

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO EXPLOITATION AND MODERN-DAY SLAVERY ON  
CONSTRUCTION SITES IN GHANA.**

By

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the thesis.

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## ABSTRACT

The construction industry is one of the easiest sectors prone to concealing acts of exploitation and modern-day slavery. Workers are most often than not exposed to exploitation and modern-day slavery on construction sites. The study aims to bring to attention and assess the issue of exploitation and modern-day slavery on construction sites in Ghana and the extent of exploitation of workers on construction sites. A literature review was undertaken and it delved into identification of the indicators of exploitation and modern-day slavery, the various causes of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites and the effects of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites. Questionnaires were used to collect data from construction practitioners: contractors, project managers, site engineers, other registered personnel, masons and labourers in the Kumasi and Accra metropolis. The data was analyzed and presented using descriptive statistics and one sample t-test. The study showed that, workers not being allowed to negotiate working conditions, working for excessively long hours over long periods, no allowance for workers to go on leave and no off days, refusal to pay social security and insure workers on site and workers not having access to medical care were ranked as indicators of exploitation and modern day slavery that are mostly experienced on construction sites in Ghana. The study concludes that exploitation and modern-day slavery is an issue worth more attention. The study recommends awareness of the issue of exploitation and modern-day slavery by all stakeholders.

**Keywords:** Exploitation, Modern-Day, Slavery, Construction, Sites, Indicators

## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENT</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY .....	1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	3
1.3 AIM.....	4
1.4 OBJECTIVES.....	4
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	4
1.6 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH.....	5
1.7 RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION .....	5
1.8 METHODOLOGY .....	6
1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH .....	6
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>8</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	8
2.2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW .....	8
2.2.1 Elucidation of Key Terms.....	8

2.2.1.1 Exploitation .....	8
2.2.1.2 Modern Slavery.....	11
2.2.1.3 The construction Industry.....	14
2.2.2 Exploitation & Modern Slavery on Construction Sites.....	15
2.2.3 Significant Indicators of Exploitation & Modern Slavery.....	17
2.2.4 Factors that influence the occurrence of exploitation and modern slavery .....	20
2.2.5. Effects of Exploitation & Modern Slavery .....	23
2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW.....	25
2.3.1 Case Study 1.....	25
2.3.2 Case Study 2.....	27
2.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER .....	28
<b>CHAPTER THREE.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>29</b>
3.1. INTRODUCTION .....	29
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN .....	29
3.3 DATA COLLECTION .....	30
3.3.1 Sources of Data .....	30
3.3.2 Population of the Study .....	31
3.3.3 Sample size and Sampling technique .....	31
3.3.4 Data Collection Method.....	32
3.3.5 Data Analysis .....	33
3.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER .....	33
<b>CHAPTER FOUR .....</b>	<b>34</b>

<b>ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS .....</b>	<b>34</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION .....	34
4.2 BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS .....	35
4.2.1 Years of Service .....	36
4.2.2 Education and occupational background .....	37
4.2.3 Migrant workers .....	38
4.3 INDICATORS OF EXPLOITATION AND MODERN SLAVERY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES .....	39
4.3.1 Descriptive Statistics .....	39
4.3.2 One Sample T-test .....	40
4.3.3 Discussion of Results.....	42
4.4 CAUSES OF EXPLOITATION AND MODERN SLAVERY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES.....	44
4.4.1 Descriptive Statistics .....	44
4.4.2 One Sample T-test .....	45
4.4.3 Discussion of results.....	47
4.5 EFFECTS OF EXPLOITATION AND MODERN SLAVERY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES.....	48
4.5.1 Descriptive Statistics .....	48
4.5.2 One Sample T-test .....	48
4.5.3 Discussion of results.....	49
4.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER .....	51
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>52</b>

<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....</b>	<b>52</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION .....	52
5.2 ATTAINMENT OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES .....	52
5.2.1 Objective 1: Indicators of Exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites	52
5.2.2 Objective 2: Causes of Exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites ....	53
5.2.3 Objective 3: Effects of Exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites ....	54
5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	55
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS .....	55
5.4.1 Practical Recommendations.....	56
5.4.2 Recommendations for future research.....	56
5.5 CONCLUSION .....	57
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>61</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Table showing statistics concerning victims of exploitation .....	11
Table 4.1 Educational level and occupation .....	37
Table 4.2 Mean and sample t-test of indicators of exploitation and modern slavery .....	41
Table 4.4 One sample t-test on causes of exploitation .....	46
Table 4.5 One sample t-test on effects of exploitation.....	49
Table 4.6 Extent of the impact of the effects of exploitation and modern slavery on the society .....	51

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Indicators of exploitation and modern slavery.....	19
Figure 2.2 Showing conditions for vulnerability .....	21
Figure 2.3 Showing risk factors in construction supply chain .....	22
Figure 2.4 Showing effects of modern slavery in construction supply chain .....	24
Figure 4.1 Types of firm.....	35
Figure 4.2 Number of years .....	36
Figure 4.3 Number of migrant workers.....	39
Figure 4.4 Degree of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites .....	44
Figure 4.5 effect of exploitation and modern slavery on construction site. ....	50

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to the Almighty God, KAAD, for making dreams possible, my entire family and to all my friends and loved ones.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The construction industry is one of the industries that is most susceptible to modern slavery and exploitation (Von Elgg, 2016). Geddes *et al.* (2013), explain that one reason for this vulnerability in the construction industry is the high demand for low skilled labour, manual labour and the low-waged work which is most likely to be subjected to forced labour. The construction industry is noted to employ about 7% of workforce globally, as according to the Building and Wood workers International.

Ghana is regarded as an emerging market in sub-Saharan Africa mainly because of the major contributions that the construction industry brings. (Laryea, 2010). Asamoah & Decardi-Nelson (2014) also asserts that the construction industry in Ghana contributes about 5%-10% of the Gross Domestic Product of the country and also employs over 10% of the population in Ghana. These statistics indicate that construction is quite dominant in the country such that Ofori, 2012, suggests that spasmodic development of the construction industry in the local areas would go a long way in alleviating poverty in the country. One characteristic of the construction industry is its complexity and the number of stakeholders involved. (Dadzie *et al.*, 2012). Asamoah & Decardi-Nelson (2014) note that even though the industry contributes to the country's economy, it is also however characterized by unprofessional practices. The industry suffers from lack of planning, disjointed stakeholders' cooperation and poor welfare and use of resources (human resources inclusive) (Twumasi-Ampofo *et al.*, 2013). As mentioned above, the construction industry employs many people most of which are low waged workers or manual workers. Most of these employees are also employed on temporary

bases. Institute of Human Rights and Business (2016) makes a strong point that workers who fill such positions are usually with low education and lack decent work options. Such individuals are highly susceptible to be involved with issues of modern slavery and exploitation in the construction industry.

Von Elgg (2016) proposes that the construction industry has two predominant factors with high risk of being involved in modern slavery. These elements as suggested by Von Elgg are the act of procuring building materials and products and the workforce. The construction industry though advanced in recent age still uses a large amount of human resources in the execution of its duties. The larger portion of these human resources employed are manual workers with poor work options and are likely to be subjected to forced labour (modern slavery). Crates (2018), emphasizes on the statement by the International Labour Organization (ILO) that states that more than 40 million people are in modern slavery worldwide with over 25 million of them being subjected in one way or the other to forced labour. He goes on further to note that mostly modern slavery is anticipated to be in developing countries, however exploitation is also being detected in the developed countries too, such that the construction industry ranks second to the sex industry as the sector most prone to exploitation in the European Union.

Forced labour is one of the main types of modern slavery and Von Elgg, (2016) stresses that due to the undisclosed nature of modern slavery and the complex nature of the supply chain in construction, figuring out and finding solutions to modern slavery is quite challenging. Neil Wilkins the Programme Manager for the Migrant Workers and Work with Dignity, Institute for Human Rights and Business, says “The construction/engineering sector faces many challenges in ensuring the rights of its workforce are respected. Increasing the knowledge

base, proper engagement with civil society organizations due diligence with their own operations and collaboration with others are key to delivery of a sustainable future for the industry.” Thus, it is quite crucial to create awareness on exploitation and modern slavery in the construction industry especially in Ghana where there is little awareness of this challenge that the construction industry is facing.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

“More than 45 million people are said to be entrapped in modern slavery across the world” as stated by Von Elgg (2016). He further states that their freedom is curtailed for the selfish or financial gain of their exploiter. Chris Blythe, the Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) makes mention of the fact that modern slavery is present in most industries including the construction industry. This agrees with the point made by Crates (2018) that due to the complex nature of the construction industry and most especially in its supply chain, which sometimes stretches over countries and continents, it provides the perfect breeding ground for exploitation and human abuses. Thus, there is the need to research into the area of modern slavery and exploitation, most especially in Ghana where there is a large use of labour in construction activities.

More so, the construction industry in Ghana is made up of both local and foreign companies where different people with different ethnic backgrounds and different educational levels and expertise who sometimes migrate from their homes to carry out construction activities. The International Labour Organization says that immigrant workers and native people are more susceptible to forced labour and exploitation.

Finally, it is agreed with Neil Wilkins who suggests that due to the challenges faced by the construction/engineering sector, the various stakeholders in construction should come

together and collaborate to combat these challenges. It would therefore be prudent to find out how these stakeholders can combat the problem of modern slavery and exploitation in Ghana.

### **1.3 AIM**

The aim of this research was to explore the situation of exploitation and modern slavery in the Ghanaian construction industry towards advancing knowledge of the subject in Ghana.

### **1.4 OBJECTIVES**

In order to achieve the purpose of this research the following objectives have were set;

1. To assess the significant indicators of modern-day slavery in the construction industry.
2. To establish the causes of exploitation and modern slavery in our construction industry (Ghana)
3. To determine the effects of exploitation and modern-day slavery in the construction industry.

### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This research sought to answer these questions in order to achieve the set aim and objectives:

1. What significant indicators of modern-day slavery and exploitation are identified in the construction industry?
2. What are the causes of identified cases of modern-day slavery and exploitation in the construction industry in Ghana?
3. What effects can be associated with situations of modern-day slavery and exploitation on construction sites?

## **1.6 SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH**

This research was focused in the Accra metropolis in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana and in the Kumasi metropolis in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. These two cities are the busiest and highly populated cities in the country. There are a lot of commercial activities which includes the construction industry that take place in these two major cities. Moreover, most foreign and local firms are situated in these large cities and thus have a good number of expatriates working in their construction firms and have projects with huge scopes and complexities. Huge projects have higher risks of encountering complexities and challenges and these situations have likelihood of igniting situations of modern slavery and exploitation.

The ILO are of the view that migrant workers have higher tendencies of experiencing modern-day slavery and exploitation. Accra and Kumasi are the most cosmopolitan cities in the Ghana. Hence, one can confidently suggest that construction firms in these cities would have several employees from different ethnic backgrounds.

## **1.7 RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION**

Chris Blythe, the Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Building rightly indicates that the construction industry is a high-risk industry (Crates, 2018). He also indicates that though the extent of modern slavery and exploitation affecting the construction industry is not fully understood, however a picture is emerging that is uncomfortable in the least. ILO and Walk Free Foundation (2017) indicate that the construction industry ranks second only to domestic work to the prevalence of forced labour. Forced labour is a form of modern slavery and this is cause for concern. Chris Blythe says that business models in the construction industry may not always lead directly to modern slavery, but they are creating an environment where it is easier for exploitation and criminality to thrive.

According to Kevin Hyland as cited by Crates (2016), ending modern slavery is a part of the Sustainable Development Goals signed by all United Nations (UN) states of which Ghana is a part of. It is therefore essential to create awareness of this challenge that exists in the construction industry in Ghana and encourage suggestions as to how to curb the issue of modern slavery and exploitation. There is the need to create more awareness of the situation of exploitation and modern slavery in the construction industry most especially when goal number eight of the Sustainable Development Goals is geared at improving work conditions and eliminating all forms of exploitation and modern slavery in every work environment.

This research would also provide literature on this topic as there is currently very little literature pertaining to this issue particularly in the case of the construction industry in Ghana.

## **1.8 METHODOLOGY**

This research used a quantitative method approach in deriving its data. Pertinent variables obtained from the literature review were used in constructing close-ended questionnaires and these questionnaires were administered to construction employees who availed themselves for this research.

The researcher used IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 and Microsoft Excel 2016 to compute and analyze the primary data acquired on the field. The statistical tools that were used include sample t-test and standard deviation for the quantitative data retrieved from the field.

## **1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH**

This research was grouped in five different chapters. CHAPTER ONE dealt with the introduction of the research providing information on the aim and objectives of the research.

It also brought to light the problem statement, that is, the present problem which needs to be solved as such this research was being conducted. CHAPTER TWO is the part of this research where pertinent literature that relates to the topic of this research was reviewed. Different views from different authors were obtained and discussed while trying to compare the different ideas of the different authors on the subject matter. CHAPTER THREE gave a detailed description of the choice of research methodology by the researcher. It included information on the population, sample size, sampling technique used and tools to be used in the analysis of the data obtained. CHAPTER FOUR is the Analysis of results from the field. The findings were discussed in accordance with the set objectives of the research. CHAPTER FIVE which is the final chapter of this research looked at deducing conclusions from the results that were analyzed in Chapter four. Recommendations were also made for future research pertaining to and around this topic.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Literature review as according to the views of Denney and Tewksbury (2012) is a comprehensive overview of prior research regarding a specific topic. Ridley (2008) is also of the opinion that literature review is where one identifies theories and previous research that may have influenced the choice of the research topic and the methodology that one wants to adapt. This chapter of this research seeks to identify theories that are synonymous to the topic of this research. This chapter has however been grouped into two parts; the theoretical review and the empirical review. The theoretical review looks at theories and findings of other research projects with regards to this topic and the empirical review section looks at case studies of situations that employees on construction sites were exploited or subjected to modern slavery basically in other countries.

#### **2.2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

##### **2.2.1 Elucidation of Key Terms**

Denney and Tewksbury (2012) argue that knowledge on different topics most especially scientific knowledge accumulates rapidly and keeping up with this might be a challenge to most readers. Thus, it is very essential to give brief explanations in and around the keywords of the research topic. The keywords of this research topic have therefore been discussed below to give readers a brief understanding of the topic under discussion or research.

##### **2.2.1.1 Exploitation**

Exploitation according to the Cambridge English dictionary is the act of using someone or something unfairly to benefit from it. Tilly (2000) describes exploitation as “An inequality-

generating mechanism which occurs when persons who control a resource enlist the help or effort of others in production of value by means of that resource but exclude others from the full value added by their efforts.” Many others agree with the definition Tilly brings aboard and one of such is the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2013) that says that exploitation is tantamount to taking unfair advantage of another individual in a work situation. However, the measure of unfairness must be established against a benchmark in accordance with the law. Crates (2018) is however of the view that, there is no one particular, clear and legal definition for exploitation but he does state that exploitation includes forced labor, servitude and slavery as according to the United Nations and the European Conventions. Exploitation is prevalent in our society such that Crates (2018) makes a statement that varying levels of exploitation have been found in both private and public sectors yet not much information of exploitation in the construction industry can be found. He further identifies the causes to be switching of forced labor between sections or locations to avoid detection and the fear that most victims have. Chris Blythe as cited by Crates (2016) speaks of the fact that exploitation is not only prevalent in developing countries and it would be wrong to look at it that way. He goes on to say that exploitation can be found in regions that pride themselves on superior human rights record including Europe and North America. According to International Labor Organization, nearly 21 million people are involved in forced labor world, yet Interpol suggests that only 5-10% of these cases are reported.

The construction industry according to Crates (2018) has been ranked by the European Union as the second most prone sector to exploitation. Jureidini (2014) holds the view that due to the complicated nature of the supply chain of the construction industry which sometimes stretches over continents and countries, it makes it a perfect breeding ground for exploitation and human

rights abuse. Von Elgg (2016) is noted to have cited the Labor Inspector of France in his work where he says that the construction industry is the most susceptible to exploitation due to a lot of subcontracting elements in it. At the end of the chain, it is the workers who are likely to be exploited because each subcontractor would like to earn as much money as possible. In a bid to achieve this, they may push their workers to work harder and produce more value than is required of them and they are most at times not paid for their extra effort.

There are a number of types of exploitation which includes; forced labour, domestic servitude, crime, drug trade, benefit fraud, organ harvesting, forced marriage and sexual exploitation. (UKHTC, 2016). However, this research focuses much more on forced labour. The table below provides information on types of exploitation and the number of people affected as cited by Von Elgg (2016).

**Table 2.1 Table showing statistics concerning victims of exploitation**

<b>EXPLOITATION TYPE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>TRANSSEXUAL</b>	<b>UNKNOWN</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Adult – domestic servitude	292	61	0	0	353
Adult – labour exploitation	161	734	0	0	895
Adult – organ harvesting	1	1	0	0	2
Adult – sexual exploitation	813	48	2	0	863
Adult – unknown exploitation	98	73	0	0	171
Subtotal (adults)	1365	917	2	0	2284
Minor – domestic servitude	44	25	0	0	69
Minor – labour exploitation	21	267	0	0	288
Minor – organ harvesting	0	3	0	0	3
Minor – sexual exploitation	184	33	0	0	217
Minor – unknown exploitation type	130	273	0	2	405
Subtotal (minors)	379	601	0	2	982
Total	1744	1518	2	2	3266

**Source: Von Elgg (2016)**

From the table, it can be noted that male adults as well as minor adults have higher numbers as being exploited in relation to forced labour. Thus, many of these males are sometimes involved in male dominated industries such as the construction industry.

### **2.2.1.2 Modern Slavery**

Modern Slavery as stated by Crates (2018) “is the most extreme example of abuses that thrive in fragmented supply chains and aggressive price-driven business models.” Von Elgg (2016)

also speaks of modern slavery being a general terminology that branches out into various mini terminologies used by different people to refer to slavery, human trafficking, forced and bonded labour, and even the worst forms of child labour. Von Elgg (2016) goes on to cite in his work the definition of modern slavery by the 2016 Global Slavery Index which refers to it as situations of exploitations where affected persons cannot leave due to menace, foul play and abuse of power or deception. Thus, one can say modern slavery is taking undue advantage of people mostly against their wish.

Modern slavery is a largely hidden crime (Von Elgg, 2016). This is because data on it is quite scarce and even the process of gathering the data is difficult. The International Labour Organization as cited by Crates (2018) estimates that more than 40 million people are involved in modern slavery worldwide. Out of this 40 million, 25 million of them are estimated to be subjected to forced labour. ILO (2017) has also stated that in the past five years over 85 million people have experienced some form of modern slavery from a few days to sometimes over 5 years. The Walk Free Foundation in citing the Global Slavery Index (2016) stated that there are 45.8 million people engaged in modern slavery globally.

Chung (2015) is also of the view that modern slavery is experiencing a significant shift in the sense that a powerful and new actor has emerged in the global anti-slavery policy making area. Thus, Mate et al., (2018) indicate that there are about 30 million people entrapped in slavery with an estimated number of about 1.1 million in 37 countries including Europe with the largest numbers in The Russian Federation, Ukraine & Poland. A greater number of these unidentified victims are entrapped in forced labour which includes enslavement outside the sex industry, construction, mines, agriculture, domestic, hospitality and other sectors. Mate et al., (2018) goes on to cite the definition of Forced labour as according to the United Nations.in

2008 which says that it is a type of slavery where victims are forced to work for long hours by little or no pay conditions under verbal or physical threats of violence. ILO (1930) also defines forced labour as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered themselves voluntarily. Crates (2016) such people may be held captive and could suffer threats of violence against themselves and their families.

Modern slavery is also a lucrative business for those involved such that ILO (2014) stated that “forced labour in private economy generates US\$150 billion in illegal profits annually. ILO (2014) continues by saying that out of the US\$150 billion generated, the construction industry, mining and utilities industry accounts for US\$34 billion representing 23% annually. The European Union (2015) came out with a research report that the construction industry comes second on a list of economic sectors in the European Union that are most prone to labour exploitation. This was due to the reason that 9 out of 21 countries that participated in the research ranked the construction industry as having the highest risk of labour exploitation.

Many at times when modern slavery is spoken of, people assume the extreme cases such as kidnapping, human trafficking, and the exploitation of illegal migrants and children. However just as Crates (2016) describes it, these abuses of human rights should not distract us from additional uncomfortable truth. People are lured to enter industries such as the construction industry through seemingly legitimate routes and are quickly trapped into situations of bonded or forced labour. Crates (2016) is of the view that lack of transparency and the reluctance of the victims to complain ensures that this seemingly infinite supply of labour becomes assimilated into the international supply chains. He concludes by saying that modern slavery hides under the cloak of respectability.

### **2.2.1.3 The construction Industry**

The construction industry is a key economic sector in every country (Hillebrandt, 2000). This is because as stated by Ofori (2012), the construction industry contributes to national economic growth by providing buildings for producing goods and to shelter people. He continues to say that apart from the physical infrastructure that the construction industry provides, it also forms the arteries for the facilitation of productive activity by enabling goods and services to be distributed within and outside the country. Lopes (2012) also agrees on the importance of the construction industry by stating that the construction industry contributes about 5 to 10% of the gross domestic product (GDP), employs up to 10% of the working population, and is responsible for about half of the gross fixed capital formation.

The construction industry is also noted to have many complex linkages to other sectors of the economy (Ofori 2012). For instance, the construction industry makes use of goods produced by the manufacturing industry and these goods are also supplied by the commerce and services sector. Another analogy is the link between the construction industry and the financial institutions. The construction industry most at times needs the financial institutions to serve as guarantors and provide financial backing. The construction industry is also linked to the legal, accountancy and other relevant professionals.

Ofori (1990) indicates that the nation's stock of constructed items forms a large percentage of its savings. The construction industry contributes between 45-60% of the Gross Domestic Fixed Capital Formation. Thus, it is quite appropriate that all built items which represents the nations wealth be done with adequate quality to last for a long time.

Most Important to note in this research is also the fact that the construction industry is a labour-intensity industry as stated by Ofori (2012). This means that the construction industry makes

use many people in its activities. Von Elgg (2016) makes mention of the construction industry employing a huge percentage of labour that is low waged, manual and low-skilled. Geddes et al., (2013) states that the construction industry hiring a large number of low skilled manual workers makes it more prone to labour exploitation. The construction industry is also large, complex and geographically spread out. The industry is diverse with many factors influencing its performance, well-being and prospects at many levels (Ofori, 2012). Hence, Von Elgg (2016) argues that the complexity of the construction industry in the discharge of their duties and the supply chains makes the construction industry a sector liable to modern slavery.

### **2.2.2 Exploitation & Modern Slavery on Construction Sites**

The construction industry as according to Von Elgg (2016), employs 7% of the global workforce. Chris Blythe as cited by Crates (2018) indicates that the construction industry is a high-risk industry and that it has similar challenges as the agriculture, food production and hospitality industry where there is a widespread use of agency workers, a heavy reliance on migrant labour and a large portion of the workforce close to minimum wage. Hence, the construction industry is more prone to situations of labour exploitation and modern slavery. Geddes et al., (2013) confirms this as he states “the construction industry is one of the sectors most susceptible to modern slavery. This is because it has a huge demand for unskilled and manual workers. Workers that fill such positions are usually poorly educated and lack decent work options (Institute of Human Rights and Abuses, 2015). Another reason for the construction industry being vulnerable to modern slavery is complex supply chains of the industry most times stretching over continents and the many stakeholders that are present in the industry (Von Elgg, 2016). Thus, Kevin Hyland as cited by Crates (2018) states “The

construction sector must also remember that the risk of modern slavery is not solely within its own labour force but also within the supply chains for its raw materials and produce.”

Crates (2018) makes a strong point when he speaks of modern slavery in the construction industry not being looked at in isolation but also in the context of exploitative practices such as health and safety breaches, banning of unions, blacklisting, illegal wage deductions, excessive working hours, withholding of passports, bullying, intimidation and squalid accommodation.”

The construction industry, Von Elgg (2016) reckons, has two elements that makes it more vulnerable to exploitation and modern slavery situations. These are labour and the procurement of goods and services. Crates (2018) also makes mention of a number of factors that puts the construction industry at a risk of exploitation. The factors he mentions are related to the elements that Von Elgg (2016) states. One factor he states is the business models of the construction industry. Crates (2018) is of the view that the business models of the construction industry are mainly based on outsourcing. The other factors he makes mention of are reliance on labour agencies, high percentage of migrant workers, very low margins, a large proportion of the work force close to minimum wage and lack of labour standards enforcement in the sector.

In the construction industry, the main contractor often needs the services of labour providers. Though using agencies to provide labour can be effective in respect of cost and time for both the main contractor and the client, are the rights of the people always part of the decision-making? Von Elgg (2016) explains that for larger construction projects where the main contractor sublets different parts of the project, a lot of subcontracting is done and labour providers are heavily depended on. This creates a situation where workers from other

countries are confronted with several ambiguous legal issues involving labour providers and subcontracted contractors. This makes it as the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights would put it “quite difficult for them know and claim their rights and whom to direct their concerns and worries. Thus, the workers have little knowledge as to whether they are being treated right in respect to the contract signed and thus are not able to lay claims for payments, which places them at the mercy of their employers. Crates (2018) also adds on by stating that in the construction industry, unscrupulous labour agencies are forcing many workers into factitious self employment where workers are not receiving full wages, their rights are being eroded and working conditions undermined. An example of this situation is stated in the 2015 Trafficking in Persons report by the US State Department. The report speaks of a man who was approached by an agent who promised to find him work in the United Kingdom and even offered to lend the man money for his travels which he could pay back when he started working. This man accepted and travelled with the agent alongside seven others like himself. It is reported that on arrival in the United Kingdom, the agent took all their identification documents and handed them to their bosses. The boss of this man then subjected him to 20 hours of construction and factory work every day with just one meal and he was never paid. He eventually fled seeking help from an NGO that helped him back to his home country, Czech Republic. This is just but one of the few cases that are ever reported or known. Many others are suffering in the construction industry on situations of forced labour either as migrants or even in their home country.

### **2.2.3 Significant Indicators of Exploitation & Modern Slavery**

Crates (2018) states that people are usually questioning whether a situation is classified as modern slavery. The answer is not always a binary yes or no. Hence, the Joseph Rowntree

Foundation (2014) argues that “modern slavery is a spectrum that stretches from decent work to minimal legal compliance, then substandard, unscrupulous, unethical, non-compliant and illegal practices” Crates (2018) explains that line between legitimate work and slavery is often continuous in the sense that workers may not be technically in slavery all the time and the extent of exploitation may vary in every situation. Crates (2018) even cites Andrew Crane, a professor at the University of Bath who says that the situation of modern slavery is informal and varies from one industry to the other. He goes on to say that sometimes people suffer minor exploitation and sometimes it escalates to a more forced labour situation, but it can change from week to week. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2014) indicate that a lot of researchers have detected a range of employer behaviors that engineer vulnerability in the workforce. These include punishing workers for refusing to work overtime, disciplining workers through dismissal or threatening to do so, setting unrealistic production targets and even retaining wages for ‘safe keeping’. The Guardian (2016) speaks of it as people being scared to lose their job at any moment under such a system.



**Figure 2.1 Indicators of exploitation and modern slavery**

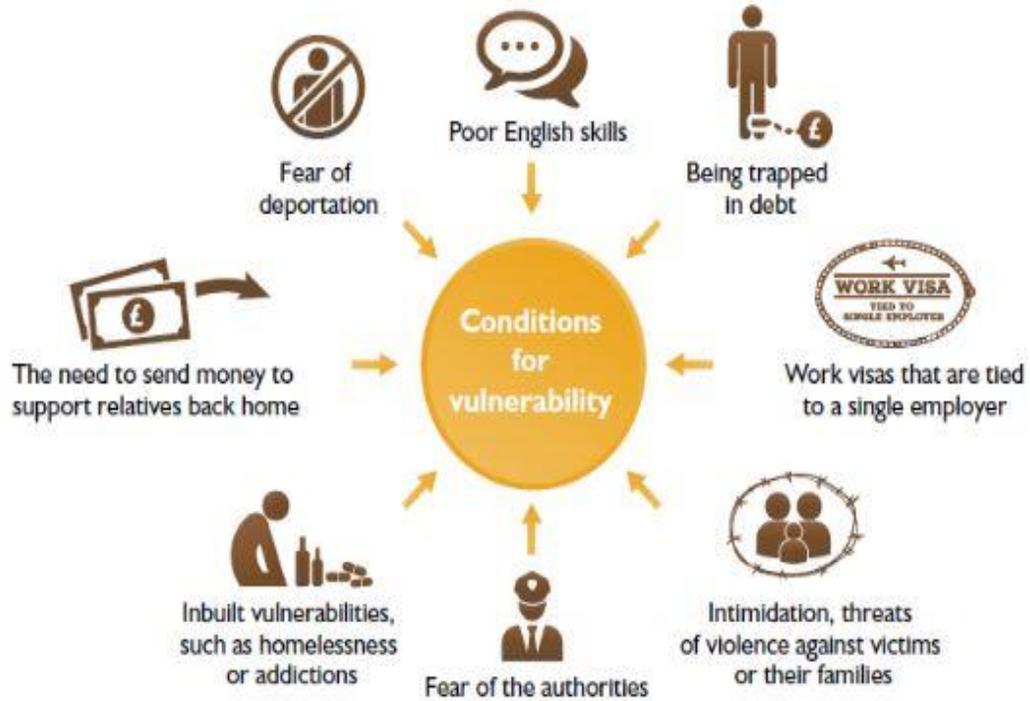
Source: Crates (2018)

The above figure makes mention of some indicators of modern slavery and exploitation on construction sites as cited by Crates (2018). There are also some practices that Von Elgg (2016) considers to be indicators of the presence of exploitation and modern slavery in the construction industry. These practices include lack of social security payments, very limited or no leave days, limited or socializing with others outside the workplace, control of worker's freedom and debt bondage. All these situations infringe on the rights on the workers. Crates (2016) also makes mention of lack of presentation as one of the indicators of exploitation on construction sites. This is because some workers are not permitted to form work unions and

thus do not appropriate platforms to channel their grievances to the main contractor and the client. Unfair contract is another indicator. This is where contracts are signed in a language the employee is not conversant with and thus, does not fully understand the conditions of the contract (Crates, 2016). These practices are on-going in the construction industry and thus makes it highly susceptible to the risk of exploitation and modern slavery.

#### **2.2.4 Factors that influence the occurrence of exploitation and modern slavery**

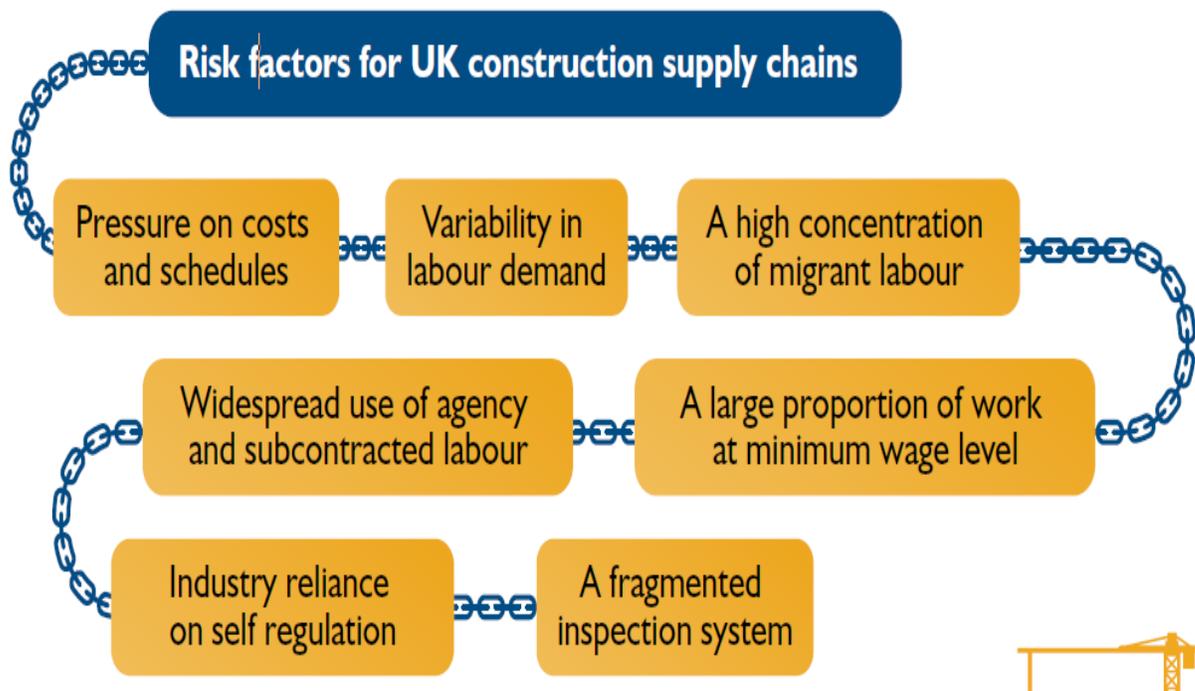
The construction industry provides the perfect breeding ground for exploitation and human right abuses because of its complex supply chains which stretches over countries and continents (Crates, 2016). Modern slavery is a complex and hidden crime that feeds on vulnerable people and a voracious demand for cheap labour. Within the construction industry, slavery thrives in conditions of greed, opportunism, poor leadership and ignorance (Crates, 2018). One thing that the victims of modern slavery have in common Crates (2018) continues is, vulnerability. They were vulnerable or became vulnerable at some point of their recruitment or employment. Some of the factors that cause vulnerability among workers have been represented graphically below.



**Figure 2.2 Showing conditions for vulnerability**

**Source: Crates (2018)**

Chartered Institute of Builders (2009) remarks “constant turnover of staff, a mobile workforce and the temporary nature of projects” is another cause for the high occurrence of modern slavery in the construction industry. The figure below shows some of the causes that Crates (2018) identifies as causes or risk factors of modern slavery in the construction industry’s supply chain in the United Kingdom. However, these factors can be said to true for the industry globally and not just the United Kingdom.



**Figure 2.3 Showing risk factors in construction supply chain**

**Source: Crates (2018)**

All the factors indicated above have one way or the other created a path or loop hole where exploitation can easily go on. They are also interlinked, and one factor leads to another.

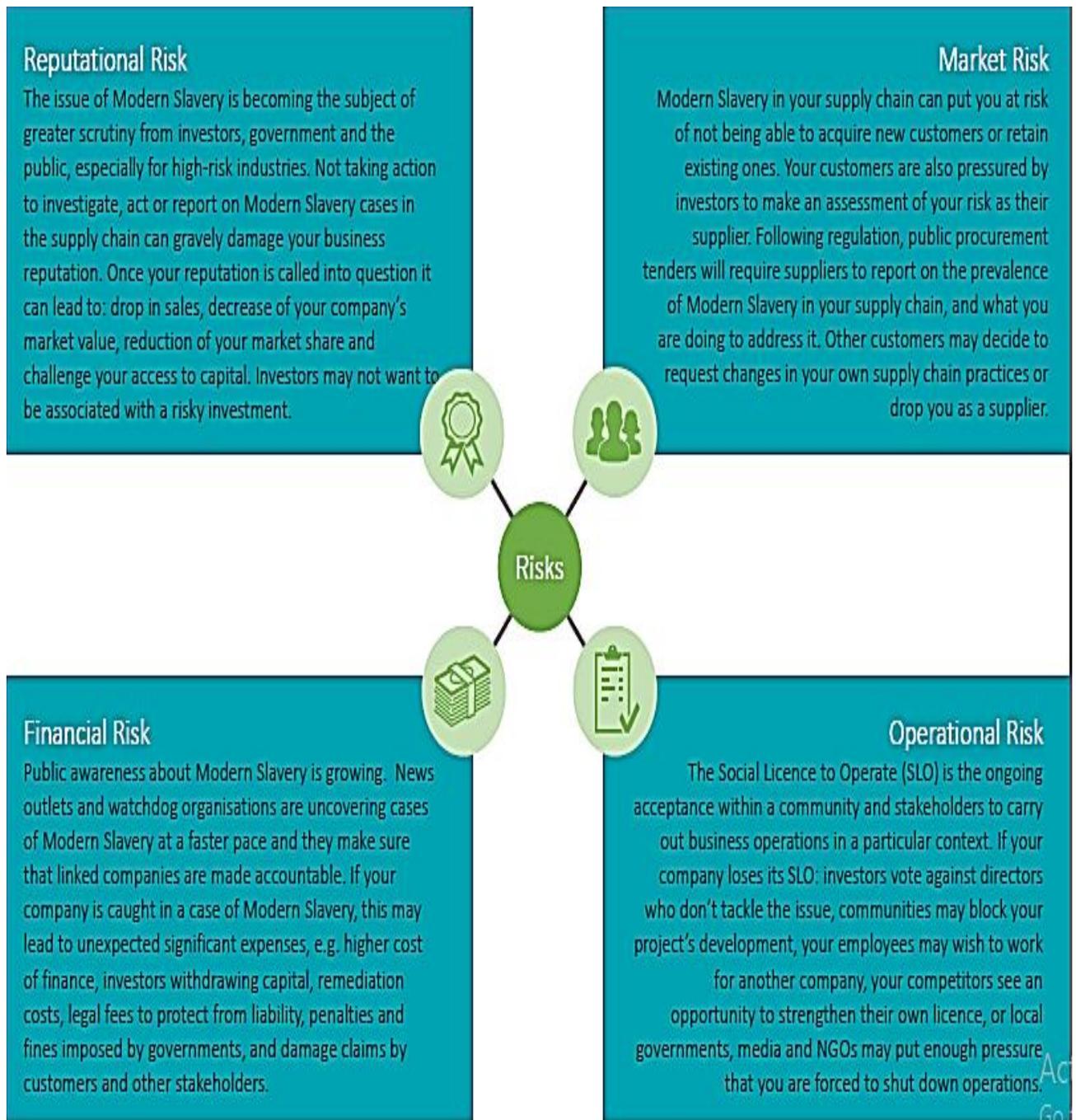
The Construction Industry Training Board and Experian (2017) indicate that the industry is currently experiencing an ongoing skills crisis and thus, forecasts that the industry would need to recruit 35,740 new workers between 2017 and 2021 for just the United Kingdom. This high demand for labour would lead to a high concentration of migrant labour and a widespread use of agency and subcontracted labour. Many of these recruits would be given large proportions of work yet at a minimum wage level. The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (2013) has indicated that many major contractors rely heavily on outsourcing and using tiers of subcontractors to reduce their financial risk. The construction industry is 99.9% made up of SME's. Due to the large numbers of SME's in the industry there is intense competition

which leads to very low-cost tendering such that little or no profit is gained. At the end of this rope it is the labourers who are going to be used to work for long hours and with minimum wage.

### **2.2.5. Effects of Exploitation & Modern Slavery**

The United Nations' Division for Sustainable Development (UN-DESA) speaks of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that follows and expands the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Under these goals which were set in 2015, there is one goal, goal 8.7 that is geared at eradicating forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking. This therefore speaks volumes as to the adverse effect the situation of modern slavery and exploitation is causing not only to the construction industry but to the global society. As Ghaemi (2006) would put it "the extent of death and injury of migrant construction workers is one of the most troubling, aspects of the construction sector." Modern slavery leads to many deaths as workers are sometimes faced with inhumane conditions with little or no regard to their health. Another effect of this canker in the construction industry is the lack of sound mind of workers to work as they live out their day in fear of dismissal or of violence. This not only affects the health of the worker, but the quality of production required of him is diminished. Thus, the construction industry loses out on quality which is one of the most important pillars of the construction industry. Modern slavery and exploitation also create low standards of living for workers which not only affects them but also affects the economy of the countries they reside in.

The Supply Chain Sustainability School (2018) summarizes the effects that exploitation and modern slavery have on construction companies in the figure represented below.



**Figure 2.4 Showing effects of modern slavery in construction supply chain**

Source: (The Supply Chain Sustainability School, 2018)

## **2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

This section of the literature review looks at reports from construction projects across the globe that situations of exploitation and modern slavery has been witnessed.

### **2.3.1 Case Study 1**

This case is from a report by Amnesty International (2016). The report was titled “The Ugly Side of the Beautiful game: Exploitation of Migrant Workers on a Qatar World Cup Site.”

The report speaks of the Kafala system in Qatar that prohibits migrant workers from leaving or changing jobs without their employers’ consent. It therefore puts the workers in danger of being abused. Thus, Amnesty International (2016) comments “The sponsorship system gives employers significant

power over migrant workers they employ. It is therefore extremely difficult for migrant workers to leave exploitative situations as the individual responsible for the labour abuse is also the individual who must give the worker permission to leave Qatar.” The report contains the interview of 234 workers who all showed signs of distress because of the treatments meted out to them. The following are some of the facts that were gathered from the report.

1. Although the country of Qatar forbids contractors from engaging with recruitment agencies that are involved in unethical practices such as charging processing fees from workers, all 234 workers interviewed confirmed that they were forced to pay charges ranging from US\$500- US\$4300 to obtain work in Qatar. All but six of the workers interviewed also complained that they were deceived as to the actual salary they were to receive and the level of work they were to do. They confirmed that their salaries were lower than their original contract and in some cases the salary was half of what was agreed in the original contract.

2. Amnesty International also reports that delayed payment, non-payment of wages or the threat of deportation were used as threats against workers that were already in financially vulnerable situations. The report makes mention of the fact that some of the workers on the Khalifa Stadium faced delay in payments for close to ten months. One interviewee was noted to have said “I just want the money still owed to me and then I want to return home...My manager says he will help me to get a [exit] permit [to leave the country]. He said the company will pay for my air fare and give me US\$25 nothing more...I did not complain to any officials. Who would I speak to? I am too scared the company will punish me if I did.”
3. Amnesty International then suggested that the Qatar authorities reform the sponsorship system such that workers would be enabled to retain their passports, change employment or leave the country without having to get the consent of their employer. The report also criticized the Supreme Committee for focusing so much on the major contractor and as a result neglecting the activities of the subcontractors. Thus, Amnesty International states that ““...Some of the most egregious abuses that Amnesty International documented on Khalifa Stadium were perpetrated by labour supply companies that the Supreme Committee did not even know were involved with the project.
4. The report therefore recommended to the Supreme Committee that the main contractor must identify all workers on the World Cup site and the companies they work for and make the information publicly available. The report also recommended that independent monitoring of the World Cup project be done so as to penalize companies that breached the standards.

### **2.3.2 Case Study 2**

This is also a report Global Construction Review (2015). The report was about one of the largest construction companies in Latin America that has been convicted treating Brazilian workers as slaves on a construction site in Angola. The following were some of the issues that were reported by the Global Construction Review.

1. This company in question is one of the biggest private employers in Brazil and had been in existence since 1984 with over 2000 workers.
2. The issue was first raised when series of complaints were filed against the company by citizens of a little town in Brazil. Many of their townfolk were recruited as workers for this company. This led to a report by International Oil Daily that stated that over 500 Brazilian workers were deceptively lured into jobs in Angola. Contrary to what they were told, they were made to work on the construction of an industrial plant.
3. The report contains statements that the workers were made to go through unfavourable and inhumane conditions and their freedom was denied them. It is reported that the company did not provide them with proper visas and also withheld their passports. They were also not allowed to leave their unsanitary camps even on rest days as they were blocked.
4. The Brazilian labour court that presided over the case ruled that even though many of the abuses were carried out by third parties, the company was responsible for the project and also benefited from the abuses. Hence the company was charged to pay damages amounting US\$13 million.

## **2.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

This chapter looked critically at literature relating to the topic under research. A number of similar cases were also discussed, cases that had people had experienced some form of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites. The key words in the topic under discussion were also adequately discussed in relation to the literature that was used to give better understanding to the issue being discussed.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter gives information on the methods of research employed in this study. It also entails the types of data used and also the mode of collecting the data including the population and sample size adapted for this research. In a nut shell, this chapter outlines the strategies and methods used in obtaining data for this research.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Akhtar (2016) discusses a research design as “the structure of the research” almost like the “glue” that holds the pieces of the research together. One can therefore say that it is the plan proposed for the research work. Manheim (1977) indicates that “research design not only anticipates and specifies the seemingly countless decisions connected with carrying out data collection, processing and analysis but also presents a logical basis for these decisions.”

There are four main types of research design and these include Exploratory research, Descriptive research, Explanatory research and Experimental research. This study made use of the descriptive research. Descriptive research as defined by Akhtar (2016) is also referred to as statistical research because it explains or describes phenomena as they exist. Kothari (2004) further explains that the main purpose of descriptive research is to describe the state of affairs as they exist as present. Descriptive research can be used to measure frequencies of something or the preferences of people and sometimes the causes of something even though there is no control over the variables. This study employed the descriptive research because the researcher is seeking to find or determine the level of modern slavery and exploitation occurring on construction sites. Thus, just as Akhtar (2016), makes mention of descriptive

research being used to obtain information or characteristic of a particular issue like community group or people, so the researcher in seeking to study or gather information on employees on construction sites in relation to exploitation and modern slavery, adapted the descriptive type of research.

The research strategy is very crucial in the research design. Here, research strategy can be defined as the way in which the research objectives can be questioned (Naoum, 2007). There are two types of research strategies namely, ‘Quantitative research’ and ‘Qualitative research’. Quantitative research is ‘objective’ in nature. It is defined as an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a hypothesis or a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the hypothesis or the theory hold true (Creswell, 1994). This type of research is subjective and inductive and is generalized through theoretical abstraction. Quantitative research is a research strategy that emphasizes measurement and quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2004). It is data and hence not abstract. Also, this type of research has its progress to be hypothesis and is generalized by statistical probability. This type of research is deductive and objective.

This research employed the use of a quantitative research.

### **3.3 DATA COLLECTION**

#### **3.3.1 Sources of Data**

There are two main sources of data that was used in this study. These are primary data and secondary data. Primary data is a type of data that is gathered from the original source (Bernard, *et al.*, 1986). This kind of data has not been published yet and has not been changed or altered. Primary data is empirical. It not being altered, makes its validity greater than that

of secondary data. A survey is made through observations, administration of well-structured questionnaires to the targeted sources and possibly a number of interviews to obtain primary data. Primary data was majorly used in this study and the data was achieved via administration of well-structured questionnaires to available and willing respondents on construction sites. Secondary sources of data are the analyzed data that which the research has to draw on. This data has already been collected and is readily available from other sources. This may be obtained from literature (books, journals, etc.), industry surveys, among others. This study also made use of secondary data from authors revolving around the topic of this research.

### **3.3.2 Population of the Study**

Rea and Parker (1997) considers a list of possible members comprising the unit of analysis as the population. Population could also be said to be the larger general group from which the researcher draws a sample. The study is into the issue of exploitation and modern-day slavery on construction sites hence construction practitioners: contractors, project managers, site engineers, other registered personnel, labourers, and others were involved in this study. The population under study covers the above stated respondents in the Kumasi and Accra metropolis. The overview of the target population was construction employees in the Kumasi and Accra metropolis. The population was unknown at the time of the study.

### **3.3.3 Sample size and Sampling technique**

According to Naoum (2007), the term ‘sample’ means a specimen or part of a whole (population) which is drawn to show what the rest is like. There are basically two main categories of sampling techniques: probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

In probability sampling, there is random selection, that is setting up a system to ensure that different units in your population have equal probabilities of being chosen. Non-probability

sampling on the other hand does not have different units of the population having equal chances of being selected. Its primary focus is to collect specific cases, events or actions that can clarify and deepen understanding. It also focuses on how the sample or small collection of cases, units or activities illuminates social life.

The non-probability sampling technique was employed for the purpose of the study. Purposive sampling was the type of non-probability sampling technique used. The non-probability sampling technique was the preferred option considering the fact that there is very little knowledge of the study and the study is aimed at bringing into the light the issue of exploitation and modern-day slavery on construction sites. The sample size was hundred (100). Convenience sampling was also employed. This study is a sensitive one and not many people may be willing to be a part of it, so a total of 100 questionnaires were sent out to 6 different sites for those willing to be a part of the study.

#### **3.3.4 Data Collection Method**

Structured closed-ended questionnaires were administered for the survey. See sample questionnaire in appendix. Questionnaires were used in the study because they enhance collection of a relatively large amount of data within a somewhat short period. These questionnaires consisted of questions pertaining to the subject matter. Also, considering the fact that some of the personnel have lower levels of education, comprehension of the questionnaires was rather difficult for them and they were adequately aided in filling the questionnaires.

Other respondents who had challenges filling the questionnaire were guided through adequately.

### **3.3.5 Data Analysis**

The data collected from the questionnaire from respondents was aggregated to give a large unit for the analysis. The data collected was analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22 software. The findings from the analysis was presented in a form of numbers or series of numbers, charts and tables with the help of Microsoft Excel 2016. The statistical tools that were adopted were Descriptive Statistics (specifically frequencies, mean score ranking and standard deviation) and Compare Means (specifically one sample t-test). Tables, pie charts, and bar charts aided the presentation of the results.

### **3.4 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

This chapter highlights the methodology carried out in the study. It reveals how the data was collected, how it is intended to be analyzed, the type of method used in the research, the population, sample size and the technique employed in sampling. It also states the various reasons for the choices of type of research, sample technique and for of data analysis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

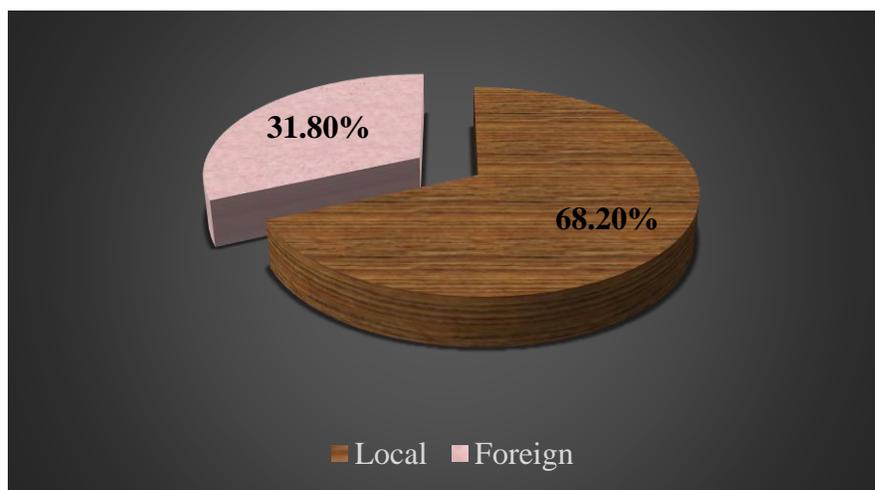
#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of primary data that were obtained from the field upon administering and reception of questionnaires. The data collected provided information which helped the researcher achieve the aim of the study. With the analysis, the software that was used for data entry and analysis was IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 22 and Microsoft Excel 2016. The IBM SPSS 22 software was used to analyze data obtained while Microsoft Excel 2016 was used to illustrate the data in a more presentable style (presentation of the data in tables and figures). The statistical tools that were adopted were Descriptive Statistics (specifically frequencies, mean score ranking and standard deviation) and Compare Means (specifically one sample t-test). Tables, pie charts, and bar charts aided the presentation of the results.

Discussions are based on the data obtained under the various objectives and is aimed at bringing to attention and assessing the issue of exploitation and modern day slavery on construction sites. The chapter is presented in six sections: Section one (1) introduces the chapter; section two (2) entails the background of the respondents, section three (3) discusses the indicators of exploitation and modern day slavery, section four (4) addresses the possible causes of exploitation and modern day slavery, section five (5) discusses the likely effects of exploitation and modern day slavery and section six (6) summarizes the entire chapter.

## 4.2 BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

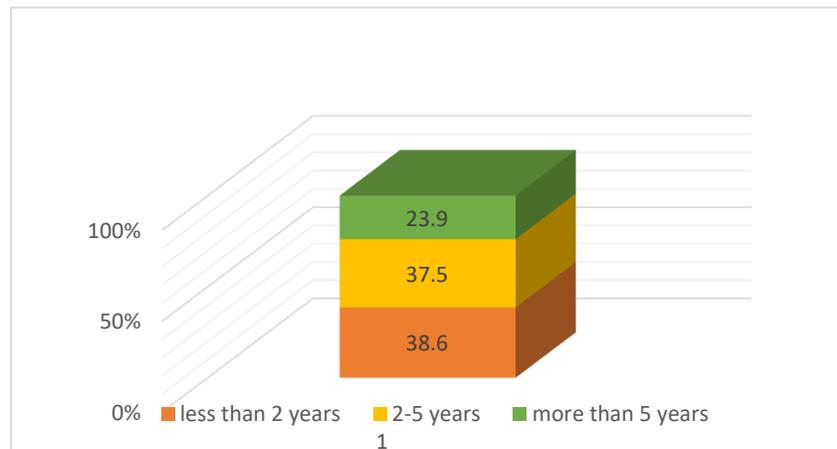
The respondents for this study were employees on active construction sites in the Kumasi and Accra Metropolis. A total of a hundred (100) questionnaires were sent to six (6) different and active construction sites and eighty-eight (88) of these questionnaires were retrieved. The response rate was 88% which is quite high and appropriate for this study. The 12% of questionnaires that could not be retrieved were due to the busy nature of some respondents and also due to the refusal of some of the respondents to participate in the study during the administration of the questionnaires stating that the issue being discussed “could land them in trouble,” even though their confidentiality was heavily implied and ensured. As mentioned earlier, six active construction sites were used for this study and 2 out of the six construction firms were foreign construction firms in Ghana. Sixty respondents out of the Eighty-eight respondents that participated in this study indicated that they worked with the local construction firms and the remaining twenty-eight respondents identified themselves with the foreign construction firms. Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of the respondents working in either the local construction firm or the foreign construction firm.



**Figure 4.1 Types of firm**

### 4.2.1 Years of Service

Furthermore, the respondents were questioned as to how many years they have worked with that particular construction firm. The responses indicated that thirty-four (34) of the respondents had worked in their respective firms for less than 2 years. Followed closely with a number of thirty-three (33) respondents were those who had worked with their current construction firm between 2 to 5 years. The least of the respondents (21 of them) were those who had worked with the firm for more than 5 years with. This indicates that this study captures respondents from long serving employees to newly employed, who have worked with the various construction firms. This is quite important to this study because varying views are captured from different angles. This is to say that exploitation and modern slavery is looked at from how long serving employees are treated and also includes those who may have just joined these construction firms. Figure 4.2 indicates the percentages of the number of years worked by the respondents in that firm.



**Figure 4.2 Number of years**

From the percentages above, it can be seen that the percentages of the three groups are quite close and this goes to prove that all views (from long serving employees to newly employed) have been adequately represented in this study.

#### 4.2.2 Education and occupational background

The researcher also went on to find out the educational background of the respondents and also the positions that they are filling in the construction firm they find themselves in. This information is important to this study because it helps the researcher to examine whether the issues of exploitation and modern slavery are being faced by educated or trained employees or people with little or no formal education or training.

**Table 4.1 Educational level and occupation**

<b>Variables</b>		<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>LEVEL OF EDUCATION</b>	No formal education	9	10.2
	Primary	4	4.5
	Junior High School	12	13.6
	Senior High School	12	13.6
	Vocational School	20	22.7
	Bachelors Degree	28	31.8
	Masters Degree	3	3.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>POSITION</b>	Supervisor	12	13.6
	Project Manager	5	5.7
	Quantity Surveyor	7	8.0
	Mason	12	13.6
	Labourer	15	17.0
	Steel bender	7	8.0
	Electrician	6	6.8
	Engineer	16	18.2
	Carpenter	8	9.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100.0</b>

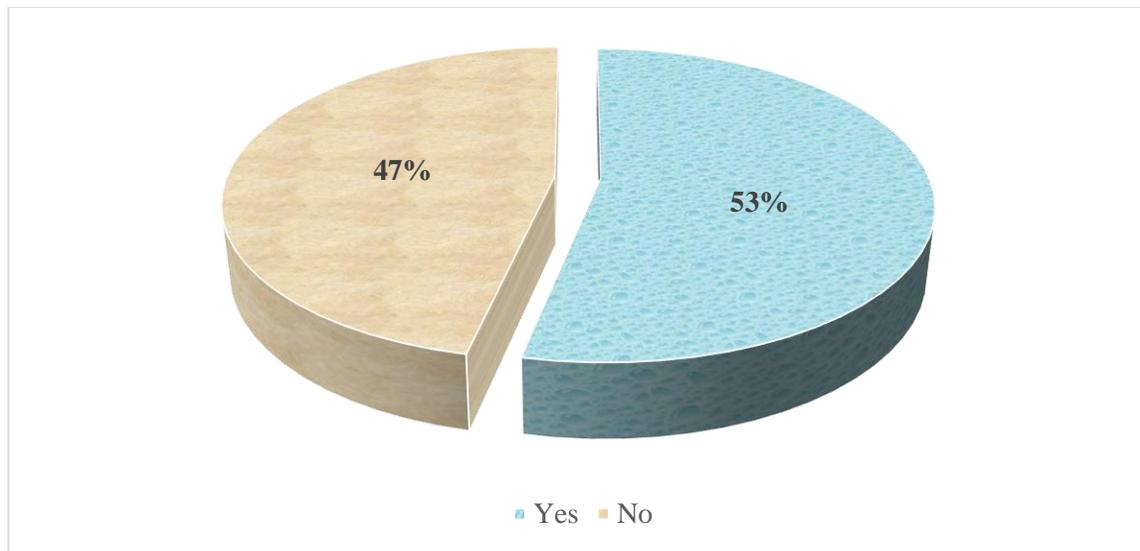
Source: Field data (2019)

From the table above, it can be noted that the respondents range from top management including project managers and engineers to the unskilled labourers. The distribution of the various occupations is such that the views of those on the ground (the labourers, masons, carpenters and steel benders) and those involved with the paper work and documentation (the quantity surveyors, engineers, supervisors) have all been represented. Thus, the researcher has views from employees from different perspectives and levels of the construction firms.

The same goes for the educational levels of the respondents but collectively many of the respondents have had some form of education and training. Thus the responses obtained can be said to be from people who have had a bit of training or education in their field and may also have a bit of knowledge of their rights and privileges on construction sites.

#### **4.2.3 Migrant workers**

Additionally, the researcher also obtained information from the respondents as to whether they were migrants. This bit of information is crucial to this research because the International Labour Organization says that migrant workers and indigenous people are more susceptible to forced labour and exploitation. Per the responses received, it is known that 47 of the respondents had moved from their homes in different towns, regions and even countries to work in their current construction firm. The results obtained can be said to contain the views of migrant workers who have left their homes and may or may not be new to the environment they are working in. The figure below provides information on the percentage of migrant workers and non- migrant workers involved in this study.



**Figure 4.3 Number of migrant workers**

### **4.3 INDICATORS OF EXPLOITATION AND MODERN SLAVERY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES**

#### **4.3.1 Descriptive Statistics**

The main aim of this research is bringing to attention and examining the issue of exploitation and modern day slavery on construction sites and the extent of exploitation of workers on construction sites. Some practices and conditions created by institutions/firms on construction sites are practices and conditions that can be termed as exploitation and modern day slavery. The main focus of this section is to determine the practices and conditions on construction sites that are indicators of exploitation and modern day slavery and the frequency at which they occur on construction sites in Ghana. This was done by outlining some practices from literature survey that has been considered as practices that identify with exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites. The respondents were asked to indicate how frequent they were involved in the outlined practices on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 with 1= Never, 2=

Hardly, 3= Sometimes, 4= Often and 5= Always. Their responses were then analyzed using the sample t-test.

#### **4.3.2 One Sample T-test**

The sample t-test according to Coakes *et al.* (2001) is a test that is used to determine whether the sample mean is the same or considerably divergent from the hypothesized mean. A statistical test of the mean was done to decide whether the population considered a particular variable to be important or not. The mean ranking of each criterion was compiled in order to articulate the decisions that the respondents expressed. Moreover, the mean for each variable with its corresponding standard deviation are presented. For each variable, the null hypothesis was that this variable was not significant or frequent. In this section, the higher ratings were from 3 to 5 which indicated the respondent's agreement to the variable. In this section of the study, the hypothesized mean is set at 3. This is for the reason that if 5= always, 4= often and 3= sometimes, then for a variable to be consistently considered agreed, it should have a mean equal or above the neutral point 3. Hence the hypothesized mean was set 3 All the means that are above 3.0 are considered as consistently agreed to by the respondents of the study. The significance level was set at 95% in accordance with the levels of risk. This is premised on the five point Likert scale rating where a success variable is deemed important if its mean was equal to or more than 3.0 (Field, 2019).

**Table 4.2 Mean and sample t-test of indicators of exploitation and modern slavery**

One-Sample Statistics					Test Value = 3		
Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Ranking
Workers not being allowed to negotiate working conditions	88	3.4886	1.22234	.13030	3.750	.000	1 <sup>st</sup>
Working for excessively long hours over long periods	88	3.3523	1.00619	.10726	3.284	.001	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Refusal to pay social security and insure workers on site	88	3.2500	1.47975	.15774	1.585	.117	3 <sup>rd</sup>
No allowance for workers to go on leave and no off days	88	3.1591	1.25841	.13415	1.186	.239	4 <sup>th</sup>
Workers not having access to medical care	88	3.0568	1.21634	.12966	.438	.662	5 <sup>th</sup>
Illegal deductions from salaries	88	2.9773	1.50078	.15998	-.142	.887	6 <sup>th</sup>
Workers working beyond their capabilities	88	2.9432	1.27178	.13557	-.419	.676	7 <sup>th</sup>
Being forced to work under unusual and unsafe working conditions	88	2.9205	1.21505	.12953	-.614	.541	8 <sup>th</sup>
No increment of salaries for more than 3 years and refusal to make increments upon requests made	88	2.8977	1.25981	.13430	-.762	.448	9 <sup>th</sup>
Restricted freedom of movement of workers	88	2.6136	1.28145	.13660	-2.828	.006	10 <sup>th</sup>
Payment below minimum wage or no payment for works done on site	88	2.6136	1.25425	.13370	-2.890	.005	11 <sup>th</sup>
Excessive punishment meted out to workers who fault	88	2.5909	2.39077	.25486	-1.605	.112	11 <sup>th</sup>
Forced to pay processing fee before gaining the employment	88	2.4091	1.38661	.14781	-3.998	.000	12 <sup>th</sup>

Workers being subjected to violence or threats of violence against themselves or against their family members and loved ones	88	2.3977	1.46640	.15632	-3.853	.000	13 <sup>th</sup>
False imprisonment and breach of contract	88	2.3409	1.27655	.13608	-4.843	.000	14 <sup>th</sup>
Sexual harassment and abuse of workers	88	2.3295	1.32805	.14157	-4.736	.000	15 <sup>th</sup>
Making use of under aged workers	88	2.1250	1.23932	.13211	-6.623	.000	16 <sup>th</sup>

### 4.3.3 Discussion of Results

The test value for this section was 3.0 and thus all the variables that had a mean greater than that of the set value were considered as important and occurring frequently on construction sites. According table 4.2, which presents the results, variables that have a mean greater than 3.0 also have a positive p-value represented on the table as T. This affirms that those variables that have a mean greater than 3.0 do not confirm the null hypothesis which states that those variables are not significant or frequent. These variables include workers or employees not able to negotiate their working conditions which was ranked first, working for excessively longer hours, refusal to insure workers and pay social security, no allowance for workers to have off days and workers not having access to medical care were also ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> by the respondents. These factors were considered as frequently occurring on our construction sites.

Workers not being able to negotiate their working conditions puts them at a very vulnerable place with their employers. This means they may have very little privileges on the construction site and can hardly have their concerns and worries addressed by their employers. Von Elgg (2016) also indicated that unnegotiable working contracts was one of the significant factors

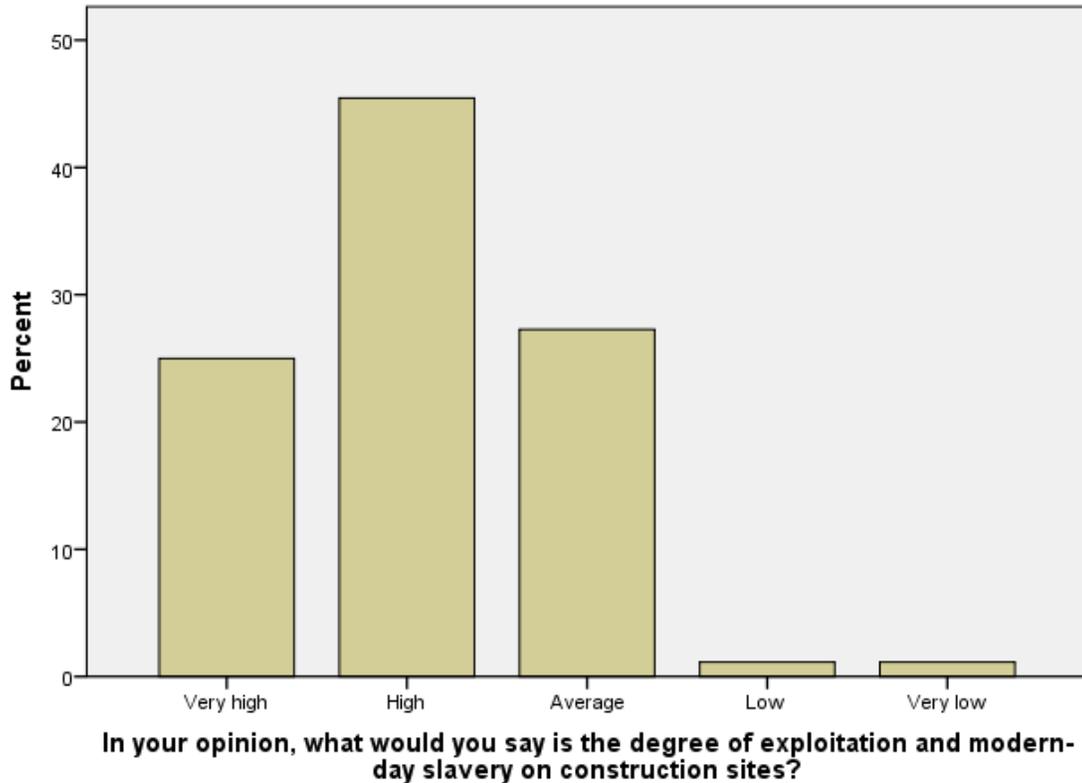
of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites. Any harsh condition may be included in their contract and they have little say on it. The available option most at times out of this issue would be to terminate the contract.

The second most ranked occurrence is also working for long hours over long periods. This can be easily linked to the highest ranked variable. This is because, an employee, not being able to negotiate the terms of his contract would enable the employer increase working hours and days mostly without or with little pay. This again has being considered as a situation of exploiting the individual and gives rise to modern slavery.

Likewise, the 3<sup>rd</sup> , 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> variables can all still be linked to unnegotiable contracts. This means that most of the factors are linked and one occurrence of exploitation can move on and lead to several other factors. Thus when issues of exploitation and modern slavery are not curbed they progress into severe or more harsh forms of modern slavery.

The respondents were also questioned as to the degree or level of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites. They were to indicate whether they perceived the level to be very high, high, average , low or very low. Sixty-two of the total respondents indicated that the rate of exploitation and modern slavery on our Ghanaian construction sites ranged from very high to high. This goes to say that there are high occurrences of exploitation that employees of construction firms are facing yet there is little attention that is being drawn to it. The figure that follows gives information about the opinions of the respondents in regards to the degree of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites.

**In your opinion, what would you say is the degree of exploitation and modern-day slavery on construction sites?**



**Figure 4.4 Degree of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites**

#### **4.4 CAUSES OF EXPLOITATION AND MODERN SLAVERY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES**

##### **4.4.1 Descriptive Statistics**

The focus of this section was to look at the causes that are associated with the occurrences of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites in Ghana. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree with or disagree with the outlined causes obtained from literature survey. They were asked to rank their opinions as against a Likert scale with 1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree and 5= Strongly Disagree. The responses were similarly analyzed with the one sample t-test.

#### **4.4.2 One Sample T-test**

The one sample t-test was used to establish the relative significance of the variables. This is used in ascertaining whether a sample mean is significantly deviant from a hypothesized mean (Ahadzie, 2007). For a single sample test, its hypothesis is:

Ho:  $\mu = \mu_0$

Ha:  $\mu <, > \mu_0$

With Ho representing the null hypothesis, Ha representing the alternative hypothesis and  $\mu_0$  representing the hypothesized mean. Ahadzie (2007) records that for a usual one sample t-test, the mean of the test group, degree of freedom for the test (an approximate of the sample size), the t-value (strength of test) and the p-value (probability of test being significant) are reported usually. In this section the test value was set at 2.5. This is because the Likert scale used ranged from 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree. Thus for a variable to be considered significantly important, the mean value should be lesser than the test value which is 2.5. This would mean that the respondents agree to that variable being a cause of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites.

**Table 4.4 One sample t-test on causes of exploitation**

One-Sample Statistics					Test Value = 2.5		
Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Rank
Fear of losing one's job	88	1.6932	.91423	.09746	-8.279	.000	1 <sup>st</sup>
High rate of unemployment	88	1.7614	.84410	.08998	-8.209	.000	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Fear of the authorities	88	1.8977	.91022	.09703	-6.207	.000	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Poverty	88	1.9773	1.06109	.11311	-4.621	.000	4 <sup>th</sup>
Ignorance and misunderstanding of the rights of the workers	88	2.0114	.95285	.10157	-4.811	.000	5 <sup>th</sup>
Greed on the part of the management	88	2.2045	1.11581	.11895	-2.484	.015	6 <sup>th</sup>
Corruption	88	2.2614	1.08802	.11598	-2.058	.043	8 <sup>th</sup>
High usage of unskilled labour	88	2.2614	1.10894	.11821	-2.019	.047	7 <sup>th</sup>
Inbuilt vulnerabilities such as homelessness, addictions and the like	88	2.3182	1.06723	.11377	-1.598	.114	9 <sup>th</sup>
Personal and selfish gains and ambitions	88	2.3182	1.03441	.11027	-1.649	.103	10 <sup>th</sup>
Low level of influence in the society of the ones exploited as against those instigating the exploitation	88	2.3750	.97453	.10389	-1.203	.232	11 <sup>th</sup>
Dormant union groups for workers	88	2.5114	1.20339	.12828	.089	.930	12 <sup>th</sup>
Poor leadership from management and Ignorance	88	2.6136	1.07673	.11478	.990	.325	13 <sup>th</sup>

#### **4.4.3 Discussion of results**

All but two of the variables outlined were agreed upon by the respondents as being causes of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites. The variables had means that were less than the test value which is 2.5. Fear of losing one's job was ranked as the number one cause of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites. Most of these respondents have families that depend on them and losing one's job in an economy where there is a high rate of unemployment is not a favorable option. Thus with the fear of being out of job, these employees are vulnerable to the employers and vulnerability makes it easy and simple for one to be exploited.

This is almost true for the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rated cause which is high rate of unemployment in this country. It is quite difficult to land in employment and thus when one does so, they hardly complain about job conditions even when they are not favorable. Hence, it creates a conducive environment for easy manipulation and exploitation by employers or superiors.

Fear of authorities, poverty and ignorance on the rights of workers were ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively by the respondents as causes of exploitation and modern slavery. They had significance level of less than 0.05 which signifies that the means of these variables are not statistically different from the hypothesized mean.

However, the respondents did not agree to the dormant and absence of union groups and the poor management on the part of leadership as part of the causes of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites. Interestingly, Von Elgg (2016) also identified lack of representation by union groups as one of the causes of exploitation and modern slavery. In this study though, it was not seen as a cause by the respondents.

## **4.5 EFFECTS OF EXPLOITATION AND MODERN SLAVERY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES**

### **4.5.1 Descriptive Statistics**

This section dealt with the effects of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites. Just like the causes, the respondents were asked to agree on the significance of the outlined effects that were gathered from the literature survey. They were asked to rank their opinions as against a Likert scale with 1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Disagree and 5= Strongly Disagree. The responses were similarly analyzed with the one sample t-test.

### **4.5.2 One Sample T-test**

In this section the test value was set at 2.5. This is because the Likert scale used ranged from 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly agree and 5 being strongly disagree. Thus for a variable to be considered significantly important, the mean value should be lesser than the test value which is 2.5. This would mean that the respondents agree to that variable being an effect of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites.

**Table 4.5 One sample t-test on effects of exploitation**

One-Sample Statistics					Test Value = 2.5		
Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Rank
Fear and panic	88	1.9205	.92502	.09861	-5.877	.000	1 <sup>st</sup>
Stress and frustrations	88	2.0114	1.02267	.10902	-4.482	.000	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Job dissatisfaction	88	2.0341	1.05535	.11250	-4.141	.000	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Inefficiency (gradual reduction in performance)	88	2.1932	.90792	.09678	-3.170	.002	4 <sup>th</sup>
Insecurity	88	2.1932	.88224	.09405	-3.262	.002	5 <sup>th</sup>
Psychological trauma	88	2.3636	1.10570	.11787	-1.157	.250	6 <sup>th</sup>
Chronic health ailments	88	2.4659	1.11364	.11871	-.287	.775	7 <sup>th</sup>
Decrease in the value of the construction company found to be involved in modern slavery	88	2.5000	1.07211	.11429	0.000	1.000	8 <sup>th</sup>
Destroyed marriages and broken homes	88	2.5909	1.43548	.15302	.594	.554	9 <sup>th</sup>
Legal costs accrued by lawsuits filed against the construction company by employees or concerned organizations	88	2.7841	1.05535	.11250	2.525	.013	10 <sup>th</sup>
Death	88	3.1932	1.14328	.12187	5.688	.000	11 <sup>th</sup>

#### 4.5.3 Discussion of results

The respondents indicated by their responses that the effects of exploitation and modern slavery mostly affects their mental, emotional well-being and also their health. The seven

variables that they considered as effects well all centered around the health and welfare of the employees. Fear and panic was ranked as the most significant effect (had the lowest mean). The effects that were outlined by the respondents can be said to be interlinked and almost like a cycle. The effects all center around poor health and welfare of the employees. One effect can also lead to the next. For instance, fear and panic easily causes stress and frustrations which causes one to be easily dissatisfied with one's job. Dissatisfaction would also lead to low production and this would make the employee insecure and the fear comes back because insecurity makes people live in fear. Thus the cycle keeps going and the individual is likely to suffer terribly in health.



**Figure 4.5 effect of exploitation and modern slavery on construction site.**

The respondents were also asked to share their view on the extent to which exploitation and modern slavery does affect the individual, progress of work and the society as a whole. The were asked to indicate whether the impact was very low all through to very high. The table below shows their response.

**Table 4.6 Extent of the impact of the effects of exploitation and modern slavery on the society**

<b>Extent (Impact)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Very low impact	1	1.1	1.1
low impact	7	8.0	9.1
moderately high impact	33	37.5	46.6
high impact	34	38.6	85.2
very high impact	13	14.8	100.0
Total	88	100.0	

From the table, it can be concluded that a number of the respondents regard the impact of the effects of exploitation and modern slavery used for this study as high. Hence there is the need to focus or shine more light on the issue of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites in Ghana.

#### **4.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER**

This chapter focused on analyzing and discussing the data obtained from the field survey. The analysis was done with IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22 software and the tools used to analyze the data were the Descriptive Statistics and the Compare Means, specifically One Sample T-test. The results of the analysis were then discussed to achieve the objectives that were set for this study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This research looks into the issue of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites in Ghana. It was put into five different chapters. Chapter one dealt with the introduction stating the background to this study. It also included the aim and objectives that were set for this research. The chapter two looked into pertinent literature regarding exploitation and modern slavery. This was followed by the chapter three that looked at the methodology that was adapted to achieve the aim of this research. It had information on the research strategy used and the sample size that was used for this study and how the primary data was to be obtained from the field survey. The data acquired from the field were then analyzed using the SPSS in Chapter 4. The final Chapter which is chapter five provides the conclusions derived from the research and it also includes recommendations pertaining to the research.

#### **5.2 ATTAINMENT OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the research was to explore the situation of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites in Ghana towards advancing knowledge of this subject in Ghana. To achieve this aim, three objectives were set. These objectives were to identify the significant indicators of modern-day slavery in the construction industry, to establish the causes of exploitation and modern slavery in our construction industry (Ghana) and to determine the effects of exploitation and modern-day slavery in the construction industry.

##### **5.2.1 Objective 1: Indicators of Exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites**

A questionnaire was prepared from the literature survey that the researcher did. Seventeen variables were outlined in the questionnaire and the respondents that availed themselves for

this study were asked to indicate how frequent these variables occurred on their construction sites. After collection and analysis of their responses, five out of the seventeen variables were considered as significant and frequently occurring practices of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites. These variables include workers or employees not able to negotiate their working conditions which was ranked first, working for excessively longer hours, refusal to insure workers and pay social security, no allowance for workers to have off days and workers not having access to medical care were also ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> by the respondents. These are practices that are commonly seen on construction sites. Employees are made to work for long hours mostly without pay. A lot of the construction firms especially the smaller firms fail to insure their workers. All these go against the rights of the workers yet the employees have very little say in situations like this because most at times they are not even allowed to negotiate the terms and conditions of their contract. Thus, as indicated by the field survey these are some of the practices that occur on site and yet are deemed as being situations of exploitations and modern slavery.

### **5.2.2 Objective 2: Causes of Exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites**

A number of causes were also outlined in the questionnaire that was administered to the respondents of this survey. The causes were obtained from pertinent literature from various authors and researchers. A total number of thirteen causes were provided in the questionnaire for the respondents to agree on or disagree with as causes of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites. Eleven out of the the thirteen provided variables were deemed as causes of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites. These causes identified by the respondents were *fear of losing one's job, high rate of unemployment, fear of the authorities, poverty, Ignorance and misunderstanding of the rights of the workers, Greed on the part of*

*management, Corruption, High usage of unskilled labour, Inbuilt vulnerabilities, personal and selfish gains and ambitions and low level of influence in the society of the ones exploited as against those instigating the exploitation.* The causes were ranked 1<sup>st</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> respectively. The respondents agreed that fear, poverty and ignorance are some of the causes that easily breed exploitation and modern slavery. The researcher sides with the respondents to say that all the causes agreed upon by the respondents make the victims quite vulnerable and vulnerability is one of the factors that easily gives way to exploitation.

### **5.2.3 Objective 3: Effects of Exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites**

The respondents rated the extent/impact that exploitation and modern slavery has on individuals, the construction industry and the society as a whole as quite high. They were provided with eleven variables and they admitted to seven out of the eleven variables provided as being significant effects of exploitation and modern slavery. Hence the effects of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites as with the findings of this study *are Fear and panic, Stress and frustrations, Job dissatisfaction, Inefficiency (gradual reduction in performance), Insecurity, Psychological trauma and Chronic health ailments.* The researcher concludes that most of these effects affects the individuals. However, the outcome of the effects on the individual is that productivity becomes very low and this affects the construction industry. The cycle does not end there as the construction industry is one of the major contributors to the national economy. Thus, the issue of exploitation and modern slavery not only affects the construction industry but the nation too and this, much awareness should be created and the systems put in place to curb this canker.

### **5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The primary limitation encountered were particularly with the gathering of data. The skilled and unskilled labour themselves posed the greatest obstacle to amassing the necessary data for the study. Some of the respondents were hesitant in disseminating the information needed for the research thinking the researcher belonged to a secret service contracted to get the information needed. Some also had the fear that their identity and/or that of their company would be stated in the research and these made them hesitant and they asked numerous questions about the research and where the researcher was from before disseminating the required information. Some of them, though had some level of formal education found it difficult answering the questionnaires and had to be guided throughout the whole questionnaire. Some learned respondents also had a few challenges in the comprehension of some portions of the questionnaire. Not only that, most of the respondents initially limited the answering of the questionnaires to only the current firms they work in instead of relating it to what they have experienced not only in their current establishment or construction site but elsewhere as well. Also, Last but not least, the time frame used for this research was quite short and it made it difficult to gather more data.

However, regardless of the difficulties encountered, none of them adversely affected the validity or accuracy of the data obtained.

### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Notwithstanding the significance of exploitation and modern day slavery on construction sites, it has not received the maximum attention it deserves. It in fact seems not to have received much attention. There is therefore a need that particular interest be taken in exploitation and modern slavery not only on construction sites but in all other facets as well.

Based on the findings of the research, recommendations were summarized into those practical and those in theory for future research.

#### **5.4.1 Practical Recommendations**

Spiking the awareness amongst stakeholders in the long run will have positive repercussions on the level of awareness of exploitation and modern-day slavery and subsequently firm decisions will be made concerning the issue of exploitation and modern-day slavery. Thinking into tomorrow, the stakeholders will be instrumental in establishing a firm grip on the issue of exploitation and modern-day slavery.

There should be education on the issue of exploitation and modern-day slavery to the entire public through various mediums. There should be strict implementation of the existing laws on exploitation and modern-day slavery in Ghana and making alterations or additions where necessary to the existing laws. Immediate course of action as discussed above should be employed to effect immediate and positive changes.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendations for future research**

In the course of research, awareness was drawn to the need to venture into research in the following areas:

- The bodies responsible for checking exploitation and modern-day slavery in Ghana.
- The level of awareness of exploitation and modern-day slavery on construction sites in Ghana.
- Identification of victims of exploitation and modern-day slavery on construction sites.
- The extent to which victims of exploitation and modern-day slavery on construction sites have been affected by the situation.

- Remedies to curb the issue of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

Exploitation and modern-day slavery is a canker that is eating into the construction industry yet with little awareness. Much education is needed and when measures are put in place to curb the current situations, there would be improved quality of work, increased productivity, improved quality of life and standard of living, among other relevant benefits. In general, it will improve on health and safety by creating a safe and healthy working environment.

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## APPENDICES

**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**  
**COLLEGE OF ART AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT**  
**FACULTY OF BUILT ENVIRONMENT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY AND**  
**MANAGEMENT**

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

This study is being conducted as part of an academic requirement for the award of an MSc. in Construction Management. It is to get information regarding exploitation and modern-day slavery on the construction sites.

The objectives of this study are:

- To assess significant indicators of exploitation and modern-day slavery in the construction industry.
- To establish the causes of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites.
- To determine the effects of exploitation and modern slavery on construction sites.

The information obtained from this survey shall be kept **anonymous and completely confidential**. Only findings in aggregate form will be submitted to the relevant authorities.

Your participation in this survey is much needed and would be highly appreciated for the success of the research.

#### **STUDENT:**

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Faculty of Built Environment  
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Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

**PART I: BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS**

- 1. Which type of firm do you work with?
  - Local
  - Foreign
  
- 2. How long have you worked with the firm?
  - less than 2 years
  - 2-5 years
  - more than 5 years
  
- 3. For how long have you been working in the capacity you serve?
  - less than 5 years
  - 5-10 years
  - more than 10 years
  
- 4. What's your highest level of education?
  - No formal Education
  - Primary
  - Junior High School
  - Senior High School
  - Technical training College
  - Bachelors Degree
  - Masters Degree
  - Other. Specify.....

5. In which construction capacity do you serve?

.....

6. Are you a migrant worker? (Travel from your town of residence to another because of this employment)

Yes

No

**PART II: INDICATORS OF EXPLOITATION AND MODERN-DAY SLAVERY**

In the table below are some common practices and conditions on site which have been considered as exploitation and modern-day slavery by different researchers and organizations. Please indicate whether you agree the stated practices can be considered as exploitation and modern-day slavery and how often you experience these by ticking the appropriate boxes.

**[A] AGREE      [D] DISAGREE      [N] NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE**

**[1] NEVER      [2] HARDLY      [3] SOMETIMES      [4] OFTEN      [5] ALWAYS**

<b>Practices and conditions</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Making use of under aged workers								
2. Being forced to work under unusual and unsafe working conditions								
3. Illegal deductions from salaries								
4. No allowance for workers to go on leave and no off days								
5. No increment of salaries for more than 3 years and refusal to make increments upon requests made								
6. Refusal to pay social security and insure workers on site.								
7. Workers not being allowed to negotiate working conditions								
8. Working for excessively long hours over long periods								
9. Payment below minimum wage or no payment for works done on site								
10. Workers being subjected to violence or threats of violence against themselves or against their family members and loved ones								
11. Workers working beyond their capabilities								
12. False imprisonment and breach of contract								
13. Workers not having access to medical care								
14. Restricted freedom of movement of workers								
15. Sexual harassment and abuse of the workers								
16. Excessive punishment metered out to workers who fault								
17. Forced to pay processing fee before gaining the employment								
Specify others, if any.....								

**PART III: POSSIBLE CAUSE OF EXPLOITATION AND MODERN-DAY SLAVERY**

In the table below are some possible causes identified by researchers. Indicate your level of agreement by ticking the appropriate boxes?

[1] STRONGLY AGREE [2] AGREE [3] NEUTRAL [4] DISAGREE [5] STRONGLY DISAGREE

<b>POSSIBLE CAUSES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Ignorance and misunderstanding of the rights of the workers					
2. Fear of the authorities					
3. Fear of losing one's job					
4. Inbuilt vulnerabilities such as homelessness, addictions, and the like					
5. Poverty					
6. Greed on the part of the management					
7. Personal and selfish gains and ambitions					
8. Corruption					
9. High rate of unemployment					
10. High usage of unskilled labour					
11. Low level of influence in the society of the ones exploited as against those instigating the exploitation					
12. Poor leadership from management and Ignorance					
13. Dormant union groups for workers					
Any others not mentioned above.....					

**PART IV: EFFECTS OF EXPLOITATION AND MODERN-DAY SLAVERY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES**

1. To what extent does exploitation and modern-day slavery on construction sites have an impact progress of work, livelihood and the society at large?

Very low impact  low impact  moderately high impact  high impact  very high impact

2. In the table below are some likely effects. Indicate your level of agreement by ticking the appropriate boxes?

[1] STRONGLY AGREE [2] AGREE [3] NEUTRAL [4] DISAGREE [5] STRONGLY DISAGREE

<b>LIKELY EFFECTS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Job dissatisfaction					
2. Fear and panic					
3. Inefficiency (gradual reduction in performance)					
4. Insecurity					
5. Chronic health ailments					
6. Destroyed marriages and broken homes					
7. Stress and frustration					
8. Psychological trauma					
9. Death					
10. Legal costs accrued by lawsuits filed against the construction company by employees or concerned organizations					
11. Decrease in the value of the construction company found to be involved in modern slavery					

Any others not mentioned above.....					

**PART V: CONCLUSION**

1. In your opinion, what would you say is the degree of exploitation and modern-day slavery on construction sites?

Very high     High     Average     Low     Very low

2. What are your suggestion(s) on how the issue of exploitation and modern-day slavery can be mitigated? [OPTIONAL]

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