilities.

The participating students' inculcated career aspirations suggest that rural children's aspirations are mostly shaped by what they experienced and the people they come into contact within their immediate school, home, community, and local district environment. The students' documented career aspirations further point to a less exposure of the rural children to the vast global opportunities. The lack of exposure is linked to under-resourcing of schools in low-income communities. The poor ICT infrastructure, insufficient grant funding and logistic for industrial visits, as well as poor rural income to support family holiday visits limit rural children inculcated

aspirations. Evidence that rurality or remoteness impact on rural children's learning aspirations. This finding affirms Bourdieu's habitus conception that learners' home environment has the greatest influence on leaners' inculcated worldview, experiences, and aspirations (Bourdieu 1979, Mills, 2008, p.82).However, Mills (2008), Bourdieu analyst, transformationalist perspective of habitus asserted that the effect of habitus on the individual is not overly deterministic as the individual wields free-will that offer possibilism to recreate habitus knowledge. Therefore, teachers working in marginalised communities can be agents of transformation if they are socio-culturally sensitive, think spatially and denounce deficit purview to rural education (Comber, 2021; Guenther et al., 2014). The participating rural school staff were identified to be innovative and resourceful in forming partnerships beyond the school community to stretch students' possibilities beyond the bounds of their immediate habitus. As argued in culturally responsive scholarship, schools or teachers who stretch rural/indigenous students' learning aspirations beyond their community help these students to court higher aspirations and succeed in school (Daniels-Mayes, 2016; Guenther et al., 2017; Zipin et al., 2015).

The findings on the significant social others to rural children learning success affirms the crucial natural, traditional and the constitutional role of the family as the primary caregiver and educator of children. Family role is thus fundamental to providing the material, emotional and psychological support that drive children learning aspirations and success than any other group. The finding on the important role of the family in children's learning resonates with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) mesosystem (family) in his ecology of children development theorization as well as Bourdieu's primary habitus. Significantly, for peers and older siblings, and uncle and aunties to have also emerged part of the significant groups in children learning suggests the traditional role of extended family and its collective care systems are still crucial to children learning in rural communities in Ghana, which have still retained much of their indigenous status, amidst of social change and globalization. Instructively, for teachers to emerged as the number one role models for the students point to the central role of teachers in rural children's learning success, give the low educational attainment and the lack of professionals in rural communities. The positive image that teachers enjoy in rural communities is a crucial social capital for building trust-filled relationships to drive rural students' learning success. Worth noting was the fact that in the case study school, the participating teachers demonstrated consciousness of the confidence that their learners and the community have reposed in them by leading exemplarily lives to shape students' behavioral development for higher academic success. This resonated with Daniels-Mayes' (2016) observation that children's trust and belief in people supporting their learning are fundamental to learning success, especially in ethnic communities.

Conclusions

The study concludes that rural students acquired ethnographic imaginations of their communities greatly influence their learning aspirations more than national and global processes due to their insufficient exposure to global opportunities linked to poor ICT infrastructure and insufficient industrial visits. Therefore, successful teachers for children in low-income communities are socio-culturally sensitive to place and culture, forge collaborative cultures with learners' homes and thrive to stretch students' cultural assets and aspirations into global opportunities in order to raise productive citizens for sustainable futures. This study thus recommends further ethnographic research into how teachers build cultural competences to advance pedagogy of place-belongness and sustainability in rural communities. This study recommends that advancing geographically responsive aspirational schooling of success for marginalised rural children in the study locality, and elsewhere with a similar context would require:

- Educational policy that is place and culturally sensitive, and contextually relevant to local way epistemologies and learning needs

- The school curriculum must expose rural students to the opportunities and within and beyond their immediate environment through regular excursion or industrial study visit to stretch rural children learning aspirations beyond the limitation of their communities and families,
- Educational curriculum and pedagogy must link schooling to learners' lifeworlds and community sustainability,
- Decolonializing education toward relevant education with adequate focus on TVET, agriculture, and agri-business related education and jobs and arousing students' interest and aspirations in TVET related career pathways.
- Educator, school leaders and teachers must place learners and their homes at the center of their pedagogy;
- Educational authorities must staff rural schools with more female teachers, especially the early and lower grades, in tune with the traditional preference for female instructors by rural children;
- Teachers must enact collaborative school cultures of trust-filled relationships.
- Teachers must create democratic learning environment including avoiding corporal punishment and adopt learner-centered approaches to create generative learning environment to elicit better learners' confidence, attention, and participation in class;
- Teachers must reward children's learning achievement to arouse their motivation in learning and,
- Teachers must appreciate and beef up older siblings academic and instructional capacities to better support younger children's reading activity at home to make up for the low educational status of adults in margainalised rural communities and;
- Rural children must be given adequate exposure to opportunities beyond the bounds of their locality through innovative ICT learning, industrial visits, and excursions for them to court higher and diversified career aspirations.

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