UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

PREDICTORS OF POTENTIAL FOR CHILD ABUSE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG FOSTER STUDENTS IN THE OKAI KOI NORTH METROPOLIS IN THE GREATER ACCRA REGION

ATTUQUAYEFIO, BRENDA BENEDICTA

May, 2013

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May, 2013

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I, Brenda Benedicta Attuquayefio declare that with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, this thesis is entirely my own original work and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

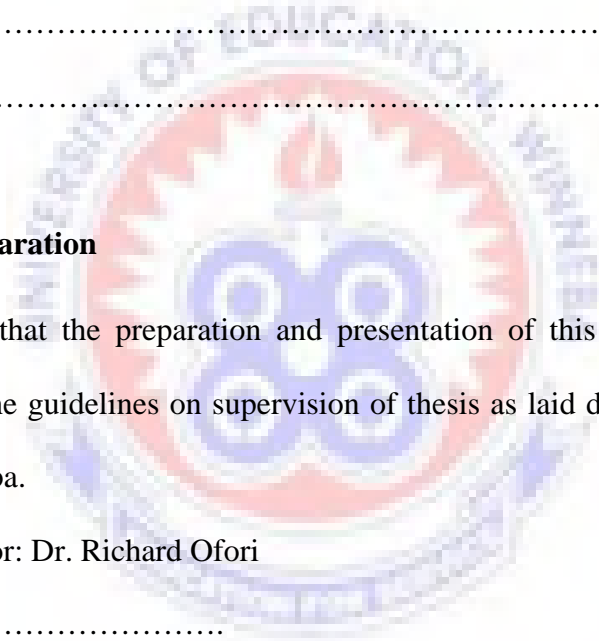Signature: ……………………….……………………………

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Supervisor's Declaration

I, hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Richard Ofori

Signature: ………………………….

Date: ……………………………………

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DEDICATION

I lovingly dedicate this dissertation to my family, especially to:

Mr. Omani Attuquayefio, my husband for his motivation and endless support;

My children Christian, Jude and Kimberly for their patience and understanding;

and

To Felicia Attuquayefio, my mother-in-law for her love and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore or find out the challenges foster students encounter in a bid to achieve satisfactory basic education.The descriptive cross sectional design was used. The target populationfor the study was 689 foster students and 2,689 non foster students. A sample of 210 respondents was selected from foster and non - foster students using the simple random sampling technique. Questionnaires were used to gather the data on the variables selected for the study: Foster Parental Stress, Child Abuse, Teacher Support, Foster Parent Support, Coping Strategies, Permissive, Authoritarian, Authoritative, and Academic Concept. The reliability of the instruments was all above 0.60. The methodological inquiry was a cross sectional and descriptive design using quantitative research approach. A multivariate hypothetical model and Independent sample t-test, were employed to test hypotheses formulated for the study.

Findings indicated that non foster students perform better than the foster students. It was also found that foster parents supportwas the better predictor of students' academic performance than the teacher support and also foster parental stress was the only variable found which contributed significant incremental variance to foster parental strategies for child abuse.Again, parenting style was found to be an important predictor of foster students' academic performance. There is therefore the need for parents to exhibit permissive parenting styles to relate positive academic performance.

Based on these findings it was recommended that governmental and nongovernmental organizations and counselors should conduct seminars, workshops, that aim at acquainting parents with the different harmful nature of experiencing parental stress and its associated outcomes.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1.Background of the Study

In all nations of the world there have been systematic efforts by the Government to provide a Functional Educational System that will cater for the needs and aspirations of all citizens. It is believed that no nation can develop without formal education. Thus, education is considered to be the bedrock of socio-economic development of every nation (McWilliam and Poh, 1975). In the view of the author, the main purpose of education whether formal or informal is to produce persons who will be useful members of society and education has to shape the character of individuals.

The government of Ghana since independence has been making frantic effort to give the citizenry formal education. This has produced elites who today are at the helm of the nation's affairs including many who have been victims of circumstances through no fault of theirs (e.g. foster children who are mostly girls).

Considering the roles women play as housekeepers and child trainers, it is evident that the basic educational foundation begins with mother at home. Any act of illiteracy exhibited by a mother in the care and maintenance of the child spells doom for her and the child. For instance, a mother who out of illiteracy cannot read and interpret prescriptions from hospital for her child will administer drugs wrongly and this can result in more complications or death of the child. Therefore, it is very important for the foster children to have basic education to develop their full human potentials.

Child fostering is a custom that is practiced in many African societies. Children are fostered out to live with surrogate parents in the event of family crisis or when the biological parents, for some reason, are unable to raise them. Fostering is practiced by both stable and unstable families, with both healthy and handicapped children, among rich and poor, and in rural and urban homes (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985).

Fosterage has become a household word with terminologies used such as fostering, adoption, child relocation and transfer, child circulation, child migration, child rearing delegation (IsiugoAbanihe, 1985, 1991) and exchange of children (Harpending and Pennington, 1993). Fostering is by far the most commonly used word. The diversity of all these terms and their definitions (which moreover are not always explicit) leads to a certain amount of confusion (Vandeermersch, 2000). They reflect very different situations and dimensions, whose explanatory factors vary depending on the children's age and sex, living environment, circumstances, time periods and societal discourse.

Among the types of fostering identified in West Africa is crisis fostering, when parents are divorced, separated, or in the event of death of a spouse. It also involves children born out of wedlock (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985). In the latter situation, children's welfare becomes a prime importance and both maternal and paternal sides decide which family group can better raise and protect the child (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985). Beliefs in witchcraft and evil spirits may lead to fostering as well (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985). Sometimes it is believed that evil spirits might kill the child. This is more likely to occur when parents have previously experienced infant or child deaths in their marriage. Therefore, fostering can be a function of crisis, real or imaginary, to protect the life of a child (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985).

There is also alliance and apprentice fostering that involve sending children to live with non-relatives such as friends and acquaintances as a symbol of social, economic, and political alliances (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985). For example, children are sent to live with people who, parents think, are respectable and can teach or train them in some trade or skills. Another reason for this kind of fostering is to ensure social mobility for the child as he or she grows up (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985).

There is also domestic fostering; this is when children are sent out to provide services and household tasks in certain homes (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985). For instance, female children can be sent to live with experienced women to learn domestic roles and how to become good housewives. This is believed to be necessary for their future married life (Fiawoo, 1978; Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985). In some instances, they are sent to provide emotional support to childless women or couples (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985).

Over this century, (referring to the last century) parents have become more likely to divorce (NCHS 1989), even when they think divorce may not be in the children's best interest (Thornton 1985) Many parents especially men die through wars and accidents. Diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Hypertension, diabetes and malaria have caused the death of many parents. Some parents especially the men sometimes leave their families for abroad in search of greener pastures or for education for a number of years. These situations leave only one parent in the home. The responsibility of taking care of the children who are born to the family becomes the burden of a sole – parent. These trends have given rise to fostering and have changed children's living arrangements (Hernandez 1993 in Allison and Furstenberg, 1989) Crowder and Teachman (2004) found that the more often children are fostered the higher likely they are to drop out of school or become pregnant compared to

non-fostered children. Children fostered have more sociological problems, lower levels of education, occupational, and financial attainment.

Academic achievement is also a challenge for foster children. They show early signs of disengagement from school; truancy rate increases. Overall, they have negative attitude towards class and teachers in general. Less monitoring of school work and social activities by the foster parent, (as compared to children staying with biological parents) resulted in lower educational expectations for them-selves as well as non-existent social activities. Research indicates that foster children perform more poorly on a number of psychological and behavioural measures than their non - fostered peers (Demo and Acock, 1996; Emery, 1982 and Forehand et al 1997, Hetherington, 1992). Relative to their non - fostered peers, adolescents who experience fosterage demonstrate more disruptive and aggressive behaviours, depressed affect, more parent child conflict and less positive parental interaction, perform more poorly scholastically, and are less likely to be monitored (Amato, 1993; Amato and Keith, 1991; Demo and Acock, 1996).

Tengey (2002) states that responses from trafficked children indicated that over 50% of them are fostered children. Some over-age pupils in some primary and junior high schools in the Okai koi north metropolis district in the Greater Accra region are no exception.

With the rising cost of living and lack of employment avenues, there has been an influx of migration of the youth to seek for greener pastures in the Metropolis. This situation is desperate and quite alarming with its attendant problem of fosterage. Therefore, the researcher is motivated to find out whether child fostering per se affects children in the attainment of basic education in these situations. In terms of academics, both boys and girls are more inferior to that of non-fostered children in school performance. There are also a lower number of foster children who go to pursue higher education. Therefore the need to

examine current prevalence of fosterage and its attendant problems has necessitated this research to be undertaken.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Several researchers have observed that foster children perform poorly academically, most times unable to remain in school till completion and have behavioural difficulties (Altshuler, 2003; Blome, 1997; Emerson andLovitt, 2003, Zetlinand Weinberg, 2004; Zetlin, Weinberg, and Kimm, 2005).

Furthermore, research indicates that most children who are fostered perform poorly on a number of physiological, behavioural and academic measures than their non-fostered peers (Demo and Acock, 1996, Emery, 1982and Forehand, et al, 1997, Hetherington, 1992).

A close look shows that, the incidence of fostering prevails in all the ten regions in Ghana. However, the rate of fostering in the Okai Koi sub metropolis, in the Greater Accra region seems to have been raised by the influx of migration by the youth in search for greener pastures. Again, scores of workshops, forums and conferences held creating awareness of Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education for all children of school going age in Ghana mandate these children to enrol in school, remain in school till completion and be functional.

Despite the general perception held, academic achievement is also a challenge for foster children. They show early signs of disengagement from school; truancy rate increases. Overall, they have a negative attitude towards classes and teachers in general. Most care givers fail woefully to monitor their school work and social activities which often leads to school dropout and early pregnancies.

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Stake holders in the educational enterprise such as the Parent Teachers Associations (P.T.A) with- in the Okai Koi sub Metropolis have observed that, the schools in the Okai Koi sub Metropolis are much populated with foster children and therefore, show academic avoidance behaviours, have higher rates of absenteeism and disciplinary referrals, most of them perform below grade level and more than half have been retained at least 1 year in school. This has been resulting in poor academic performance in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E.). (Zetlin and Weinberg, 2004, p.918).

Fosterage per se need not be a problem and fostering children to relatives best able to support a child's education can be an advantage but fostered children often suffer multiple disadvantages. These challenges are truly enormous and they include loneliness, sexual harassment, depression, financial problems and other psycho-social, educational and socio-personal problems.

Again, the problem of persistent poverty, lack of parental or guardian support, lack of parental monitoring, lack of academic self-confidence and self-esteem, lack of teacher's support and lack of resilience affects foster students academic performance. Undoubtedly, these chronic behaviour problems of foster children impact negatively on their future goals and aspirations in life, despite their sterling academic performance, motivation and ability to succeed.

A scan through literature reveals that there has been far less research conducted on fosterage in Ghana. It is from this position that the researcher finds it prudent to carry out this study to examine academic problems faced by foster students in achieving basic education in the Okai Koi North basic schools Metropolis.

1.3 Purpose of study

The main purpose of this study is to explore some of the factors that may influence the academic performance of foster students in the Okai Koi North Schools.

1.4. Hypotheses

The main hypotheses to be tested in the present study are three hypothetical models. After these, some supplementary bivariate hypotheses will be tested. The first model to be tested is a:

1. Hypothetical model in which foster parents' coping strategies are assumed to mediate their stress and potential for child abuse.

2. Hypothetical model in which foster students' academic self - concept is assumed to mediate parental support and academic performance.

3. Hypothetical model in which foster students' academic self - concept is assumed to mediate teacher support and academic performance.

4. There will be a significance difference in academic performance between foster children and non-foster children.

5. There will be a significance difference between parental styles of foster parents and non-foster parents.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The research findings would be useful to education planners and developers to enable them develop a curriculum and syllabus that would help address the issue of enrolment and sustenance of foster students in schools. Parents and guardians would be equipped with requisite knowledge that would enable them see the need to sponsor and motivate their

foster children to remain in school till completion. School Guidance counselors as well as teachers would be informed by findings from this study as regards techniques and measures they need to guide and counsel foster students for resilience.

1.6 Delimitations

The Scope of the study is to evaluate all foster students within the Okai-Koi North Sub Metropolis, in the Greater Accra region, Ghana. The researcher's familiarity with the area under study is hoped to afford her the cooperation of the respondents.

1.7 Definition of terms

For the purpose of this study the following operational definitions would be used:

Foster child: a child looked after temporarily or brought up by people other than his or her natural or adoptive parents

Resiliency: is defined as overcoming the hardships of one's past and moving forward with their goals.

Educational performance: is defined as success attained in academics.

Multiple disadvantages: is defined as numerous obstacles that make some one less effective or successful

Attachment bond: Unique intimate or love relationship between a mother or a guardian for which both find satisfaction**.**

Empirical: Based on direct experience or observation of the world

Theoretical framework: A framework showing the central concept of a piece of research and their conceptual status with respect to each other; often expressed as a diagram.

Biological parents: A situation where the one who caused a person to be born takes care and responsibility for the child's upbringing

1.8. **Organization of the study**

The study would be organized into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the background to the study, statement of problem, purpose of the study, hypotheses, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, definition of terms and organization of the study.

The second chapter focuses on the review of related literature while the methodology is the subject of chapter three. The methodology describes the research design, the population, sample and sampling procedures, data gathering instrument, data collection procedures of the study and the methods of data analysis. In chapter four, the results and discussions of the findings are presented. Finally, the fifth and concluding chapter contains the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.
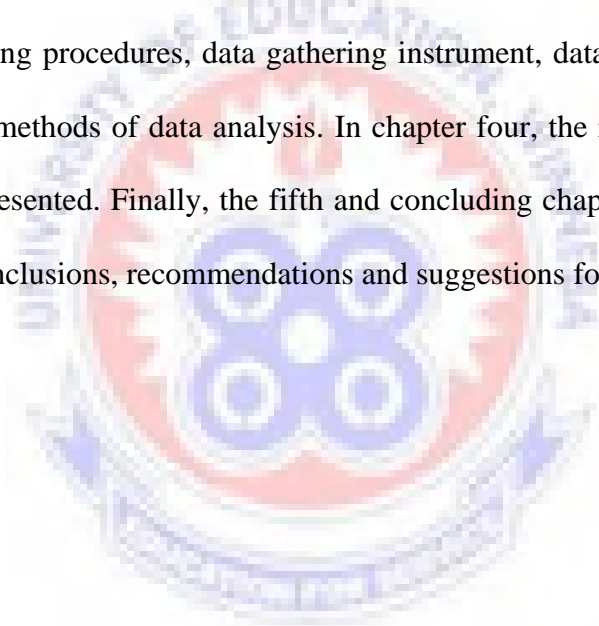
CHAPTER TWO

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The chapter attempts to bring to light the work of some authors on the factors predicating fostering. Literature has therefore been reviewed both theoretically and empirically. Section 2.2 looks at the theoretical issues involving fostering while sections 2.3 to 2.12address some of the empirical issues and section 2.13 deals with the theoretical frame work.

2.2 Theoretical perspective

2.2.1.Fosterage: A General Overview

There is a growing literature on the phenomenon of child fostering in general and, in particular, its impacts on the welfare of children. However, reports on the effects of fostering on child welfare present mixed outcomes dependent on the social context of fostering, the motives for fostering, the existence of living mothers or fathers and the relationships between biological and foster parents (Serra, 2009: 158).

Serra (2009) argues, based on earlier works by Akresh (2004) and Bennell (2005), that where fostering is sought by both sending and receiving households within acceptable cultural contexts, foster children do not appear to be disadvantaged with regard to schooling and therefore cautions against outright condemnation of non-parent residence as detrimental to children's welfare.

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This argument supports an earlier assertion by Goody (1982) that the purpose of pursuing fostering was to provide opportunities for the fostered child in terms of widened knowledge, experience and training. In spite of the foregoing arguments, household labor deficits have been identified as a major force behind the decision by a household to accept foster children in West Africa.

Ainsworth (1996) noted in Côte d'Ivoire that the motivating factor for fostering-in children aged 7-14 was solely driven by the need for children's labor services. This underpins Akresh's (2009) argument that parents reap the benefits of fostering whilst the fostered children often shoulder the costs. The sending parents benefit not only by receiving material payments; but they also save income that would have been used for the upkeep of the fostered child. Similarly, receiving parents benefit through the services provided by the fostered children, usually at a lower cost than alternatives.

The possible negative impacts of fostering on the welfare of children notwithstanding, Serra (2009: 166), when rationalizing the pervasiveness of fostering in Africa, argues that the phenomenon "is an efficient way of raising and training children and preparing them for adult life under very specific conditions typical of African societies". Bledsoe (1990) made a similar observation within the Mende ethnic group of Sierra Leone: children can develop best by leaving the comfortable yet confining home in which they were born and striking out into the wider world.

Kuyini et al. (2009: 440) put it more forcefully, asserting that the principal aim of fostering is to "provide the best and/or appropriate alternative care for children whose biological parents, for some reason, are unable to undertake the caring role". As Madhaven (2001) argues, kinship, family and networks need to be examined in order to understand the effects of fostering on children.

Child fostering in Sub-Saharan Africa has been attributed to a number of reasons. In Ghana, Kuyini et al. (2009) reported that strengthening and maintaining family ties were the key reasons for fostering children but were quick to point out the intimidation and physical and emotional abuse that characterized the phenomenon. Vandermeersch (2002) and Serra (2009) considered fostering as a demographic regulator of family size.

Bledsoe's (1990) report from Sierra Leone regarded fostering as central to child-rearing and socializing of children. In Burkina Faso, Akresh (2009) and Hampshire (2006) observed the role of fostering in regulating household size as a temporary coping strategy against external shocks while Ansell and Van Blerk (2004) noted in Malawi that fostering could help meet household labour deficits. These reasons reinforce the argument by Serra (2009) above that where there is an agreement between out-fostering and in-fostering households within acceptable cultural contexts, the impacts of fostering could be minimal. The effects of fostering on children's educational outcomes present similarly ambivalent reports (Pilon, 2003).

On one hand, children may have access to education as a result of being fostered whereas on the other hand, household demands sometimes prevent children in foster households from enrolling in school. However, foster children's schooling, according to Charmes (1993) is often more vulnerable and unpredictable than that of non-fostered children (Cited in Pilon, 2003).

Charmes notes that foster children, especially girls, were more vulnerable to disenrollment from school than non-foster children. Similarly, Kuyini et al. (2009) found in Ghana that a quarter of the fostered children they interviewed indicated that they did not think that they were given the same treatment as non-fostered children. But Zimmerman (2003) noted in South Africa that fostered children were just as likely to attend school as non-fostered

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children, because of purposive fostering of children to households that were better able to enroll them in school.

Fostering could therefore affect children's welfare in general and their education in particular either way – positively or negatively. With parental background being a key determinant of children's educational outcomes (Smyth et al., 2009; Nonoyama-Tarumi, 2008), this paper contributes to the debate by exploring the relationship between child fostering and education in Ghana.

2.2.2 Theoretical perspective of fostering

The relationships that exist in the family influence the child in many ways. A number of theoretical perspectives have been proposed to explain these relationships. Research that has examined relationships between changing family structures and student's school related outcomes, has tended to show that in relation to biological parent families most children in guardian families have lower academic performance, are more susceptible to peer pressure to engage in deviant behavior have higher drop-out rate from high school and have greater social and psychological problems. A number of theories have been proposed to explain the variations.

The no-impact perspective claims, for example that the association between changing family structures and academic outcomes can be attributed to a combination of family backgrounds such as parent's education and incomes, as well as the race of the family. Further, some researchers proposed that much family structure research is inclusive because it has failed to differentiate among various types of guardianship whether they result from parental death, divorce, separation or poverty.

In addition, it is suggested that many studies failed to take into account the timing in a child's life of a family disruption, the duration of the effect of that disruption, and whether the guardian is a relative or non-relative. An economic deprivation theory suggests that economic hardship in guardian families will require the child to work long hours and to take greater responsibility for the guardians' wards. As a result, these time-consuming activities are likely to relate to lower school achievements.

In a family socialization perspective, it is proposed that the absence of biological parents is probably associated with a decrease in total parental monitoring and involvement, which is also related to poorer school outcomes. In general research suggests that differences in the academic achievements of children from foster parent and biological parent families can be related to changes in the economic circumstances of families and to variation in the quality of parent-child inter reactions in the different family structures.

2.3. Empirical Review

2.3.1. Child fostering

Child fostering, a pervasive phenomenon in Sub-Saharan Africa (Isiugo- Abanihe, 1984; Akresh, 2005), has been variously defined by different authors. The phenomenon, which is widespread in Ghana, is generally considered as the relegation of parental responsibilities to non-biological careers (Vandermeersch, SBHA 2011, 76(1):53-70 2002). Isiugo-Abanihe (1983) defines child fostering similarly as sending children out to be raised by non-biological parents. Pilon (2003), while admitting the two definitions above, goes further to give a precise age range – from birth to nineteen.

However, there are situations where fostered children are orphans and therefore the issue of relegating one's parental responsibility does not pertain. Drawing on these definitions, the researcher defined a foster child as one who is not above 17 years and not staying with his/her biological parents whether such parents are alive or dead.

2.3.2 Categories of fosterage

Two categories of fostering have been identified in the literature – kinship and non-kinship (Kuyini et al., 2009). According to Scannapieco, Hegar, and McAlpine (1997) kinship foster care involves sending children to blood relations to be catered for, while the foster parents in non-kinship foster care are not blood relations. In the case of Ghana in particular, kinship foster care might not necessarily be regarded as the relegation of parental responsibilities as noted by Vandermeersch (2002) because kinship foster care is culturally accepted within the extended family system.

However, the researcher is quick to note that fostering (whether to kinship foster household or non-kinship foster household as noted by Kuyini et al. (2009)) could mean relegating parental responsibilities. Often, arguments which tend to defend fostering as a way of securing better future opportunities for foster children contend that the in-foster households are usually better in terms of their potential to provide better future opportunities for foster children than the out-fostering households (see Serra, 2009; Pilon, 2003; Bledsoe, 1990). Thus, the better opportunities in the in-fostering household serve as a motivating factor.

2.3.3. Causes or Motivations of Child Fostering

Although the practice of sending children away 'at various ages is reported' in many parts of the world (Ainsworth1967, in Uganda Kay, 19 6 3; and Keeing, 1970 in Oceania; Rawson and Berggren, 1973, in Haiti;- Sanford; 1975, in West Indies), perhaps nowhere has it been institutionalized,' as in parts of' West Africa. West African fostering has been a valued traditional practice among many ethnic groups; 'the practice has probably become more prevalent or taken new dimensions as societies become more complex and diversified. What seem extraordinary in West African fostering are its prevalence, the very young age of children not living with natural parents and the early age at which children are boarded out.

Furthermore, because-fostering here is rooted in kinship arrangements, children are sent out not only in the event of some family crisis or when one or both natural parents cannot, for some reasons, manage to bring them up. Rather, the sending out of children or the delegation of parental child raising functions is often practiced by both stable and unstable families, married and single mothers, healthy and handicapped parents, rural and urban homes, and wealthy and poor parents. In this section the various types of child fostering arrangements are presented, together with the different functions and motivations for the practice.

Child relocation resulting from the dissolution of the family of orientation by divorce, separation or death of a spouse may be termed crisis fostering. Children boarded out as a result of being born out of wedlock also belong to this group, especially in a culture where such children are stigmatized. In most remarriages following the breakup of marital unions, the welfare of the child is thought to be better maintained by the father's kin because of the characteristic fear of child neglect or even poisoning by a stepmother.

Also to be categorized as a type of crisis fostering is the sending out of a child necessitated by apprehension over its survival. The fear of witchcraft by a neighboring old woman or a co wife, for example, or of reprisals by the spirit of unappeased dead kinsmen or ancestor could result in boarding a child out, while the supposed cause of the crisis is being ameliorated. Closely related to such fears is sending" out a child because of previous or' repeated, experience with infant or early childhood deaths by a mother. Crisis fostering is generally thought to improve the survival chance of children by removing them from the source of a crisis, real or imagined.

Alliance and apprentice is another type of fostering that involves sending children to live with non-relatives such as friends and acquaintances as a symbol of social, economic, and political alliances (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985). For example, children are sent to live with people who, parents think, are respectable and can teach or train them in some trade or skills. Another reason for this kind of fostering is to ensure social mobility for the child as he or she grows up.

There is also domestic fostering, these children are sent out to provide services and household tasks in certain homes (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985). For instance, female children can be sent to live with experienced women to learn domestic roles and how to become good housewives. This is believed to be necessary for their future married life (Fiawoo, 1978; Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985). In some instances, they are sent to provide emotional support to childless women or couples.

Among Ghanaians and Nigerians, grandmothers are the most popular recipients of foster children, especially from young mothers. Children live with their grandmothers during their period of weaning and this frees their mothers in doing something else, such as going to the farm or doing petty retail trading. This arrangement guarantees a flow of foods,

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clothes, and other supplies from parents to the grandparents (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985). Even though wealth flows from parents to grandparents in absence of fostered children, the flow is more regular when children are fostered out. It also ensures regular visits from parents to grandparents' homes.

Finally, most present-day child fostering is commonly thought to be associated with formal education, as education is increasingly view as the sure means of social mobility. However, sending children out for schooling is perhaps common in many parts of the world, and clearly not all African school children living away from their parents are being fostered, especially at older ages. Children are often boarded out with relatives, who are expected to provide formal education to the younger ones as a compensation for their own education. They may be sent to non - relatives where there are few relatives living near to schools or where relatives are no longer willing to honor the kinship claims of distant relatives. For instance, Goody (1975) has observed, in Ghana, a shift in the choice of foster parents, from the traditional kin group to non- relatives. She contends that the critical factor is the balance between child fostering as a reflection of rights vested in kinship roles and fostering as a means to education, an end to which almost all parents now aspire for their children as the major source of social mobility.

2.3.4. Challenges faced by foster children in education

Foster children in school, "…have higher rates of absenteeism and disciplinary referrals; 75% perform below grade level and more than 50% have been retained at least 1 year in school" (Zetlin and Weinberg, 2004, p. 918). They also consistently earn lower grades than non-foster youth in reading and mathematics, and score lower on standardized tests in these subjects (Zetlin and Weinberg). Consequently, foster youth are disproportionately

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represented in special education services: "…where as 10% of the general population receives special education services, 25-52% of children in foster care are placed in special education" (Zetlin and Weinberg, 2004, p. 918).

Compounding the challenges faced by foster children and youth are high levels of residential mobility and school transfers. As foster children get shuffled around from placement to placement, their educational records frequently become incomplete due to missing transcripts, assessments and attendance data. With the transfer of school records often delayed, foster children miss school, creating further educational gaps (Emerson and Lovitt, 2003). This has dire consequences for all foster children, especially those with special needs as their special education services, such as IEPs (Individualized Education Plan), are often neglected or not implemented until months later (Zetlin and Weinberg, 2004).

Another challenge foster children face in school which affects their academic performance is the attitudes of teachers. Being a foster child affects both the way students behave in school and the reactions they elicit from educators (Altshuler, 2003). As Emerson and Lovitt (2003) contend, "Some teachers are unaware of or insensitive to their foster children's problems and do not offer proper encouragement" (p. 200). This may further degrade the self-esteem of foster children as well as increase their feelings of isolation, making it even harder for them to absorb information and positively interact with their peers.

2.4. Risk and protective factor model

Various risk and protective factors influence young people's attitudes and behaviours with regard to substance use. These factors are also related to the success of treatment

programmes. A risk factor is any factor associated with the increased likelihood of a behaviour that usually has negative consequences. A protective factor is any factor that reduces the impact of risk behaviour, helps individuals not to engage in potentially harmful behaviour, and/or promotes an alternative pathway (Spooner, Hall and Lynskey 2001). A growing body of cross-cultural evidence indicates that various psychological, social, and behavioural factors are protective of health, especially during adolescence (WHO 2002).

In the early 1990s, the risk and protective model does regard fosterage as irregular (Seifer 1992; Thiessen, 1997) because the basis of the model is that all families have both strengths and weakness (Marsh 1990). Rather than view foster parenting as the cause of negative outcomes for children in these families, the risk and protective factor model describes family structure as one of many risk factors. Risk factors are either background characteristic or live events that may have a negative impact on child development. Protective factors are characteristics and events that positively influence children and help limit the impact of risk factors (Seifer et al 1992: Thiessen, 1997). Essentially, risk factors are the weaknesses and the protective factors the strengths of any given family. According to the model, fosterage can be risk factor and protective factor for children in a type of family. Personality, availability of social support and family cohesion are often identified as categorise of factors that can impact a child positively or negatively.

Researchers define personality factors as internal characteristics found in every child, including the child's intellectual ability and approach to learning, attitudes and disposition, self – esteem and impulse control. Social support availability factors are whether or not the child has advocates at home, at school, and else - where in the community. Family cohesion includes family structure and background characteristics such as the guardians' occupation, guardian's income, guardian's education, guardian' mental illness,

guardianship style, race and ethnicity and family size. Family cohesion factors also include life events such as divorce, death and remarriage and other changes that can influence child development (Thiessen 1997).

Elements of each of the three categories can serve as either risk or protective factors. For instance, researcher regards family size as a risk factor when there are four or more children, close in age within the same house hold, but a protective factor in families with fewer than four children or when children are spaced two or more years apart. Furthermore risk is cumulative (Seiffer 1992), meaning that children who have a combination of risk factors such as poverty, many 'siblings' (children of the guardian) close in age and carefree guardians are at greater risk of poor academic performance and other negative child development outcomes than children from care giving guardians with higher incomes and fewer 'siblings'. The more risk factors children have, the more likely they will experience negative outcomes as a result of the prevailing risk factors.

Risk factors can lead to negative results, but the presence of risk factors does not guarantee poor outcomes (Seifer, 1992; Thiessen, 1997). Indeed, protective factors mediate and limit the impact risk factors have on academic achievements and other aspects of child development. According to research in this area, protective factors include high self-esteem, strong social support at home and at school, low rate of criticism from guardian figures, positive guardian mental health, college-educated guardians, high income, and guardianship strategies that effectively address high-risk situations.

For instance, children considered high-risk because of exposure to several risk factors often do well in school when their guardians and teachers believe that they have the ability to do so. Similarly, strong guardianship is a protective factor and children who lived in impoverished areas can successfully avoid negative out comes if guardians develop higher

expectations for their children's school performance (Kaplan, Liu and Kaplan 2001; Seifer 1992). Essentially, the strengths and protection offered children are more important than staying with guardians or biological parents (Thiessen 1997).

However, in most ways children in guardianship families are at greater risk than children in biological families. Even if they have the same academic abilities, children in guardianship families are three times more likely to drop out of high school than children from biological parents (Thiessen 1997;Zimilesand Lee 1991). Because they are the primary and frequently sole source of financial support for the family, guardians have less time to help children with home work, are likely to use consistent discipline appearing maltreatment and have too much guardianship control over foster children in the performance of domestic chores, and all of these conditions may lead to lower academic achievement (Astone, Nan and Mclanahan 1991; Mulkey, Crain, and Harrington, 1992; Thiessen 1997).

Children from guardianship families generally find it more difficult to connect with school (Mulkey et al, 1992). However, some research suggest that the factors that have the greatest impact on students achievements is not family structure but income and positive attitudes towards education (Battle, 1998; Knox, 1996; Milne, 1986;Mulkey et al, 1992).Studies that consider the influence of biological parent configuration, income and positive attitude towards education find that there is little difference in the academic performance of children from biological parents with low income and negative attitudes towards education and guardians with higher incomes and positive attitudes towards education (Battle, 1998; Knox, 1996; Milne et al, 1986;Mulkey et al, 1992).

Family income and positive attitude towards education influence guardian support and involvement in education – factors related to school achievement. Foster students who regard their guardians as warm, firm and involved in their education earn better grades than their classmates with their biological parents (Delandes et at, 1997). Guardianship support acts as a protective factor countering some of the risk factors foster children encounter although economic pressures often limit or prevent guardianship involvement in fosterage, when guardians make the effort to support their foster children's education, their efforts acts as a protective-factor.

Fosterage is not the sole predictor of academic failure for foster children. There are many risk and protective factors that inter play to encourage a foster child's academic success or contribute a foster child's school performance. Regardless of family type, guardians should stay involved with their foster children's education from elementary school through high school and beyond to help them maximize their academic achievement.

2.5. The effects of fostering

The effects of fostering on children's educational outcomes present similarly ambivalent reports (Pilon, 2003). On the one hand, children may have access to education as a result of being fostered whereas on the other hand, household demands sometimes prevent children in foster households from enrolling in school. However, foster children's schooling, according to Charmes (1993) is often more vulnerable and unpredictable than that of non-fostered children (Cited in Pilon, 2003). Charmes notes that foster children, especially girls, were more vulnerable to disenrollment from school than non-foster children. Similarly, Kuyini et al. (2009) found in Ghana that a quarter of the fostered children they interviewed

indicated that they did not think that they were given the same treatment as non-fostered children.

Furthermore, examination of research in interviews revealed that guardians made it clear that meeting educational costs was frequently a struggle for them. Many explained that they faced difficult choices with their children's schooling:"We face a lot of problems. Sometimes we sell the little food we have, to buy the children's school needs and when we are faced with starvation we sell the few sheep and goats that we rear and that's how we continue to exist." (Interview with caregivers).

Moreover, where a family is unable to send all children to school, it may be foster children who are excluded. Education professionals tended to cast the implications of fosterage for education in a negative light:"most times a foster child comes to school late and sleeping in class when asked why coming in late and sleeping in class, the child says 'oh I am not staying with my parents I am staying with my auntie or this and that and early in the morning before I come to school I have to do this, do this, do this or have to work late at night that's why I am always sleeping in school'. So the school will know that the child is not actually with the parents but they don't have records for that." (Interview with education professional) Caregivers, however, more often emphasised the benefits of fostering, including in terms of education. For example: "There are advantages for fostering these children for us and for the children. We get the opportunity to send them to school so they can learn. Sometimes with their biological parents they are not able to go to school." (Interview with caregiver) Both sets of interviewees, nonetheless, agreed that some foster parents treat foster children unequally when compared to biological children.

However, some foster parents cited a lack of support from biological parents as a major barrier in respect of providing for a foster child's education. One education professional explained the approach taken in his own case: "When the girl was weaned after three or four years and she [his sister] came to take the child I told her, 'no, I want the girl to go to school. You don't live here, you live somewhere and if I give the girl to you she will become a liability'. But we are looking at the children as assets so that she will come and work for you, so if you want financial help, come to me and I will help you but this girl I want her to go to school and I want to keep her here."

While not generalizing, the example illustrates the point that to some extent at least, the disadvantage suffered by fostered children may be alleviated through co-operation between foster and biological parents. Interview findings suggest that while some cases of fosterage are educationally beneficial to the fostered child, in many, kinship obligations are the main reason for the foster arrangement and these may result in a considerable burden on already poor families in respect of additional educational expenses.

Fostering could therefore affect children's welfare in general and their education in particular either way – positively or negatively with parental background being a key determinant of children's educational outcomes (Smyth et al., 2009; Nonoyama-Tarumi, 2008).

2.6. Stress and Coping

2.6.1 Stress

It is commonly believed that foster parents mostly experience a higher degree of stress, compared with non-foster parents. Hewitt and Flett (2002) suggest that foster parents, relative to non-foster parents, are exposed to a greater number of stressful events simply as

a result of their unrealistic approach to life. As well as the usual stressors that can occur to any normal person, foster parents also produce stressors, because they seek to control foster children in many, if not all, spheres of behavior. Foster parents' behavior can generate stress that stems partly from the authoritarian tendencies to stringently evaluate themselves and others, focus on negative aspects of performance, and experience little satisfaction. Hewitt and Flett (2002) suggest that foster parents are like perfectionists that have a difficult time accepting failure, and have strong negative reactions to the actual or perceived experience of stressful events. The presence of these behaviours serves to enhance or intensify the negative impact of stress, which may lead to maltreatment of foster children (Hewitt andFlett, 2002). Blankstein and Dunkley (2002) also suggest that majority of parents experience a high amount of stress as they can unrealistically appraise ordinary events as though they are distressing, while Flett et al. (2002) suggest that foster parents for instance have characteristics that will lead to stress enhancement, and the generation of stress.

The different dimensions of parents are also thought to impact on stress differentially - maladaptive dimensions increase stress, while adaptive dimensions can impact positively on stress. Braver et al (1996) found that parents, that scored highly on the personal standards scale, which is commonly thought of as a positive dimension, reported the lowest levels of distress (in Slaney et al, 2002).

2.6.2. Parental Stress and Child Outcomes

Parenting stress also has been found to significantly relate to child externalizing behavior (e.g., Ross, Blanc, McNeil, Eyberg, and Hembree-Kigin, 1998). Webster-Stratton (1990) reviewed an extensive amount of literature examining the relation between familial, extra

familial and interpersonal stressors with child conduct problems. The author found that negative parenting practices often were related to higher levels of stress placed upon the parent. In other words, when stressed, the parent may be more likely to become irritable, critical, and/or to engage in abusive behaviors. When stressed, the parent may also develop increased negative perceptions of the child, display poor problem-solving skills, and demonstrate a low degree of nurturance towards the child (Webster-Stratton, 1990). For instance, a parent's negative perceptions of his or her child have been found to correlate significantly with increased parental criticisms of the child, commands towards the child, and physically negative behaviors toward the child (Webster-Stratton, 1989). In turn, diminished parenting abilities increase the probability that children will develop conduct problems, and child misbehavior may then increase the parent's level of stress (Webster-Stratton, 1990). In this manner, a coercive cycle of parent-child interaction may be set into place, similar to the coercive cycle described by Patterson (1982).

Levendosky and Graham-Bermann (1998) found that mothers with a history of domestic violence reported a significantly higher degree of parenting stress than mothers who did not have a history of domestic violence. Results also suggested that, even after controlling for maternal psychopathology and physical abuse, parenting stress continued to significantly predict child adjustment. Further, parenting stress was found to moderate the effects of maternal abuse on child outcome (Levendosky and Graham-Bermann, 1998). Similarly, Sprang, Clark, and Bass (2005) found that the degree of stress within the family structure (as measured by the Family Stress Checklist) significantly contributed to the severity of child maltreatment in a sample of 208 offending parents. Additionally, Mullins et al. (2004) found that parenting stress significantly moderated the relation between child-reported depressive symptoms in a sample of children diagnosed with diabetes mellitus, indicating

that parenting stress may play a significant role in the development and/or maintenance of child psychopathology and outcome.

In a longitudinal study investigating the connection between anticipated parenting stress prior to child birth and child behavior at age seven years, Benzies, Harrison, and Magill-Evans (2004) found that parenting stress not only predicted the frequency of child behavior problems at age seven in participant mothers, but also predicted the way in which such behavior problems impacted both participant mothers and participant fathers. Both mothers and fathers who reported increased parenting stress also tended to report that the child's behavior at age seven years was a greater problem for them (Benzies et al.). These results suggest that the degree of stress in a parent's life may play an important role in determining a child's behavior later in life. Additionally, parenting stress appears to affect the way parents discipline their child.

2.6.3 Coping

In light of this relationship between parents and stress, coping has received an increasing amount of attention. Generally, there are two forms of coping. Problem-focused coping aims to alter the source of the stress (a problem solving method), while emotion-focused coping aims to reduce or manage the emotion distress associated with the stress. When people feel that something constructive can be done, problem-focused methods are often used, while when the stressor appears to be something to be endured, emotion-focused methods are often employed (Carver, Scheier and Weintraub, 1989). Carver et al. (1989) proposed a series of coping dimensions. Active coping involves taking steps to remove or minimize the effects (for example, initiating direct action); planning involves thinking about how to cope with a stressor (for example, coming up with action strategies);

suppression of competing activities involves trying to avoid being distracted by other activities and focusing on the stressor; restraint coping involves waiting until the appropriate time to act; seeking social support for instrumental reasons involves seeking information or advice; seeking social support for emotional reasons involves seeking moral support, sympathy or understanding; positive reinterpretation and growth involves managing the distress emotions rather than dealing with the stressor itself; and turning to religion involves an increased engagement in religious activities. These coping strategies are thought of as functional and as positive methods of coping. The following are seen as dysfunctional and are thought to impede adaptive coping:behavioural disengagement, which involves reducing efforts to deal with the stressor; mental disengagement, which involves activities that distract the individual from thinking about the stressor; alcohol / drug use; and denial, which involves denying there is a problem. Some of the coping strategies can be seen as both positive and negative. These include focusing on and venting emotions which involves the tendency to focus on the distress the individual is experiencing and to air those feelings; humour which involves using humour to cope with the stress; and acceptance of the situation (Carver et al. 1989).

It is thought that negative foster parents generally use more maladaptive forms of coping strategies when attempting to deal with stressful circumstances, while non-foster parents use more adaptive coping strategies (Burns and Fedewa, 2005). A study by Flett, Hewitt, Blankstein, Solnik and Van Brunschot (1996) found that self-oriented foster parents and other-oriented parents were associated with positive problem solving orientations. A study by Flett, Russo and Hewitt (1994) found that socially-prescribed parents were associated with less adaptive coping and more maladaptive coping strategies, while the study by Flett, Hewitt, Blankstein, Solnik and Van Brunschot (1996) found that socially-prescribed

parents were also associated with negative problem solving orientations (cited in Hewitt and Flett, 2002).

Rice and Lapsley (2001) have found that non-foster parents reported greater use of problem-focused coping, and less use of dysfunctional coping compared with foster parents. They believe that "the features of non-foster parents dispose a person to adopt the sort of planning and other active coping activities that are characteristic of problem-focused coping" (Slaney et al, 2002: 77). Additionally, Edge et al. (2001) found that children with their biological parents had significantly lower scores on immature defenses such as denial, acting out, passive aggression and projection compared with foster children (cited in Slaney, Rice and Ashby, 2002). Flett et al. (1994) have also examined foster parents with respect to coping responses. They found that self-oriented foster parents was correlated with aspects of behavioral coping and was significantly related to the global behavioral coping scale.

Studies suggest that self-oriented foster parents may involve both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies. It has been suggested that although self-oriented foster parents may use generally adaptive coping strategies, using those strategies in certain situations may actually accentuate distress because they may put a great deal of effort into tasks that are irrelevant or unimportant - they may not know when to stop the task focus, or use strategies in inappropriate situations (Hewitt and Flett, 2002).

Socially-prescribed foster parents have been negatively related to both emotional and behavioral coping. It has been found to be highly dependent on avoidant behavior, which is the source of much negative behavior (cited in Burns and Fedewa, 2005). Hewitt, Flett and Endler (1995) found that socially-prescribed foster parents were associated with decreased social diversion (a form of coping that involves seeking people out in order to deal with

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problems) (cited in Hewitt &Flett, 2002). Flett, Blankstein, Hewitt and Obertynski (1994) found that socially-prescribed foster parents were associated with low support from family, friends and significant others which increase their stress level (in Hewitt and Flett, 2002). Socially-prescribed foster parent was associated negatively with ratings of comfort in seeking help and positively with ratings of difficulty continuing with good treatment of foster children. These findings support the idea that foster parents tend to be less open to seeking professional help for psychological problems, and that they can have a deleterious influence on the continuation of maltreatment for foster children who actually receive help (Hewitt and Flett, 2002).

2.7. Parenting Factors and Child Maltreatment

While parenting stress has been found to predict child behavior, it also has been found to relate to parenting practices and, subsequently, to a parent's potential to maltreat their child. Feinfield and Baker (2004) found that parents who reported decreased levels of stress related to their role as parent also reported significantly greater incidence of positive parenting practices. Calam, Bolton, and Roberts (2002) found significant positive correlations between parenting stress and increased criticism and hostility towards children. These investigators also found significant negative correlations between parenting stress and parental warmth, indicating that increased parenting stress was associated with decreased levels of parental warmth towards one's child (Calam et al.). In a longitudinal study, McCurdy (2005) found that increased maternal stress significantly predicted more punitive maternal parenting attitudes. In turn, the author found that maternal stress significantly increased the mother's potential for child maltreatment (McCurdy). Combs-Orme, Martin, Fox, and Faver (2000) interviewed a large and diverse sample of new

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mothers and found that these mothers believed that the two main causes of child maltreatment were stress factors and parenting abilities. These authors also found that mothers with higher levels of income and education were more likely to name - stress as a cause for child maltreatment (Combs-Orme et al.). Mash, Johnston, and Kovitz (1983) reported that abusive mothers were more likely to have greater perceived life stress than non-abusive mothers.

Finally, Ammerman and Patz (1996) found that parental stress (in the form of decreased maternal support) accounted for almost half of the variance in mothers 'potential for child maltreatment. Given the previously-noted correlations between parenting practices and behavior problems in children, as well as the current noted connections between parenting stress, parenting practices, and child maltreatment, it is evident that parenting stress is an important factor to take into account when determining a parent's ability to care for his or her child.

There is evidence that parental psychopathology is related to parents' potential for child abuse. For example, Robertson and Milner (1985) found significant positive correlations between adults' potential for child abuse and self-reported apprehension, tension, and anxiety. Further, a significant negative relation was found between adults' potential for child abuse and self-reported life stability. Additionally, the four variables (apprehension, tension, anxiety, and life stability) significantly accounted for 29 percent of the variance in child abuse potential (Robertson & Milner). Additionally, Lahey, Conger, Atkeson, and Treiber (1984) found that parents who abuse are more likely to have low self-esteem than non-abusive parents, and Salzinger, Kaplan, and Artemyeff (1983) found that abusive parents are more likely to be socially isolated than parents who have not abused.

2.8. Parenting Style-The Concept and Classification

It is important to note that the theoretical model accepted by many investigators to represent the possible styles of parenting has undergone some changes. It is also important to note that in the past, different styles of parenting were advocated by different theorists. Initially, the main issue regarding child rearing practices had been whether parents should employ restrictive or permissive child rearing practices in the years between 1913 and 1910, which were the heyday of American behaviorism, child rearing experts regarded the infant as an object for systematic shaping and conditioning. Consequently, desirable social behavior could be attained if the child's antisocial behaviors were always punished and never indulged. Thus, according to behaviorists and popular opinion of the time, restrictive methods in styles of parenting is by far better than permissive styles (Hetherington and Parke, 1979).

A shift toward a more permissive attitude in which the parent was advised to be concerned with the feelings and capabilities of the child emerged in the year's between the early 1930s, until the mid-1960s. This shift was due in part to the influence of Freudian Psychology and its focus on the role of early deprivation and restrictions in the development of inhibitions which could serve as the foundation of many emotional problems.

Additional influence toward permissive style also came from writings of humanistic psychologists (such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers) and progressive educators such as John Dewey. These people believed that individuals have an innate capacity to realize their potential abilities if they are free to explore and develop in an open and accepting environment. But again since the mid-1960s the virtue of the authoritative style has been highly praised (Hetherington and Parke, 1979).

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Generally, this controversy appeared to attract researchers' attention. As a result, a number of studies were conducted on child rearing practices in general and as to which style of parenting is more beneficial for children's healthy development in particular.

One can see from the parenting styles literature that Baumrind's three-fold classification of parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles) had been accepted as a conceptual framework. The fact that number of researchers (e.g.Dornbusch Ritter, Leideman, Roberts, and Fraleigh, 1987; Steinberg, Elmen, and Mounts, 1989) have employed her model in their studies seems to support this argument. Nevertheless, Maccoby and Martin (1983) tested Baurnrind's three-fold model and detected that permissive style of parenting encompasses two styles- indulgent and neglectful styles. Since then the four- fold model seems to be recognized (authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful styles).

Studies of child rearing practices that employed either of the above models used various dimensions to identify one parenting style as opposed to another. The four dimensions used in many of these studies are warmth, control, autonomy, and maturity demands (e.g., Schaefer, 1965; Baumrind and Black, 1967.

Each of these dimensions has been independently shown to be related to various aspects of children's behavior. A brief examination of each dimension follows.

2.8.1. Authoritative Parents

Parents who employ authoritative child rearing practices are controlling and demanding. They have high expectations for mature behavior and friendly enforce them by using commands and consequences for disobedience where necessary. At the same time, they are warm and nurturing, listen patiently and sensitively to their youngster's point of view, and

encourage children's input into family decision making (Berk, 1991; Papalia and Olds, 1982). In addition, these parents seem to have confidence in themselves as parents (Fischer and Lazerson, 1984).

As pre-schoolers, children from authoritative homes are the most self- reliant, self: controlled, exploitative, and content (Baumrind and Black, l967). Adolescents from authoritative homes were also found to be high achievers in school (Dornbusch, et.al., 1987), superior in psychosocial development (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, and Dornbusch, 1991; Dornbusch et.al. 1987), and show fewer problem behaviors (Hetherington and Parke, 1979).

2.8.2. Authoritarian Parents

Like authoritative parents, authoritarian parents are demanding and controlling, but they place such a high value on conformity and obedience that they are unresponsive even outright rejecting when children assert opposing opinions and beliefs. Consequently, little communicative give-and-take takes place between these parents and their youngsters.

Rather children are expected to accept their parents' word for what is right in an unquestioning manner. If they do not, authoritarian parents resort to forceful, punitive measures to curb the child's will (Berk, 1991; Papali and Olds, 1982).

Children from authoritarian homes are so strictly controlled, by either punishment or guilt, that they are often prevented from making a conscious choice about what their parents will do. Children were also found to be more discontented, withdrawn, distrustful (Baumrind and Black, 1967), and low in self-reliance and self-perception (Dornbusch et.al., 1987, Lamborn et.al., l991).

2.8.3. Indulgent Parents

Indulgent parents are nurturing, communicative, and accepting, but they avoid asserting their authority or imposing controls of any kind. They are overly tolerant and permit children to make virtually all of their own decisions (Berk, l991). In other words, indulgent parents are non-punitive, affectionate, and are parents who do not provide rules and guidelines to their children.

According to Baumrind (cited in Hetherington £ Parke, 1936) permissiveness is a cluster which refers to parents who do not enforce and communicate rules clearly, who have few demands or expectations from mature behavior; who ignore or accept undesirable behaviors, and who allow free expression of impulses and desires. Comparing Maccoby and Martina's indulgent style with Baumrind's permissive style of parenting, one can see that there are many similarities.

Children of indulgent parents are low in self-reliance, in achievement orientation, and in self-control (Hetherington and Parke, 1986. Compared to children from authoritative and authoritarian style of parenting these children report more school misconduct, more drug use, and less positive orientation toward school. These children however, report greater social competence than authoritarian-raised adolescents (Lamborn et.al. l991).

2.8.4. Neglectful Parents

Neglectful (or uninvolved) parents display little commitment to their role as caregivers and socialization agents beyond the minimum effort required to maintain the child as a member of the household. Often these parents are overwhelmed by many daily pressures and stresses in their lives, and they have little time and energy to spare for children. As a result, they cope with the requirements of parenting, by keeping the child at a distance and are

strongly oriented toward avoiding inconvenience (Berk, 1991). In other words, neglectful parents are less affectionate and less controlling and demanding parents.

Children from neglectful parents are on the whole impulsive-aggressive, non-compliant, moody, and low in self-esteem. They are more likely to have drinking problems, spend time on streets with peers, from similar parents, and are truant, precociously sexually active with records of arrest (Hetherington and Parke, 1986).

2.9. The Relationship between Parenting Styles and Academic Achievement

There seems to be a general agreement among theorists that a child's academic achievement is not a simple function of his/her innate ability. Environmental factors do play an important role in the child's scholastic performance. In particular, exposure to different types of stimuli out of the school may produce different levels of academic achievement independent of ability. Among these out-of-school variables which influence or which are at least related to academic achievement of children and adolescents, much attention seem to be given to parenting styles (e.g., Baumrind and Black, 1967; Dornbusch et.al., 1987; Lamborn et.al., 1991).

A number of studies indicate that there are direct and indirect relationships between parenting styles and academic achievement. Indirectly, parental stimulation, expectation for high achievement, encouraging curiosity, and challenges were found to be significantly and positively related to children's intrinsic academic motivation, which in turn was a significant predictor of academic achievement (Gottfried, 1990; Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried, l994). Also, direct parental involvement in such activities as advising, reinforcing, showing techniques of study was found to have positive effect on academic achievement (Fehrmann, Keith, Remers, 1987).

In an attempt to identify processes linking family and school achievement, Hess and Holloway (1984) reviewed results of studies of pre-school, primary, and middle school children. The authors identified five processes-verbal interactions between mother and children expectation of parents for achievement, positive affective relationships between parents and children, parental beliefs and attributions about the child, and discipline and control strategies. And it is not difficult to see that each of these processes is related, one way or another, to parenting styles indicating that parenting styles are related to academic achievement.

Likewise, some studies tried to compare the home environment (including parental behavior) of high-achieving and under achieving high school boys Morrow and Wilson (1961) for example, revealed that parents of high achievers gave children more praise and approval, showed more interest and understanding, were closer to their children and made their children feel more attached to the family In contrast, parents of underachievers were characterized as more domineering, over restrictive, and more punitive (in terms of both severity and frequency of punishment) The latter parents were also more likely to pressurize their youngsters excessively to achieve The results further indicated that family moral fosters academic achievement among high school students by fostering positive attitudes toward teachers and toward school and by promoting interest in intellectual activities. Similar results were also reported by a study that employed observation to examine parent-child communication in families of low and high achievers (Nicassio, 1983).

Generally, the above studies indicate that high achievers tend to have favorable home environment and supportive parental behavior while this is not the case for low achievers. More specifically, low achievers seem to have parents that are not supportive.

Unlike the above studies, other studies tried to compare the academic achievement of students from different parenting styles. More specifically while the above studies tried to compare the environment of high and low achievers other studies preferred to identify; families who employed different parenting styles first and then compared the academic achievement of children from these families. We can classify these studies into two-those employing Baumrind's three fold models (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive styles) A study by Dornbusch, and his associates (1987) employed the three- fold model to examine the relation between parenting style and adolescent school performance using a large (n=7,836) and diverse sample. The results indicated that authoritative parenting is positively correlated with adolescent school performance, whereas authoritarian and permissive parenting are negatively related to academic performance. More specifically, the researchers found that adolescent who described their parents as more democratic, more warmly, and more encouraging earned higher grades in school than their peers who described their parents to be less so. Several other studies that examined the relation between parenting styles and children school performance also reported similar results (see Hess and Holloway, 1984).

Another study by Steinberg and his associates (1989) tested how authoritative parenting affects school success of high school adolescents (n=120). The study revealed that youngsters who described their parents as liberal in granting psychological autonomy and more firm in controlling over their behavior showed greater increase in achievement than

the youngsters who rated their parents as exercising less control and giving more autonomy.

Another study by Steinberg, Lambon, Dornbusch, & Darling, (1992) examined the overtime effects of authoritative parenting, parental involvement, and encouragement on students academic achievement using a longitudinal sample (n=6400). According to Steinberg et.al. (1992) students who described their parents as authoritative improved more academically and became more engaged in school over the one –year study period than did their counterparts from non - authoritative homes.

2.10. Academic self-concept

Self-concept is an important construct in psychology and education. Byrne (1984) concluded that self-concept' is a multidimensional construct, having one general facet and several specific facets, one of which is 'academic self-concept'. The term 'academic self-concept' can be characterized by two elements consistent with the Shavelson model (Strein, 1993). First, academic self-concept reflects descriptive (e.g., I like math) as well as evaluative (e.g. I am good at math) aspects of self-perception. Second, self-perceptions associated with academic self-concept tend to focus on scholastic competence, rather than attitudes. It is referred to as a person's perception of self with respect to achievement in school (Reyes, 1984). A student's self-perception of academic ability or achievement will affect their school performance (Marsh,1990a).

There is a general consensus that children with educational and social needs such as foster students tend to have lower self-concept than non-foster students (Gurney, 1988; Elbaum and Vaughn,2001). They are vulnerable to low self-concepts because of a tendency to

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academic failure, the stigmatizing nature of their learning problems and the segregation from friends.

Three major points in understanding the self-concept of Chinese people are found in studies relating to self-concept from the CHC viewpoint. The first point relates to the discrepancies between one's actual self, ideal self and ought self. Despite the higher academic performance of Chinese students than American students, they tended to have a low ability self-concept (Sue &Okazaki, 1990). Chinese parents usually place high expectations on their children such that the actual self of the child might not measure up to the high expectations of the parents. The second point is based on the looking-glass self tradition (Cooley, 1902; Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979) –how we see ourselves depends to a great extent on how we imagine others see us. Chinese people tend to place a significantly high importance on how they appear in others' eyes or how they are being judged (Cheung and Lau, 2001). The last point comes from the multifaceted and hierarchical nature of self-concept developed by Marsh, Byrne and Shavelson (1988). Research has shown that Chinese people's self-concept has adopted the multidimensional approach to self-concept (Lau and Leung, 1992; Leung and Lau, 1989).

Psychologists have recognized the important role of self-concept in an individual's personal adjustment while educators are becoming increasingly aware that a students' perception of him / herself may have a significant influence on his/her academic performance in school. Studies done over the years have substantiated the positive relationship between these two variables and the volume of growing evidence that the two influence each other cannot be overlooked.

Generally, students try to compare the home environment including parental behaviour which motivates them to build a high academic self-concept. For example parent who gave children more praise and approval, showed more interest and understanding were closer to their children and made them feel more attached to the family. In contrast, parents who were characterized as more domineering, over restrictive, carefree, unloved and more punitive (in terms of both severity and frequency of punishment) tend to build a low academic self-concept.

2.11. Special Needs of Foster Children

Upon receiving a foster child into their care, foster parents may be placed in a difficult parenting situation from the onset. Foster children have several unique needs of their own that must be addressed by the foster parents. Foster children have been shown to experience greater mental and physical health problems than children who are not placed in foster homes (e.g., Barahal, Waterman, & Martin, 1981; Browne & Finkelhor, 1986; Burns et al., 2004; Crittenden, 1984).

Foster children also have been found to demonstrate poorer academic performance than children not involved in the child welfare system (e.g., Fanshel, 1978) as well as increased incidence of developmental delays and increased interaction with the juvenile justice system than children who are not placed in foster care. Therefore, foster careers face additional stressors related to the characteristics of the child in their care that biological parents may not have to manage.

Fanshel (1978) studied the adjustment of foster children over the course of five years, with the purpose of determining ―how children separated from their parents fare over time with extended tenure in foster care (p. 3). In Fanshel's sample, at the end of five years 36.4% of

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the children were still in foster care, 56.1% were no longer placed in foster care, 4.6% had been adopted, and 2.9% were placed in mental institutions, residential treatment facilities, or special training schools. Fanshel also found that approximately 25% of participant children were rated ― emotionally impaired by psychologists at the end of the study (out of this 25% percent, 12%were originally rated as impaired, while 12% were originally rated normal). Approximately 30% of foster children remaining in care at the end of the five years were deemed by case workers to be ―difficult to care for, 17% were rated ― moderately difficult, and 12% were rated ― substantially difficult. Further, approximately 31% of the children remaining in foster care at the end of five years were rated by school teachers to have adjustment problems, and an additional 24% were rated to be ― poorly adjusted. In terms of school performance, 59% of the sample of foster children was performing below their age-appropriate level following entry into foster care, 55% at the midpoint of the study (approximately two and one-half years later), and 53% at the end of the five years (Fanshel). This study provides evidence that foster children may exhibit greater mental health and school performance deficits than biological children.

Urquiza and Wirtz (1994) investigated a sample of 167 children who were referred to a Children's Protective Services (CPS) agency. Thirty-five percent of the sample was referred for having experienced physical abuse, 83% for neglect or failure to protect, and 12% for sexual abuse. Further, over half of the sample had experienced more than one prior referral to CPS. These investigators found that 68% of the children were identified as at-risk on at least one (if not more) of five domains: (a) developmental/ cognitive abilities, (b) academic abilities, (c) behavioral problems, (d) social/adaptive skills, and (e) affective problems. More specifically, 22.8% of children were identified as at-risk for cognitive delay or deficits, 28% were performing below grade level academically, 56% displayed

behavior problems (31% in the clinical range), 29% demonstrated significant deficits in social and adaptive skills, and between 6% and 12% (depending on domain) demonstrated significant affective problems. The most common affective problems that foster children exhibited were posttraumatic stress, anxiety, dissociation, and depression (Urquiza and Wirtz, 1994).

Additional research has demonstrated the elevated prevalence of mental illness in foster children compared to biological children. When investigating a sample of 426 children involved with the child welfare system, Garland et al. (2001) found that 41.8% of foster children met full criteria for at least one psychiatric disorder. Out of this sample, 20.8% of children qualified for a diagnosis of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), 16.1% for conduct disorder, and 13.5% for oppositional defiant disorder. In terms of internalizing problems, 8.6% of the sample met full criteria for an anxiety disorder (4.6% for separation anxiety disorder, 1.7% for post-traumatic stress disorder, 1.3% for obsessive-compulsive disorder, 1.0% for generalized anxiety disorder, 0.8% for social phobia, and 0.4% for panic disorder) and 5.2% qualified for a mood disorder (4.7% for major depression, 0.9% for mania, and 0.2% for hypomania; Garland et al.). In a review of the literature investigating mental illness in foster children, Hill and Thompson (2003) stated that prior neglect and abuse, biological predisposition to mental illness, and foster care transitions significantly led to foster child mental illness, and that conduct disorder is the most common disorder experienced by foster children.

These authors also suggest that because of the high prevalence of externalizing behavior disorders in foster children, often internalizing problems (e.g., anxiety, affective disorders) and physical health problems may be overlooked, and thus prevalence rates of internalizing disorders that have been reported may be underestimated (Hill and Thompson). Clausen et

al. (1998) found that after two months' placement in foster care, foster children demonstrated behavior problems at a rate of two and one-half times the rate of the general population, and demonstrated deficits in adaptive behavior at more than one standard deviation below the norm. Further, Hazen, Hough, Landsverk, and Wood (2004) found that children involved in the child welfare system were more likely to utilize mental health services. Specifically, 87.4% received outpatient mental health services, 61.9% received inpatient mental health services, 54.1% received school-based services, 8.3% had been placed in a detention center, and 7.2% had been placed on probation or assigned a juvenile corrections officer (Hazen, Hough, Landsverk, and Wood).

Foster children not only have been found to demonstrate a greater incidence of mental illness than children not involved in the child welfare system, but also have been found to demonstrate lower school performance and experience a greater number of medical problems than children who are not in the foster care system. Wood (2006) further found that 27% of their sample of children in out-of-home placement scored in the clinical range of behavior problems (25% externalizing behavior problem, 21% internalizing behavior problem). Out of this sample, 13% of children had repeated at least one grade, and 14% had at least one suspension or expulsion. Further, 14% demonstrated a reading skill delay, and 12% demonstrated a math skill.

Further, Hochstadt, Jaudes, Zimo, and Schachter (1987) found, in a sample of 149 foster children, 24.2% demonstrated developmental delays, 23.4% emotional and/or behavioral problems, 18.1% speech delays, and 8.1% school problems. A large percentage of this sample also experienced one or more types of physical illness. The most prominent physical illnesses reported were dermatologic abnormalities (25.5%), neuromuscular problems (20.1%), cardiovascular problems (19.1%), dental problems (13.4%) and

ophthalmologic disorders (12.8%; Hochstadt, Jaudes, Zimo, and Schachter). Overall, foster children appear to demonstrate a much higher rate of both mental and physical disorders, as well as deficits in academic school performance, which may hinder their developmental process and subsequent adjustment.

Foster children have also been found to have unique difficulties in forming secure attachments. Bowlby (1944) noted that broken relationships during childhood (e.g., a child being removed from his or her biological parents' home) may result in increased likelihood that a child will become psychopathic, delinquent, or antisocial and as a result, have an - affectionless personality. Therefore, it appears as if early attachment experiences determine future attachment styles. Given that many foster children are removed from their initial homes because they were abused and/or neglected, it is assumed that they have not formed a secure attachment to their biological parents. However, based on Holmes' research, it is also unlikely that foster children, without additional assistance, will easily be able to form a secure attachment to future caretakers (e.g., foster parents). Lanyado (2003) stated that, when a young child has experienced neglect and abuse from his or her parents followed by abandonment, there is a fearfulness about allowing anyone else — possibly particularly an adult — close to him. In the child's mind, this risks a repeat of the painful rejection, attack, abandonment, or uncertainty of past relationships. The child may now be convinced that daring to try again to allow a new relationship to grow, is a highly dangerous position.

In support of Lanyado's statements, Green (1998) found that foster children with a history of abuse or early institutional care were likely to exhibit an insecure attachment and/or be diagnosed with Reactive Attachment Disorder.

Millham et al. (1986) found that, within a sample of foster children who had not had contact with their biological parents in at least two years, almost half of these foster children had not been able to form a secure attachment with either their biological or their foster families. attributed these difficulties in developing a secure attachment style to foster children's experiences in being placed in several short-stay temporary homes. Groze and Rosenthal (1993) reported that formation of relationships with new parents (e.g., foster parents) were least positive in the case of children who experienced multiple abuse episodes. These researchers also noted that frequent transitions between foster homes were associated with difficulties in trusting others and avoidant or ambivalent attachment styles. Pardeck, Murphy, and Fitzwater (1985) found that when interviewing a sample of foster care workers, 94% of respondents reported that children with emotional problems were likely to experience unstable foster care (e.g., a greater number of transitions between foster homes). Further, Holland and Gorey (2004) found that children who had been sexually abused were six times more likely to experience multiple foster care placements. Barkley (1997) reported that foster children demonstrating disruptive behaviors were more likely to experience placement breakdown than foster children who did not demonstrate such behavior. In turn, Newton, Litrownik, and Landsverk (2000) reported that foster placement breakdowns were associated with a greater number of foster child internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors.

These findings suggest that foster children may be engaging in a dangerous cycle, whereby the child's behavior problems contribute to a placement breakdown, which then contributes to those behavior problems becoming more severe, and the cycle repeating itself. Given that foster children have been found to experience a greater number of emotional problems than biological children, that presence of emotional problems and/or a history of sexual

abuse positively predict number of foster home transitions, and that number of transitions has been found to relate to attachment difficulties, the chance that foster children will be able to develop secure attachments to caregivers (foster or biological) appears grim. This may, in turn, result in foster parents becoming less likely to retain a child in their care in the future, further hindering the foster child's healthy development.

The majority of the studies cited utilized participant samples that were composed of biological parents reporting about their biological child, or the studies did not specify whether parent participants were biological parents as opposed to individuals in another parenting arrangement. It is again important to recognize that the term - parent is not a homogeneous term, and that there are actually a number of different classifications of parents who care for children. For example, another classification of -- parent is foster parents who care for children who have been placed apart from their biological caretakers. While the studies cited above describe relations between parenting practices, parenting perceptions, parenting stress, potential for abuse, and child behavior for biological parents, no mention is made of foster parent participants. Yet, foster parents are in a unique situation and may demonstrate special parenting issues that are different from those of biological parents.

2.11.1. Special Needs of Foster Parents

Because foster parents demonstrate such unique parenting issues, it is imperative that they are provided with sufficient training in order to help them successfully fulfill their role as foster parent and eventually to reduce foster parent attrition (Rork and McNeil, 2005). Foster parents, prior to caring for a non-relative child in their home, must receive a minimum amount of parent training; however, the amount of training a foster parent

actually receives varies widely (Pecora et al., 1992). Some training programs require only six hours of parent training and education before a foster parent is allowed to bring a foster child into his or her home. Berry (1988) noted that child welfare agencies often provide a variety of training programs to foster parents, which frequently differ in focus, content, and theoretical underpinnings (e.g., behavioral, reflective counseling, cognitive-based parent education, attachment-focused). In a meta-analysis of 150 outcome studies, Weisz, Weiss, Han, Granger, and Morton (1995) concluded that behavioral parent training (BPT) produced significantly better therapy effects than non-behavioral methods of treatment. However, given that not all foster parents receive BPT as part of their pre-training experience, the efficacy of foster parent training programs may be questionable, as is foster parents knowledge and application of behavioral parenting principles.

Rork and McNeil (2005) also concluded that many of the parent training programs currently offered to foster parents have not been empirically validated, and studies performed to test program reliability and validity have been characterized by methodological limitations. Further, foster parent training programs frequently did not take into account the heterogeneity of the term -- foster parent and often did not design programs based upon the characteristics and special needs of foster parents (Rork and McNeil,2005). Foster parents have been found to commonly request additional training and education from child welfare agencies about how to be a successful foster parent (e.g., Dorgan, 1974; Henry, Cossett, Auletta, and Egan, 1991), and satisfaction with their training experience has been found to significantly correlate with foster parent satisfaction with role demands (Fees et al., 1998). However, foster parent attrition is one of the main problems facing the child welfare system today, and the child welfare system is bordering on a crisis whereby there are not enough homes in which foster children can be placed (e.g. Martin,

2000; Pecora, Whittaker, Maluccio, Barth, and Plotnick, 1992). To better retain foster parents in the child welfare system, foster parents must feel as if their special needs are being attended to by child welfare system workers; otherwise, there is a significantly increased risk of those foster parents deciding not to foster in the future.

Factors related to the foster child are not the only factors that are unique to the experience of being a foster parent. Foster parents have specific needs of their own that differentiate them from biological parents. For instance, upon becoming a foster parent, one must learn the aspects of the child welfare system, along with the duties of the system and the duties of foster parents. Shaw and Hipgrave (1983) noted that parenting a foster child requires specialized parenting abilities above and beyond what may be necessary to parent a biological child. These include an understanding and acknowledgement of the child's life history, prior parenting experience, ability to manage child disruptive behavior, ability to adjust to the child's defense mechanisms, and ability to develop an appropriate attachment with the foster child while still allowing the child to maintain connections with the biological family (Shaw and Hipgrave,1983).

Heller, Smyke, and Boris (2002) interviewed foster parents and identified four areas in which foster parents often experience difficulties. These included gaining an understanding of the medical, health, and educational systems, communicating with the legal and child welfare systems, being able to manage maladaptive child behavior, and being able to attend to the distinctive challenges of being a foster parent (Heller et al, 2002). Brown and Calder (2000) interviewed foster parents and asked them the question, - What do you need to be a good foster parent? Five main factors emerged from the foster parents' responses: (a) positive relationships with members of the child welfare system (b) support from the child welfare system, (c) family unity, (d) cultural sensitivity, and (e) appropriate personality

characteristics and parenting skills necessary to be a successful foster parent (Brown and Calder, 2000).

Further, Rhodes, Orme, and McSurdy (2003) investigators found that there is often a discrepancy between the views of foster parents and child welfare agency workers regarding each others' responsibilities. If foster parents and agency workers have different opinions regarding their roles and responsibilities, it is likely that a negative relationship may develop, which may only serve to exacerbate foster parent's stress level. Exacerbation of foster parenting stress may further serve to decrease their parenting abilities, as well as their willingness to foster a child in the future. McMillen (1997) reported that individuals associated with the child welfare system (such as foster parents) often have elevated stress levels when compared to the general population. McMillen (1997) emphasized that even though foster parents and other child welfare workers are offered interventions designed to decrease their stress, these interventions may actually (inadvertently) increase individuals' stress level, rather than decrease it. For example, McMillen (1997) states,

"To help [families in the child welfare system], the child welfare system offers a variety of interventions. Each intervention, however, comes with its own price. Each intervention investigation, assessment, family preservation, therapy, drug treatment, child placement, termination of parental rights, and so on—adds stress to an already stressful situation(p. 781).''

There is yet another set of stressors that are associated with and unique to foster parents that biological parents who are not involved in the child welfare system do not have to handle.

One study investigated the impact of foster parents' parenting strategies on placement outcomes (Lipscombe, Farmer, and Moyers, 2003). Four parenting factors were found to significantly impact child placement outcomes (defined as placement quality and likelihood of placement breakdown). Foster parent supervision was significantly related to less placement disruption and greater placement success. Foster parents' ability to respond to the foster child's emotional and chronological age was inversely related to placement disruption. Foster parents' dislike of the foster child at the start of the child's placement was significantly related to poorer parenting. Further, foster parents' level of encouragement of ― appropriate self-efficacy and independence in their foster child was significantly related to the quality of the placement (Lipscombe et al.2003). These results suggest that while there are aspects of foster parenting that significantly relate to child success, there are also additional factors with which foster parents must cope in order to successfully parent a foster child.

Rork and McNeil (2005) noted that foster parents may have very different reasons for fostering a child, including being concerned about the safety and welfare of out-of-home children, financial gain, and/or having an inherent desire to become a parent. Foster parents' motivation for becoming a foster parent may impact their perception of their foster parenting experience and/or their ability to successfully parent a foster child. Dando and Minty (1987) found a relation between foster parents' motivation for becoming a foster parent and their subsequent ability to successfully fulfill their foster parenting role. The investigators found that a foster parent's (a) desire to parent a child if they were unable to have a child of their own and (b) identification with deprived children as a result of their own negative childhood experiences were significantly related to foster parents' ability to fulfill their role as foster parent. Foster mothers who reported that their main motivation to

become a foster parent was one of altruism and social concerns were found to have increased ability to successfully foster children. Further, three-quarters of this sample of foster mothers reported that becoming a foster mother enhanced their quality of life (Dando and Minty, 1987).

One additional factor unique to foster parents occurs when foster parents have biological children of their own who are living in the home at the time the foster child is taken into their care. Poland and Groze (1993) administered questionnaire measures to a sample of 103 foster parents and 51 biological children of these foster parents. A majority of foster parents (57 percent) reported that the effects of having a foster child in the home with the biological child were positive. However, 93 percent of the sample noted that biological children spent less time at home after the foster child was taken in, and 61 percent of the sample believed that taking in a foster child did not promote positive family relationships. The most often cited foster parent concern about the effects of fostering on biological children was that biological children would feel ― left out of the family unit. With regard to the responses of biological children, two-thirds of the sample (67 percent) reported changes in their home after the foster child was brought into the home, and 47 percent of those biological children stated that they did not like the changes that had occurred. It was found that having to share a parent's time with the foster child was significantly associated with biological children's reported enjoyment of having a foster child in the home and with their acceptance of changes in the family that resulted from the foster child's placement (Poland and Groze, 1993).

2.12. Teacher Support

Teachers are also important sources of information and support as adolescents negotiate their way through high school and beyond. While the positive effects of warm interpersonal relationships with teachers has been the focus of a great deal of research, few have focused on the effect informational support from teachers has in shaping adolescents' feelings about their present school experiences and future educational and occupational expectations (Kumar and Hruda, 2001). Expectations and beliefs about their students often influence the informational support that teachers provide. Teachers rely on stereotypes in developing expectations for students from stigmatized group such as foster students. Based on their prejudices and the low expectations they have of these students, teachers may discourage them from taking courses that can improve their future educational opportunities (Cooper, 1994; Patthey-Chaves, 1993). Consequently, teachers who hold lower expectations of poor, minority students not only deny these students emotional support, but by giving inappropriate advice, also deny students informational support. As Phelan found in her ethnographic study of high school students in schools where two-thirds of the students were minority and came from homes where neither parent had a college education, teachers provided no mentoring to help them with course selection. Students were not made aware of the availability of college scholarships they could apply for or the opportunities open to them at local universities and business (Phelan, Davidson, and Yu, 1998). These students received little informational support from their high school teachers.

Among Ghanaians in general and the people in the Okaikoi north district in particular, foster children most at times exhibit negative behaviours such as truancy and 'hardiness' hence teachers may unconsciously have prejudices against foster children and therefore not provide the needed support for them. Thus schools and teachers in particular, can act as

gatekeepers, preventing some students from advancing while encouraging other students to do so. With little or no informational support from teachers or parents, these adolescents are likely to have little understanding of how schoolwork relates to their future lives, or how they can reach their future educational and career goals. Schools where foster students are not helped to make these connections between their present life and their future are likely to have depressed educational aspirations and expectations, as well as feel skeptical about the usefulness of schooling which will negatively affect their academic performance.

2.12.1. Development of Self-confidence in Students

Teaching is one of the most challenging professions. Working with young people as they develop their personality is a rewarding experience. Teachers help to develop the minds of young people to the end that they can cope with problems affecting our country's future (Gilchrist el al., 1985).

To teach successfully, one must plan successfully. Successful planning means knowing how to facilitate a positive learning experience for all students. The teacher uses his/her best professional judgment to decide which method; strategy and technique will work best for a particular situation (Crandall, 1983).

Teacher training is focused on methods, courses and areas of content specialty. It is as if we assume that once a person knows many facts about a particular subject, he or she can teach it to others; or in the case of elementary and secondary education, if teacher studies a subject in depth and learns methods of instruction, he or she will then be a good teacher (Reynolds, 1985).

2.13. Theoretical Framework for the present study

The theoretical framework for the present study is based on the socio-cognitive, attachment and transactional theories.

2.13.1 Socio-cognitive theory

Social learning theory proposes that all behaviours happen in a context, so it is important to note the influence of other factors. The theory is based on the idea that we can not only rely on ourselves for information about the world and how we should behave in it(Bandura, 1977). Bandura's 1977, model states that people observed what goes on around them and then interprets the meaning of those behaviours. He explains observational learned behaviours as a situation where the observer does something he or she has never done before by watching a model do it and be rewarded from doing it.

Bandura postulates that there are four distinct processes necessary for the occurrence of modeled behaviour. First, the observer must attend to the model. If one is not watching the model, one cannot learn anything from him. Obviously, one's ability to learn from models depends on what kinds of model are available in the environment. Second, the observer must remember what the model does. Third, the observer must be physically able to enact the modeled behaviour and fourthly, for a truly modeled behaviour to emerge, the observer must be motivated to engage in that behaviour. Motivation is said to be derived from a need to achieve.

Bandura emphasized cognitive aspects of learning by particularly focusing on the role of observational learning; that is learning occurs by observing role models. Bandura's social learning theory recognizes the importance of observing, modeling the behaviours,

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emotional reactions and attitudes of others. Cognitive theory states that our interpretation of internal arousal would be affected by what we observe going on around us.

There are therefore many factors that influence the academic success and motivation of students. Social cognitive theory contends that individuals learn and perform based upon a triadic reciprocaility of personal factors, behaviours and the environment (Bandura, 1986). Personal factors such as beliefs, behaviours and the environment equally influence one another. Existing literature suggest that highly motivated students may attain more academic success (Grolnick and Slowiaczek, 1994).

In relating this theory to the present study, socio-cognitive theory assumes foster students interpretate the messages that their home and school environment provide them through their guardian behaviours, which can change cognitions and behaviours. For instance, a foster student who receives low or lack guardian care, may feel uncared for and unloved and may show signs of hopelessness, aggression, delinquency, carefree attitude among others and this will further influence his or her behaviour.

Previous studies have indicated that guardians are still influential in the lives of the foster children (Gecas and Seff, 1990). According to Clausen et al (1996), guardians serve as role models for their foster children and that foster children tend to imitate the habit and behaviour of their guardians. Therefore, any ill behaviour portrayed by the guardian may have negative impact on the foster student and his or her academic performance.

2.13.2. Attachment theory

The attachment theory is concerned with how children's early relationships affect their development and their capacity to form later relationships. This concept helps to explain why children who have had a poor start to relationships with others, or who have

experienced seriously disrupted care, often behave in very troubling ways in society and most of them are unable to climb the academic ladder to be beneficial to themselves and the nation at large.

The attachment theory was pioneered by the British psychiatrist, John Bowlby in the 1940s, and used the term 'attachment bond' to describe a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with a mother or permanent mother substitute in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment (Bowlby, 1951, p.13). In his influential work, Bowlby described the attachment system that helps an individual to seek comfort from their caregiver and develop a sense of security. The theoretical basis of most of the attachment research is that secure attachment in infancy will predict good social and emotional outcomes. However, attachment theory is continually evolving in the light of new research, and the importance of attachment to developmental issues in middle childhood and adolescence, such as a child's independent involvement in life experiences beyond the home (at school, with peers and in the community), is also recognized (Marvin, and Britner,1999).

Attachments are best thought of as mutually reinforcing patterns of behavior between a guardian and a child. Although children play an active role in developing and maintaining an attachment relationship, what motivates a guardian to respond to the child is as important to attachment as a child's behavior in moments of need.

Attachment theory contends that how guardians anticipate, respond to and interpret the child's attachment behavior is influenced by many factors. For example, guardians who are dealing with a major challenge such as domestic violence are likely to have difficulty in focusing on and attending to their child's needs. Their own experience as children and the mental image of parental relationships that they bring to their role as parents are also likely to affect how guardians anticipate, respond to and interpret their own child's attachment

behavior. Guardians without secure attachments with others may also find it difficult to respond to a child in such a way that will lead to the formation of a secure attachment (Dozier, Stovall, Albus, and Bates, 2001).

Having a guardian who provides consistent, responsive care helps children to learn to recognize the nature of their own emotions, and to regulate their own behavior and emotional states. Through experiencing responsive and sensitive care giving a child also develops social competencies, empathy and emotional intelligence, and learns how to relate to other people and understand what to expect from them (Crittenden, P.M. 1990). When a guardian is sensitive to a child's emotional needs and responds positively, this helps the child to develop a sense of being loved and lovable. This is how children learn that they will be able to rely on others for help in times of trouble later in life. Children are better able to cope with traumatic experiences when their earlier experiences are safe and protected (Howe, 2005). This helps them to build positive self esteem to give out their best holistically.

A child's confidence that a guardian will be protective also enables the child to explore the world and learn new skills, using the guardian as a secure base for exploration, play or other social behaviors. A child who feels that they are looked after and protected by reliable adults is freed from the fear and anxiety that accompany a sense of being alone or abandoned. The more secure the child feels the more energy and enthusiasm they have to be curious, to learn, to seek understanding and to try to make sense of the world.

In relating this theory to the present study, attachment theory assumes that, foster students need 'attachment bond' to develop to their maximum capacity and potentiality, physically, emotionally, socially, morally and academically. Foster students interpret the messages that their home and school environments give them through their guardian behavior which can

influence their total development positively or negatively. For example, foster students who experience domestic violence are most likely to perform poorly academically as a result of emotional and physiological instability. This therefore mean, most foster students who suffer experiences of abuse and neglect display attachment behaviors that can be classified as disorganized for which poor academic performance is inclusive as a result of low academic self concept. On the other hand, foster students who are loved and protected enjoy emotional and physiological stability which enhance their academic performance.

Researching into the foster child's behavior (poor academic performance) from an attachment viewpoint can help foster guardian find alternative explanations, make sense of difficult situations, have empathy with the child, and develop guardianship strategies that can reduce a child's distress (Cairns, K. 2002).This study is intended to help foster guardians and others close to foster children use attachment theory to understand children's needs and challenges and to build productive, new relationships that can safeguard their future.

2.13.3. Transactional Model

Other theories that under pin the present study is stress and coping strategy of Lazarus's Transactional Model.

Lazarus's Transactional Model outlined initially in the mid-1960's by Richard Lazarus and colleagues (Folkman,1984; Lazarus &Folkman, 1984) the transactional model is regarded as one of the most influential models that underpin current approaches to stress research. The transactional model views stress not as a variable that exists in the individual or the environment, but as a dynamic process that consists of several components (O'Driscoll, Taylor, and Kalliath, 2003). Lazarus theorized that the individual's personal perception of

the stressor determines how stressful the event is, emphasizing that an important component in this model is cognitive appraisal (Gardner, Rose,Mason, Tyler, and Cushway, 2005). This perspective implies most individuals will experience stress or strain when a situation or event is appraised as challenging and/or demanding and if the individual possesses insufficient resources to effectively cope with the event.

The transactional model views stress as dependent on the person environment interaction therefore, individuals' coping behaviors used in response to stress should relate systematically to the manner in which they respond to other events (Watson and Hubbard, 1996). One of the central themes of the transactional model of stress and coping is that stress-coping processes unfold from a complex interaction between the person and situation (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, and Gruen, 1986). However, little research has examined the specific interactions and contexts of stress-coping processes. It may be that the impact of personality in the stress-coping process may essentially depend on the actual context of the stressful situation (O'Brien and DeLongis, 1996).

In the transactional model of stress coping, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argued that a critical variable is the individual's cognitive appraisal of the situation. As the transactional model underlies this current study the different types of appraisal will be discussed. Lazarus (1966) outlined two types of cognitive appraisal, primary and secondary (Gardner, Rose, Mason, Tyler, and Cushway, 2005). Primary appraisal refers to an evaluation of a stressor. Lazarus (1966) further established the differences between primary appraisal of harm (damage already occurring), threat (harm that may happen in the future) and challenge (positive outcome) (Gardner, Rose, Mason, Tyler, and Cushway, 2005).

Primary appraisal is a significant factor in establishing how an individual appraises and then reacts when exposed to a stressful event. Secondary appraisal, in contrast, refers to an individual's attempt to define what coping resources are available for dealing with the harm, threat or challenge perceptions established during primary appraisal. Secondary appraisal involves the individual assessing how he or she can deal with the stressor or situation. The individual evaluates various coping methods, such as actively changing the situation, avoiding or simply accepting it, as a means for adapting to the event (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, and Gruen, 1986).

 Secondary appraisal is important in the stress coping process as it takes into account which coping options are available and which will accomplish the goal of effective coping. Irrelevant appraisals occur when an individual perceives an event or stressor to be unimportant to their overall well being. Again personality characteristics have an effect in the process and can influence what aspects of the event or situation are appraised as relevant to the individual's well-being or goals (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, and Gruen, 1986).

In a transactional model a mediated relationship occurs where the independent variable influences the mediator, which in turn influences the outcome (Holmbeck, 1997).

It is commonly believed that foster parents mostly experience a higher degree of stress, compared with non-foster parents. Hewitt and Flett (2002) suggest that foster parents, relative to non-foster parents, are exposed to a greater number of stressful events simply as a result of their unrealistic approach to life. As well as the usual stressors that can occur to any normal person, foster parents also produce stressors, because they seek to control foster children in many, if not all, spheres of behavior. Foster parents' behaviour can generate

stress that stems partly from the authoritarian tendencies to stringently evaluate themselves and others, focus on negative aspects of performance, and experience little satisfaction.

Hewitt and Flett (2002) suggest that foster parents are like perfectionists that have a difficult time accepting failure, and have strong negative reactions to the actual or perceived experience of stressful events. The presence of these behaviors serve to enhance or intensify the negative impact of stress, which may lead to maltreatment of foster children (Hewitt and Flett, 2002). Blankstein and Dunkley (2002) also suggest that majority of parents experience a high amount of stress as they can unrealistically appraise ordinary events as though they are distressing, while Flett et al. (2002) suggest that foster parents for instance have characteristics that will lead to stress enhancement, and the generation of stress.

In relating this theory to the present study, transactional study assumes that, foster parents need the mediator 'coping strategy' to minimize stress which will lead to reduction if not eradication of child abuse thereby enhancing the academic performance of the foster child.

Modern living has brought with it, not only innumerable means of comfort, but also a plethora of demands that tax human body and mind. Now-a-days everyone talks about stress. It is cutting across all socio economic groups of population and becoming the great leveler. Therefore, foster parents must avoid their unrealistic approach to life and how they seek to control foster children in many, if not all spheres of behaviors which create higher level of stress and its resultant of potential for child abuse which affects the foster children academic performance.

In conclusion, the foster parents must adapt secondary appraisal which involves the individual assessing how he or she can deal with the stressor or situation. The individual evaluates various coping methods, such as actively changing the situation, avoiding or

simply accepting it, as a means for adapting to the event (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, and Gruen, 1986).

Fig. 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 are diagrammatic presentations of the present study's theoretical frame work. The frame work hypothesized that foster parents coping strategies mediate stress and potential for child abuse, academic self concept of foster students mediates foster parent support and academic performance and teacher support with academic performance respectively. Just as in Lazaru's transactional model the mediators can influence the dependent and independent variables directly or indirectly. For instance, stress can lead directly to potential for child abuse and can be mediated by coping strategies where potential for child abuse will be minimized if not avoided. Thus the academic performance of foster students to large extent, would be determined by the degree of influence of foster parent support, high academic self concept of foster students and to some extent teacher support.

Fig.2.1
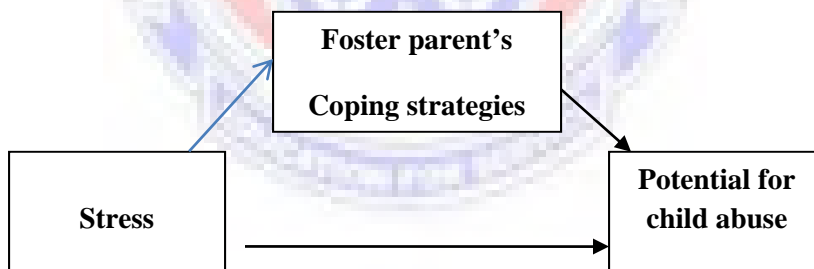
A theoretical model of foster parents coping strategies as a mediator of stress and potential for child abuse.

Fig.2.2
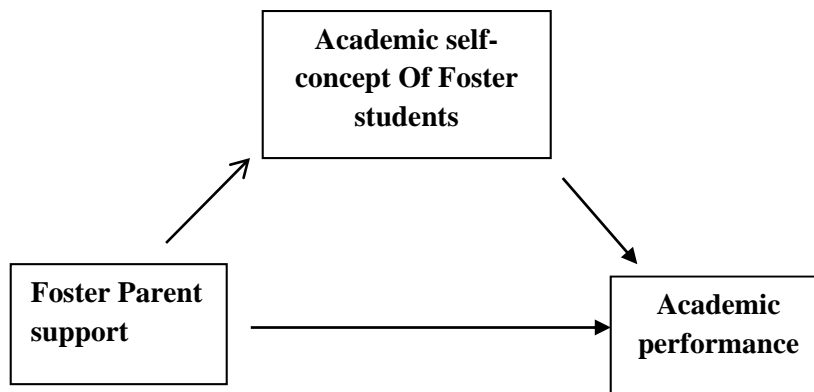
A theoretical model of foster student's academic self-concept as a mediator of the support they receive from their foster parents and academic performance.

Fig.2.3
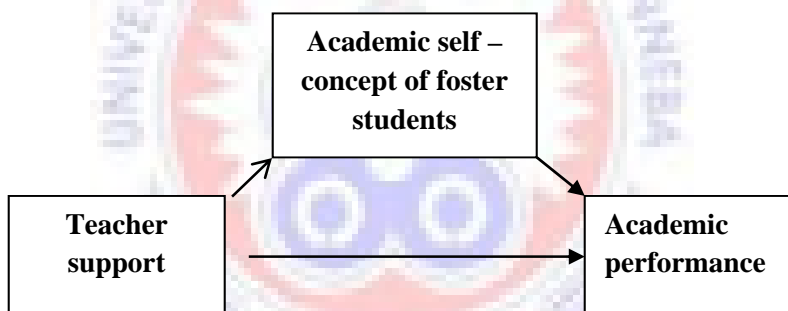
A theoretical model of foster student's academic self-concept as a mediator of the support they receive from their teachers and their academic performance.

From the figure 2.3 above, teacher support is assumed to directly enhance foster students academic performance and could also be mediated by academic self-concept of foster students.

2.14. **Summary:**

Earlier studies suggested that foster students perform poorly academically than their non foster counterparts due to their disruptive and aggressive behaviors. However, the present research has concluded that, fosterage per say is not the cause of foster student poor academic performance but rather the presence or absence of certain predictors.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology for the study. It deals with the description of the research design, the target population, sampling procedure, instrumentation, data collection procedure as well as the reliability and validity of the instruments and the method of data analysis

3.2   Research Design

The research study was a descriptive cross sectional design utilizing the quantitative research approach. It was the most appropriate design to use for this study in order to determine if there is a relationship between the study variables.

Patton (1990) described the quantitative process as assigning consequential numerical values to qualitative data, by qualitatively analyzing and assigning significance to quantitative data. In quantitative research, Gall (1989) found quantitative research designs are either descriptive (subjects usually measured once) or experimental (subjects measured before and after a treatment). Patton (1990) revealed a descriptive study establishes only associations between variables, while an experiment establishes causality. In a descriptive study, Cohen & Manion, (2001) emphasized no attempt is made to change behavior or conditions; that a researcher measures the variables simply as found.

The present study used the quantitative research design which Strauss and Corbin (1990) cited in Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997: 22) describe as "studies whose findings are mainly the product of statistical summary and analysis". The main feature of quantitative

research is the heavy reliance of the researcher on data analysis to arrive at findings or conclusions. Numbers are assigned to the properties in the phenomena to represent their qualities.

Quantitative research is usually associated with numbers which possess specific characteristics which make them very useful for analytical purposes. Ghauri and Gronghaug (2005: 204) view quantitative research as an efficient way to represent information and meanings. In quantitative research, Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005: 204) further noted that analyses are conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics.

The choice of a quantitative research design for this study was informed by its primary strengths because, according to Blanche et al. (2006: 132) "the findings are generaliseable and the data are objective". Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005: 109) also assert that a quantitative research design is more scientific than a qualitative research design.

3.3. Population

Mouton (1996) describes population as a collection of objects, events or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. The target population for the study was all foster and non foster students in the public Junior High Schools in the Okai Koi North Metropolis in the Greater Accra region. There were 689 foster students (300 boys and 389 girls) and 2,689 non fostered from nine junior high schools in the study area.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

Bryman and Bell (2003: 93) refer to sample as a sub set of the population that is selected for investigation. Sample involve collecting information from a portion of the larger group,

and on this basis, infer something about the larger group (population). A sample of 210 respondents was selected from a total population of 689 using simple random sampling technique. In obtaining this sample, ''YES'' or ''NO'' was written on pieces of paper and folded. Participants were then to pick randomly and those who selected the ''YES'' were selected to participate in the study. A similar processed was used to select 210 non – foster students.

A representative sample is crucial to quantitative research and must reflect the population accurately so that inferences can be drawn. Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997: 136) argue that the ability to generalize from a sample of the population depends critically on the representativeness of the sample; otherwise, the sample becomes biased. Rubin (2005 describes a sampling bias to mean that those selected are not typical or representative of the larger population they have been chosen from. This could be as a result of overrepresentation of some segment of the population or the exclusion or underrepresentation of a significant segment. Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997: 136) contend that a sample will be representative of the population from which it is selected if the aggregate characteristics of the sample closely approximate those same aggregate characteristics in the population.

Struwig and Stead (2001: 118) emphasized that a representative sample should not be less than 15% of the target population. The selected sample was 30.5% of the target population ,hence the sample size for the study was representative according to Struwig and Stead (2001: 118).

3.5 .Instrumentation

The following instruments were used to collect data for this study. They are:

- Parenting Styles Questionnaire

- Students Academic Concept Questionnaire

- Parental Stress Scale

- Potential for Child Abuse Inventory

- Teacher Support Questionnaire

- Parent support Questionnaire

- Parental Coping Scale

- Academic Performance

3.6. Validity

Validity tells us the degree to which an instrument actually measures what it is supposed to measure and provides a direct check on how well the test fulfills its function. The validity of a test should not be reported in general terms; for example, you should not say that a test has a high or low validity. Its validity must be established with reference to the particular use for which the test is being considered (Anastasi, 1988; Polit et al, 2004).

In this study, two validities were used namely, construct validity and concurrent validity.

3.6.1. Construct Validity

Construct validation is appropriate whenever the test user wants to draw inferences from test scores to a behaviour domain which cannot be adequately represented by a single criterion or completely defined by a universe of content. A test's construct validity is the

degree to which it measures the behaviour domain or other theoretical constructs or traits that it was designed to measure. More specifically, construct validity can be understood as the extent to which the behaviour domain or the constructs of theoretical interest have been successfully operationalized. For example, a researcher is interested in determining the students parenting styles where the parenting styles were of three types (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative). Since parenting styles is a construct which cannot be adequately represented by a criterion or defined by a universe of content, the researcher adopted 33 items developed in order to tap the construct "each parenting styles" and proceeds to collect the data.

Establishing construct validity is an ongoing process that involves the verification of predictions made about the test scores. A procedure for construct validation that was used in this study was factor analysis, or determining construct validity: the factor analysis.

3.6.2. Concurrent Validity

Concurrent validity refers to the degree to which the operationalization correlates with other measures of the same construct that are measured at the same time. Going back to the selection test example, this would mean that the tests are administered to current respondents and then correlated with their scores on other variables that were continuous.

3.5.1. Parenting Styles Questionnaire

Abesha (1997) constructed and validated parenting style questionnaire. Parenting style questionnaire was composed of two 33- item subscales on authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Responses were generated from students on a 4-point Likert-type format, with responses from adolescents ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly

agree (4). Abesha (1997) reported internal consistency of 0.87 on authoritative, 0.79 on authoritarian and 0.78 on permissive parenting style. In this study, the internal consistency of 0.75, 0.69 and 0.72 were realized respectively.

3.5.1.1.. Factor Analysis of Parenting Styles Questionnaire (PSQ)

Factor analysis is a type of analytical statistical technique used to develop questionnaire in order to make sure that instrument measure what it is suppose to measure.

After collecting the data from the respondents, it was fed into SPSS version 16.The data was first screened to make sure that it is normally distributed, thus meeting one of the assumption of parametric test. This was done using the skewness of the distribution on each of the variables. Each distribution was judged using the z-statistic of -/+3.29. According to Ofori and Dampson (2010), distribution with the resulting z-statistic score more than -/+3.29 after dividing its skewness value by its standard error (SE) of skewness indicates that the distribution is abnormally skewed. Using this criterion of-/+3.29, it was found that items 8, 14, and 28 were abnormally skewed. That is such items had a z-statistic beyond the $p = 0.001$ criterion of +/- 3.29 indicating that it is abnormally positively skewed. As a result, they were excluded from further analysis.

The remaining 30 items were subjected to **Principal Component (PC) with Oblinim Rotation** using SPSS version 16 to ascertain the appropriateness of the factors. Oblinim rotation was used because the items are related. These factors were confirmed using factor loadings based on the content of the items. Factor loading exceeding 0.3 was used because the greater the loading, the higher the variable is efficient to measure what it is suppose to measure and that a factor loading of 0.1 for instance is not strong enough to ascertain the pureness of the measure of the factor(Howell,2002).

First, an abridged version of the Rotated Matrix(R-Matrix) was inspected with the top half of the table contains the Pearson Correlation Coefficient between all pairs of the questions whereas the bottom half contains the one-tailed significance of these coefficients.

The researcher screened the significance values and looked for any variables for which the majority of values are greater than 0.05. In addition the researcher checked if there were any correlation coefficients where the relationship exceed 0.9 or -0.9. It was found that items 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8 had their correlation coefficients exceed 0.9 or -0.9 as a result these items were eliminated and re-run the analysis for the remaining 25 items.

After 16 iterations, rotation converged with the extraction of 3 factors with eigen values above 1.0. The items 3,9, 10, 17, 18, 19, 23, 29 and 33 were found to be cross loaded meaning that they are not meaningfully measuring a single construct and as a result eliminated from further analyses. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.65, above the recommended value of .50, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (χ^2 (190) = 1.178E3, p = .000). The diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were all over .5, supporting the inclusion of each item in the factor analysis. Finally, the communalities were all above .3 (see Table3.1), further confirming that each item shared some common variance with other items.

Five items (20, 30, 12,26,15,24 and 7) showed their highest loading factor one. These tapped authoritarian construct that accounted for 23.3% of the total variance in the data rotated. Items 32, 31, 11, 25 and 27 showed the second highest loading on factor two which tapped the construct of permissiveness. This factor accounted for 16.6% of the total variance in the data rotated. Items 21,16,1 and 13 also loaded on factor three accounting for 11.4% of the total variance in the data rotated. The final 16 items with their loading and communalities values are presented in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1Items listing, factor loadings and communalities for three –factor PC solution

	Factor loading			Communality
Factor	1	2	3	
Factor 1 – Authoritarian (alpha =0.75)				
q20	-0.82			0.70
q30	- 0.80			0.67
q12	0.79			0.66
q26	0.76			0.66
q15	0.62			0.56
q24	0.50			0.37
q7	0.49			0.35
Factor 2 – Permissiveness (alpha =0.77)				
q32		0.68		0.54
q31		-0.65		0.46
q11		-0.63		0.44
q25		- 0.63		0.46
q27		0.56		0.37
Factor 3 – Authoritative (alpha = 0.78)				
q21			0.51	0.61
q16			0.69	0.54
q1			0.63	0.49
q13			0.57	0.43

The internal consistency for each of the subscales was examined using Cronbach alpha. The alpha value for items 20,30,12,26, 15, 24 and (authoritarian) had the alpha value of 0.75. Items 32, 31, 11, 25 and 27 (permissiveness) had the alpha value of 0.77. Items 21, 16, 1 and 13 (authoritative) had the alpha value of 0.78.

The authoritarian consists of the items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The permissiveness also consists of the items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Lastly, authoritative consist of the items of 11 and 12 respectively.

3.5.2. Student Academic Concept Questionnaire (SACQ)

This scale was constructed and validated by Anderson (1991). The SACQ was 6-item self - report instrument designed to measure the academic concept of the foster students. Participants responded to each item on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 to 5 with the higher numbers generally representing greater academic concept. The total scores range from 6 to 24 with higher scores indicating greater academic concept. Anderson (1991) reported good psychometric internal consistency reliability alpha of 0.83 for this scale. In this current study, internal consistency of 0.67 was found.

3.5.3. Parental Stress Scale (PSS)

Parental Stress Scale was constructed and validated by Abidin (1995). This is a self-report measure of 12-items designed to assess for the presence of stress with regard to foster parent's relationship with a foster child. Participants response to whether each item was present in their foster parent relationship on a 4-item point scale ranging from strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree 4. Respondents' responses were summed to arrive at a total score ranging from 6 to 24 with higher scores representing a greater degree of parental

stress Abidin (1995) reported acceptable psychometric property for the 6-item scale of 0.78 cronbach alpha. In this study, the PSS was found to be quite similar to that reported by Abidin (alpha = 0.72).

3.5.4. Child Abuse Inventory (CAI)

Potential for child abuse by the foster parent was measured using the CAI (Ammerman & Patz, (1996).This is 6-item self-report scale. Participant's response was used to identify the degree of foster abuse by their foster parent. It is 4-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). Ammerman & Patz, (1996) reported internal consistency of 0.76 of CAI. In this study, the internal consistency of 0.81 was realized.

3.5.5. Teacher Support Questionnaire

This scale was constructed and validated by Anderson (1991). Teacher Support Questionnaire was measured using 8-item self - report instrument designed to measure the learning or studying support teachers give to students. Participants responded to each item on a 4-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4) with the higher numbers generally representing greater sour feeling as a foster child. The total scores range from 8 to 32. Anderson (1991) reported good psychometric internal consistency reliability alpha of 0.81 for this scale. In this current study, internal consistency of 0.68 was found.

3.5.6. Parent Support Questionnaire

This scale was constructed and validated by Dubow& Ullman (1989).This is 7-item self-report scale. Participant's response was used to identify the degree of their teacher

competence on their teaching. It is 4-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4). Dubow & Ullman (1989) reported internal consistency of 0.88 of PSQ. In this study, the internal consistency of 0.69 was realized.

3.5.7.Parental Coping Questionnaire

This scale was constructed and validated by DeLongis & Holtzman (2005). Parental Coping Questionnaire was measured using 10-item self report instrument designed to measure the parents coping with regards to parenting. Participants responded to each item on a 4-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (4) with the higher numbers generally representing greater sour feeling as a foster child. The total scores range from 10 to 40. DeLongis & Holtzman (2005) reported good psychometric internal consistency reliability alpha of 0.89 for this scale. In this current study, internal consistency of 0.71 was found.

3.5.8. Students academic performance

The researcher obtained the student's academic records from the school records (i.e., cumulative records or the broadsheets). The researcher used the scores of the two terms of the students, summed them to get the average mark. For example, if a student scored a total of 490 in the first term and 540 for the second term, the final total for such a student will be (i.e. 490 + 540 = 1030/16 = 64.4). It was divided by 16 because it was assumed that the students study 8 subjects, and in two terms summed up to 16. In order to obtain the uniform score, standardized scores were used with the help of SPSS.

3.7. Construct Validity of Predictors of Foster Student's Academic Performance Questionnaires

The questionnaires used in the study were Teacher Support (TS), Parent Support (PS), Parental Stress (PSS), Parental Coping (PC), Student Academic Self Concept (SAC) and Potential for Child Abuse (PCA).

Prior to the analysis, the data were screened for univariate outliers, and two of the items (PCA4, TS1, TS5, TS6, PS2, PS4 and SAC6) were deleted for the fact that they failed to meet the assumption underlying parametric test. That is such items had a z-statistic of 6.98, 7.13, 5.68, 6.03 and 9.48 for skewness. This was beyond the $p = 0.001$ criterion of +/- 3.29 indicating that it is abnormally positively skewed. As a result, they were excluded from further analysis.

The remaining 37 items were subjected to Principal Component (PC) with Oblinim rotation using SPSS version 16 to ascertain the appropriateness of the factors. Oblinim rotation was used because the items are related. These factors were confirmed using factor loadings based on the content of the items. Factor loading exceeding 0.3 was used because the greater the loading, the higher the variable is efficient to measure what it is supposed to measure and that a factor loading of 0.1 for instance is not strong enough to ascertain the pureness of the measure of the factor (Howell,2002).

First, an abridged version of the Rotated Matrix(R-Matrix) was inspected with the top half table containing the Pearson Correlation Coefficient between all pairs of the questions whereas the bottom half containing the one-tailed significance of these coefficients.

The researcher screened the significance values and looked for any variables for which the majority of values are greater than 0.05. It was found that items PC5, TS2, TS3, PS1 and

SAC1 had their communalities less than 0.30 and as such they were excluded from the further analysis.

The remaining 31 items were used to rerun the factor analysis. It was found that majority of the items had their significance value less than 0.05.

After 11 iterations, rotation converged with the extraction of 6 factors with eigen values above 1.0. In order to decide the number of extracted factors, eigen values based on the principal components solution were obtained. The results showing the initial factor extraction statistics and the screen plot from the principal components analysis were shown in appendix D3 and D4 respectively.

The items PC7, PSS2, PS5, PCA1, PCA3, SAC3, and TS4 were found to be cross loaded (see Appendix K) meaning that they are not meaningfully measuring a single construct and as a result were eliminated from further analyses. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.518(see Appendix C2), which is above the recommended value of .50, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (χ^2 (465) = 1.238E3, p = .000).

Kaiser (1974) recommends accepting values greater than 0.5(values below this should lead to collect more data). The diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix were all over .5, supporting the inclusion of each item in the factor analysis. Finally, the communalities were all above 0.30 (see Appendix G), further confirming that each item shared some common variance with other items.

Three items (PC10, PC1, and PC3) showed their highest loading factor one. These tapped parents coping strategy construct that accounted for 11.2% of the total variance in the data rotated. Items PSS5, PSS6 and PSS1 showed the second highest loading on factor two which tapped the construct of parental stress. This factor accounted for 9.3% of the total variance in the data rotated. Again, items PS6, PS3 showed the third highest loading on

factor three which tapped the construct of parental support. This factor accounted for 8.3% of the total variance in the data rotated. Items PCA6, PCA5, and PCA2 also loaded on factor four accounting for 8.1% of the total variance in the data rotated that tapped potential child abuse. Items TS8 and TS7 showed the fifth highest loading on factor five which tapped the construct of Teacher Support and accounted for 7.1% of the total variance in the data rotated. Lastly, items SAC2 and SAC4 loaded on factor six and tapped the construct of Students Academic Concept and accounted for 6.7% of the total variance in the data rotated. The final 14 items with their loading and communalities values are presented in Table 3.2.:

T able 3.2

Items listing, factor loadings and communalities for six–factor PC solution

	Factorloading						**Communality.**
Factor	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	
Factor 1 – Parental Coping Strategy							
PC10	-.655						.57
PC1	.632						.53
PC3	.626						.46
Factor 2 – Parental Stress							
PSS5		.636					.53
PSS6		-596					.45
PSS1		.532					.43
Factor 3 – Parental Support							
PS6			-468				.57
PS3			.383				.53
Factor 4 – Potential Child Abuse							
PCA6				.315			.65
PCA5				-640			.46
PCA2				-611			.51
Factor 5 – Teacher Support							
TS8					-781		.36
TS7					-636		.40
Factor 6 – Student Academic Concept							
SAC2						.487	.49
SAC4						-.481	.60

The internal consistency for each of the subscales was examined using Cronbach alpha. The alpha value for items PC10,PC1 and PC3 (parental coping) had the alpha value of 0.71. Items PSS5, PSS6, and PSS1 (Parental stress) had the alpha value of 0.72. Items PS6 and PS3 (parental support) had the alpha value of 0.69.Items PCA6, PCA5 and PCA2

(potential for child abuse) had the alpha value of 0.81, while items TS8 and TS7 (teacher support) also had the alpha value of 0.68, and lastly, items SAC2 and SAC4 (students academic concept) had the alpha value of 0.67.

Table 3.3

Reliability Analysis for Respondents Responses

Subscale	Cronbach' Alpha	Number of Items
Parental Stress	0.72	3
Child Abuse	0.81	3
Teacher Support	0.68	2
Parent Support	0.69	2
Coping Strategies	0.71	3
Permissive	0.72	5
Authoritarian	0.69	7
Authoritative	0.75	4
Academic Concept	0.67	2

3.8. Data Collection Process

An introductory letter was obtained from the Head of Department to enable the researcher to carry out the research work at the selected schools. The researcher visited the nine Junior High schools personally and delivered copies of the letter to the various head masters and mistresses. Permission was granted to the researcher and the heads with their respective teachers gave their support during the data collection period. After consultation with the

various heads and teachers in their schools, dates were agreed upon and students were informed of the dates and the purpose of the questionnaire they were about to complete. On the set dates the researcher went to the participatory schools and administered the questionnaire. Respondents were educated on how to respond to the questions. All questionnaires were examined to ensure completion before collection.

3.9. Data Analysis procedure

After sorting out the questionnaires, the data were computed and analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0. The statistical analysis such as frequencies and percentages, and linear regression, Independents sample t-test, and Multiple regression were used according to respective hypotheses of the study.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

As this study utilized human participants and investigated school practices, certain issues were addressed. In considering these issues for ensuring privacy and security of the participants these issues were identified to prevent future problems that could have risen during the research process. Among the significant issues that were considered were consent, confidentiality and data protection.

In the conduct of the research, the questionnaire was drafted in a very clear and concise manner to prevent misunderstanding among respondents. People who participated in the research were given ample time to respond to the questions posed to them to avoid errors and inaccuracies in their answers. The respondents were also assured of confidentiality of their identity with the hope to promote trust between the researcher and the respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter begins by presenting the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This is followed by the treatment of research questions. The third section, which is the major part of the study, focuses on the testing of hypotheses of the study. In doing this, the analysis is based on quantitative data analysis and interpretation.

4.2. SECTION A – Demographic Characteristics of foster students

The demographic variables of the student respondents included: (a) sex, (b) age, and(c) guardian educational status. The demographic variables are presented in table 4.1:

Table 4.1 indicates that with regard to the foster students, there were 60 male students representing 57.1% and 45 girls representing 42.9%. The dominant age group of the respondents ranged between 13 – 15 years representing (44, 41.9%), followed by 16 – 18 years representing (32, 30.5%) while the 10 – 12 years olds made up the smallest group, representing (29, 27.6%). In terms of the respondents' parents or guardian educational level, Table 4.1 further indicates that 17 of them representing 16.2% had a tertiary education level; 26 representing 28.4% had a secondary education level; 23 respondents of them representing 21.9% had a basic education level, and 39 representing 37.1% were uneducated.

Table 4.1

Demographic characteristics of foster students' by gender, parents or guardian educational level and age, and distance covered to school

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Male	60	57.1
Female	45	42.9
Age(Years)		
10 – 12	29	27.6
13 -15	44	41.9
16-18	32	30.5
Parents or guardian educational level		
Tertiary	17	16.2
Secondary	26	24.8
Basic	23	21.9
No education	39	37.1
Distance covered to School(foster children)		
Less than 1/2 km	12	11.4
Between 1/2 and 1km	18	17.1
Between 1 -- one and half kms	27	25.7
More than one and half kms	48	945.7

Concerning the distance they covered to school by the foster students, 12 of them representing 11.4% reported that they covered less than 1/2 km to school, 18(17.1%) indicated that they covered between 1/2 and 1km to school, 27(25.7%) also reported that

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they covered between 1 and one and half kilometers to school, and lastly, 48 of them representing 45.7% reported that they covered more than one and half kilometers to school. This implies that majority of foster children covered more distance to school.

Table 4.2 indicates that the majority of the non foster participants were male (i.e., 57, 54.3% and 48(45.7%) were female. Overall, the ages of the participants ranged from 10 years old to 18 years old, that indicates that the majority (38) of them were within the age range of 13 – 15 representing 36.2%, 32 of them representing 30.5% were ranged between the ages of 10 – 12 years.

With regard to the non foster parents educational status, table 4.2 further indicates that majority of them(68) representing 32.4% reported that their parents have completed tertiary, while the least of them(36) representing 17.1% indicated that they have completed basic education.

Concerning the distance they cover to school, 37 of the non – foster participants representing 35.2% indicated that they cover less than half kilometer to school, while 17 representing 16.2% reported to have covered more distance to school.

Table 4.2

Demographic characteristics of non- foster students' by gender, parents or guardian educational level and age, and distance covered to school

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Male	58	55.2
Female	47	44.8
Age (Years)		
10 - 12	32	30.5
13 - 15	38	36.2
16 - 18	35	33.3
Parents or guardian educational level		
Tertiary	34	32.4
Secondary	42	40.0
Basic	18	17.1
No education	11	10.5
Distance covered to School		
Less than 1/2 km	37	35.2
Between 1/2 and 1km	31	29.5
Between 1 -- one and half kms	20	19.0
More than one and half kms	17	16.2

4.3. SECTION C – TESTING OF STUDY HYPOTHESES

4.3.1. Hypothesis one - Foster parents coping strategies will mediate their stress and potential for child abuse.

In order to test this hypothesis, a multivariate hypothetical model in which foster parents coping strategies are assumed to mediate their parental stress and potential for child abuse was tested. In this case, the intervening variable, M, is the mediator. It "mediates" the relationship between a predictor, X, and an outcome, Y. In this hypothetical model, the intervening variable, ''M'' is ''foster parents coping strategies, predictor variable ''X'' is parental stress while the outcome variable, ''Y'' is potential for child abuse. As indicated below, table 4.3 presents Results of the SPSS mediation analysis.

Table 4.3: Results of the SPSS mediation analysis (Barron & Kenney approach)

	R^2	F-Ratio	Beta	Sig.
1. Regressing [potential for child abuse] on [stress]	0.223	29.574	0.600	0.000
2. Regressing [coping strategies] on [stress]	0.303	44.700	0.372	0.000
3. Regressing [potential for child abuse] on [coping strategies] controlling for [stress] Bets for stress	0.416	36.388	0.990 0.232	0.000

Since the (standardized) regression coefficient for [stress] is reduced by 0.600 – 0.232 = 0.368 [coping] partially mediates the relationship between [parental stress] and [potential for child abuse].

In order to determine whether the difference is significance or not, Sobel test was used. Sobel (1982) stated that significance level is achieved when the ratio exceeds ± 1.96 which is at $\alpha = 0.05$. Sobel test is equivalent to the calculation of standard error of Beta. Because SPSS does not report the standard error of Beta, we need to calculate it. The t statistic given in these tables is either the unstandardized regression coefficient (b) divided by its standard error, or the standardized regression coefficient divided by its standard error. Thus we can solve

$t = \beta/ s\beta$, $s\beta = \beta/t = 0.550/6.686 = $ **0.082**

Similarly for the path from coping strategy to child abuse, partialling parental stress, we have

$t = \beta/ s\beta$, $s\beta = \beta/t = 0.158/1.357 = $ **0.116**

These results yield the following table.

Table 4.4

Regression coefficients and standard errors for two parts of mediating path

Path a	Path b
Parental stress⟶ Coping Strategy	Coping Strategy⟶ Child Abuse
$\beta = 0.550$	$\beta = 0.158$
$s_a = 0.082$	$s_a = 0.116$
t = 6.686	t = 1.357

Then the regression coefficient for the path from Parental Stress → Coping Strategy → Child Abuse is equal to $\beta_a * \beta_b = 0.0.550*0.158 = 0.087$, where a and b refer to the relevant

paths. (Path c is the direct path from Parental stress to Child Abuse In addition, we know that the standard error of this two-part is given by:

$$SBB = \sqrt{B_a^2 S_b^{2+} B_b^2 S_a^2 - S_a^2 S_b^2}$$

That was calculated to be equal to 0.034.

where β_a and β_b are the paths, and s_a^2 and s_b^2 are the corresponding standard errors of the standardized regression coefficients for those paths. We can calculate the standard error of the combined path with the formula above.

We now know the path coefficient (0.550*0.158 =0.087) and its standard error (0.037), and we can form a t ratio as:

t = 0.087/0.034 = 2.6

The test statistic for the Sobel test of 2.6 is greater than -+1.96, it indicates the association between the IV(Parental stress) and the DV(child abuse is reduced significantly by the inclusion of the mediator (parents coping strategy) in the model; in other words, there is evidence of mediation.

4.3.2. Hypothesis two - Foster children academic self – concept will mediate parental support and academic performance

Mediation is a hypothesized causal chain in which one variable affects a second variable that, in turn, affects a third variable. The intervening variable, M, is the mediator. It "mediates" the relationship between a predictor, X, and an outcome, Y. In this hypothetical model, the intervening variable, ''M'' is ''foster children' academic self- concept'', predictor variable ''X'' is parental support, while the outcome variable, ''Y'' is students

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academic performance. As indicated below, table 4.5 presents Results of the SPSS mediation analysis.

Table 4.5

Results of the SPSS mediation analysis (Barron & Kenney approach)

	R^2	F-Ratio	Beta	Sig.
1. Regressing [academic performance] on [parental support]	**0.047**	**5.072**	**-11.867**	**0.000**
2. Regressing [academic self- concept] on [parental support]	**0.060**	**6.578**	**-0.269**	**0.000**
3. Regressing [academic performance] on [academic self - concept] controlling for [parental support] Bets for parental support	**0.092**	**5.175**	**-10.951** **-14.809**	**0.000**

Table 4.5 above shows that the (unstandardized) regression coefficient for [parental support] is rather increased from -11.867 to -14.809 a difference of 0.2942 [academic self - concept] partially mediates the relationship between [parental support] and [students academic performance].

Then the regression coefficient for the path from Parental Support → Academic Self-Concept → Academic Performance is equal to $\beta_a * \beta_b$ = -0.0.217*-0.219 = 47.52, where a and b refer to the relevant paths. Path c is the direct path from Parental stress to Child

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Abuse In addition, we know that the standard error of this two-part was calculated to be equal to 23.04. the Sobel test therefore is 2.06 which is greater than -+1.96, hence the mediating variable (academic self – concept)was significance and as such had significance influence on the relationship between parental support and academic performance.

4.3.3. Hypothesis three - Foster children's academic self – concept will mediate teacher support and academic performance

Using the procedures as illustrated above, table 4.6 below presents the results of the various regression test conducted.

Table 4.6below indicates that the indirect effect (B – B1) shows an increment of 1.592(i.e. -10.355 – (- 11.947). This was the excess beta value when academic self – concept was added to the model.
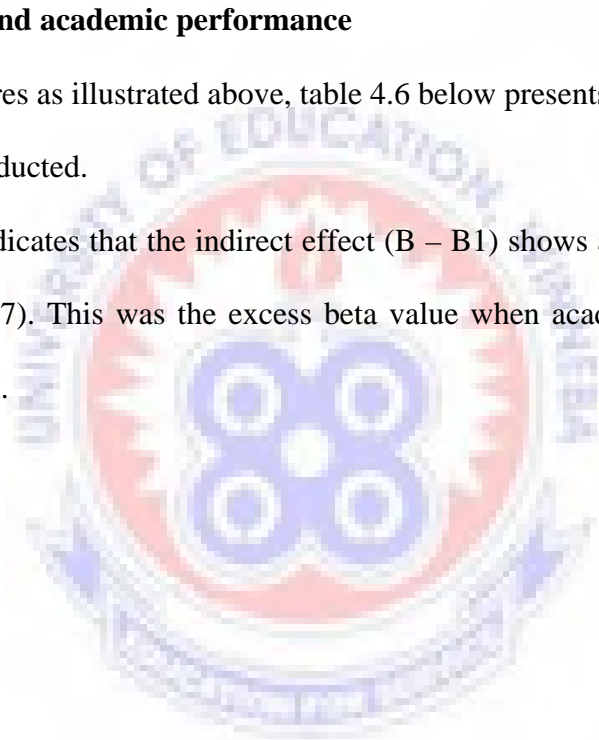
Table 4.6

Results of the SPSS mediation analysis (Barron & Kenney approach)

	R^2	F-Ratio	**Beta**	Sig.
1. Regressing [academic performance] on [teacher support]	**0.044**	**4.703**	**-10.355**	**0.032**
2. Regressing [academic self- concept] on [teacher support]	**0.028**	**2.932**	**-0.165**	**0.090**
3. Regressing [academic performance] on [academic self - concept] controlling for [teacher support] Bets for teacher support	**0.080**	**4.431**	**-9.646** **-11.947**	**0.048**

Then the regression coefficient for the path from Teacher Support → Academic Self-Concept → Academic Performance is equal to $\beta_a * \beta_b$ = -0.0.209*-0.193 = 0.04, where a and b refer to the relevant paths. (Path c is the direct path from Teacher Support to Academic Performance. In addition, we know that the standard error of this two-part was calculated to be equal to 0.09. the Sobel test therefore is 0.4 which is less than -+1.96, hence the mediating variable (academic self – concept)was not significant and as such had no significance influence on the relationship between teacher support and academic performance.

4.3.4. Hypothesis four – There will be a significance difference on academic performance between foster children and non-foster children

This hypothesis was to determine whether academic performance of foster children and non-foster children differ or not. To test this hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare their means. The test was meant to identify whether the mean for the academic performance of the foster children and non-foster children differ or not. This hypothesis was tested at the alpha level of 0.05.

Table 4:7

Independent sample t-test of academic performance of foster and non foster students

Variable	M	SD	N	df	t	Sig.
Non – foster children	5.07	1.32	105	168	5.812	0.000
Foster children	2.19	0.98	105			

Table 4.7 shows that the alpha level obtained were 0.00 (i.e. less than 0.05) meaning that there is significance difference (Creswell, 1994). The results indicate that there was significant difference on academic performance for non – foster children (M =5.07, SD =1.32.) and foster children (M = 2.19, SD = 0.98), t = 5.812., df = 168, p = 0.000 By comparing the means and standard deviation, this analysis provides evidence that foster children were, indeed, more affected than non-foster children.

4.3.5. Hypothesis Five - There will be a significance difference between parental styles of foster parents and non - foster parents.

To test this hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare their means. The test was meant to identify whether differences exist among foster parents and non – foster parents in terms of their parenting styles.

The hypothesis was also tested at the alpha level of 0.05. Table 4.8 shows that the alpha level obtained were 0.016(less than 0.05) meaning that there is significance difference (Creswell, 1994). By comparing the means and standard deviation of both foster children parenting styles (M = 2.26, SD = 0.59), t = - 2.338, df = 208, p = 0.020 and non – foster children parenting styles (M =2.35, SD = 0.65). The significance difference can also be seen on their means.

Table 4.8

Independent sample t-test on parenting styles of foster parents and non - foster parents.

Variable	M	SD	N	t	df	Sig.
Foster Parents parenting styles	2.26	0.59	105	2.338	208	0.020
Non – Foster Parents Parenting Styles	2.35	0.65	105			

A closer examination of table 4.9 below indicates that we tended to get larger number of foster parents exhibiting authoritarian styles (63, 57.3%), while we had a greater number of non – foster parents exhibiting permissive and authoritative styles of parenting. Thus, substantial differences are observed with regard to their parenting styles.

Table 4.9

Parenting Styles differences on foster and non foster parents

	AvePS	%	PeS	%	ArPS	%	Total	%		
FPS		5	33.3	37	43.5	63	57.3	105	50	
NFPS		10	66.7	48	56.5	47	42.3	105	50	
Total		**15**	**100**	**85**	**100**	**110**	**100**	**210**	**100**	

Note: FPS = Foster Students Parenting Styles

NFPS = Non Foster Students Parenting Styles

AvePS = Average parenting style

PeS = Permissive style

ArPS = Authoritarian style

4.4. Discussion of Findings

4.4.1. Hypothesis One - Foster parents coping strategies will mediate their stress and potential for child abuse

Parental stress contributed significant to child abuse. The results from the regression analysis support Calam, Bolton, and Roberts (2002) that found significant positive correlations between parenting stress and child abuse. Several researchers have hypothesized that parental stress as an element of authoritarian behavior produces lower academic achievement (Abidin, 1995; Green, 1998). McCurdy (2005) also found significant negative correlations between parenting stress and child abuse, indicating that increased parenting stress was associated with decreased levels of parental warmth towards one's child. McCurdy (2005) further indicated that increased parental stress significantly

predicted more punitive parenting attitudes. In turn, the author found that parental stress significantly increased the parents' potential for child maltreatment.

Combs-Orme, Martin, Fox, and Faver (2000) interviewed a large and diverse sample of foster parents and found that these parents believed that the two main causes of child maltreatment were stress factors and parenting abilities. Mash, Johnston, and Kovitz (1983) reported that abusive parents were more likely to have greater perceived life stress than non-abusive parents. Finally, Ammerman and Patz (1996) found that parental stress (in the form of decreased maternal support) accounted for almost half of the variance in mothers' potential for child maltreatment. The hypothetical model provide an evident that parenting stress is an important factor to take into account when determining a parent's ability to care for his or her child.

4.4.2. Hypothesis Two - Foster children's academic self – concept will mediate parental support and academic performance

The hierarchical regression analysis revealed that home factor predicted more of the variance in the students' academic performance. This finding seems to suggest that home factor was a problem for students. The reason for this might be due to the fact that home is the basic learning environment for every human being and is the key criteria that lead to dissatisfaction or satisfaction in one's education (Collins, 2003). According to Cummins (1994), home is the crucial social setting that is conducive to supporting and grooming children. The home environment is supposed to be the basis for good education where the foundation for future learning and success is laid (Collins, 2003). The researcher is therefore convinced that foster children whose parents are available are better off, in the sense that these learners are not responsible for all household chores. Even if they are not

supported educationally, they have moral support and supervision from their parents who ensure that children do their schoolwork, and they go to school regularly. When foster students academic self-concept was added to the model, the beta value of the parental support decreased meaning that academic self – concept was really influence between parental support and academic performance. Collins (2003) explained that when parents support their children positively, the students academic self - concept enhances.

4.4.3. Hypothesis Three -Foster children's academic self – concept will mediate teacher support and academic performance

Majoribanks (1996) indicated that despite the effects for teacher support, negative parent support clichéd the students self – concept. No wonder that student's academic self – concept did not influence the relation between teacher support and students academic performance.

For adolescents with high parent support, high anticipated teacher support was associated with lower levels of depression. However, for adolescents with low support from parents, high anticipated support from teachers was associated with more depressive symptoms (Cummins, 1994). This suggests that when relationships with parents are non supportive, adolescents self – academic concept decline. Therefore teachers support do not shield the students from mental health difficulties and as such exhibit poor academic performance characteristics. This may be because these adolescents are affiliating with deviant peers (Majoribanks, 1996).

4.4.4. Hypothesis Four – There will be a significant difference on academic performance between foster children and non-foster children.

Independent sample t-test revealed that non-foster children perform better than their foster children counterparts. This finding was consistent with that of Linares,et al (2006) who emphasized that biological parents are much caring.

Brestan & Eyberg(1998) reported that sometimes foster parents refuse to provide certain educational needs to foster children which eventually affect their academic performance. The uncertainty regarding not staying with their biological parents also affects one's self-concept and self-identity negatively, resulting in poor performance at school (Shaw & Hipgrave(1983).

Fanshel (1978) indicated that non - foster parents demonstrated greater knowledge of behavioral parenting principles than foster parents. Research has consistently suggested that behavioral parenting methods have been most successful in decreasing young children's disruptive behavior which in turn boost children academic performance. Brestan & Eyberg (1998) argues that foster parents reported greater child behavior problems they may not have been placing these behavioral methods into practice as often or as consistently as necessary to significantly decrease foster child disruptive behavior hence leading to lower academic performance.

4.4.5. Hypothesis Five – There will be a significant difference between parental styles of foster parents and non - foster parents.

The results of independence sample t-test showed that non-foster parents employ permissive style and had a positive and significant influence on academic performance of foster children. The results are consistent with Park and Bauer (2002), Attaway and Bry

(2004) which found that permissive parents had their children at heart and as a result promote school achievement. Durkin (1995) highlighted three reasons for the association between permissive parenting and high school achievement. First, he recommended that parents with permissive style give emotional security to their children with a sense of calm and autonomy, and also, they assist their children to be successful in school activities. Second, he cited that parents with permissive style show much love which their wards reciprocate by learning to please their parents. Thirdly, he suggested that permissive parents involve in reciprocal contact with their children.

Permissive parents support their children, encourage them to do well academically, and explain the need for education in order to become a successful adult. Thus, children growing up in the permissive environment have better overall well-being and higher performance in school related activities (Baumrind, 1991).

The finding also indicated that foster students parents employ authoritarian styles of parenting, which lead to their poor academic performance. This result is in line with the previous finding by Roche et al. (2007) who showed that authoritarian parenting was significantly related with academic strain. Parents with authoritarian style did not allow their children to be free and control their behaviors and actions. Therefore, it is likely that foster children from highly authoritarian environment do have clear rules and expectations from parents, which consequently may lead to low achievement motivation and poor academic performance. The present finding is similar to the findings by Kim and Rohner (2002) and Olige (2008). Authoritarian parents tend to practice rigid and high level of monitoring. Rigid monitoring may demotivate children to succeed (Cooper et al., 2000). However, these characteristics do not have any relation to academic performance amongst students in the present study.

In conclusion, the findings of the present study implied that parents play a significant role in determining the level of academic performance among adolescents. Thus, it is essential that parents are equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills so that they can provide better guidance for their children positive development, especially in academic performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Summary of the Study

This chapter presents the summary of the research findings, and conclusions from the results and finally the implications and recommendations for further studies.

5.2. Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to find out the challenges foster students encounter in a bid to achieve satisfactory basic education and other factors that affects their academic performance.

The following five hypotheses were formulated for the study:

1. Hypothesis One - Foster parents' coping strategies will mediate their stress and potential for child abuse

2. Hypothesis Two - Foster children's academic self – concept will mediate parental support and academic performance

3. Hypothesis Three - Foster children's academic self – concept will mediate teacher support and academic performance

4. There will be a significant difference in academic performance between foster children and non-foster children.

5. There will be a significant difference between parenting styles of foster parents and non - foster parents.

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The study followed quantitative approaches because the researcher intended to measure or compare association by using inferential statistics such as linear regression, Independence sample t-test, and to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and hypotheses pertaining to natural phenomena. The alpha level was set at 0.05.

The sample of 210 foster children was randomly selected from the population of 689 together with 210 non – foster children from the public Junior High Schools in the Okai Koi North Metropolis in the Greater Accra region. The following section begins with summary of study findings, followed by conclusion and with recommendations and also offer suggestions for future research.

5.2.1. Summary of Findings

1. When child abuse was regressed on parental stress, significant effect was assumed, but when parental coping strategies were added to the hypothetical model, beta value of parental stress was reduced. The Sobel test was found to be above -+1.96, meaning that parental coping strategy influence the relationship between parental stress and potential for child abuse.

2. Foster students' academic self – concept was found to influence the relationship parental support and their academic performance

3. Foster children's academic self – concept did not influence the relationship between teacher support and academic performance

4. Non – foster students performed academically better than the foster students

5. While foster parents were employing authoritarian parenting styles, non- foster parents employed permissive parenting styles

5.3. Conclusions.

On basis of' the findings , the following conclusions are made:

Stress reduction strategies among parents are essential since the study revealed that parental stress leads to child abuse.

There was a significant cause- effect relationship between the independent variables of parents support and teachers support on dependent variable of foster students' academic concept. Students who rate their parents as liberal in granting psychological autonomy and more firm in controlling over their behavior showed greater increase in achievement than the youngsters who rated their parents as exercising less control and giving more autonomy.

Foster children whose foster parents support them perform better than parents who over control. In other words, foster parents who use levels of control, supervision, and demands on maturity frustrate the foster students.

Lastly, parenting style is an important predictor of foster students' academic performance. There is therefore the need for parents to exhibit permissive parenting styles to relate positive academic performance.

5.4. Recommendations

1. According to the results of this study non-foster children performed better than the foster children. This indicates that the trauma the foster children were experiencing really affects their cognitive development. The researcher therefore, recommends that governmental and nongovernmental organizations and counselors should conduct seminars and workshops that aim at acquainting parents with the different harmful nature of experiencing parental stress and its associated outcomes.

2. As the finding revealed, foster students receive less support from their foster parents which influences their academic self concept and academic performance negatively. It is therefore recommended that the Department of Social Welfare, school and church counselors should educate, provide support and welfare programmes for foster parents.

3.The findings revealed that the foster child's academic self-concept did not influence the relationship between teacher support and academic performance. This means the teachers role in enhancing the foster child academic performance is more important than the foster child's academic self-concept.

The researcher therefore recommends that educational stake holders such as the Government, circuit supervisors, head teachers and others should supervise and encourage teachers to deliver their best.

4. Findings revealed that foster students performed poorly academically than their non-foster counterparts because of stigmatization. The researcher therefore recommends that counseling coordinators and other educational stake holders in the Okai koi north sub metropolis in the Greater Accra region should make all efforts to remove the negative perception attached to the foster students.

5. From the study, foster parents employed authoritarian parenting style whereas non foster parents employed permissive parenting style. The researcher therefore recommends that school counselors, educators and social workers should educate foster parents on programmes that would provide modern concepts regarding child rearing.

5.5. Implications for School Counsellors

Guidance counselors should try to identify and assist foster students despite their trauma for them to fulfill their highest potentials. Guidance counselors should motivate foster

students for higher aspirations regardless of home background. Like teachers, guidance counselors are expected to serve as a source of extrinsic motivation for foster students and also to promote a greater sense of intrinsic motivation in foster students, and thus, higher achievement outcomes.

5.6. Suggestion(s) for Further Research

Beale (1995) emphasized that counselors should try to provide guidance that can facilitate cordial relationship especially in the area of communication between foster children and their foster parents. They should enlighten foster parents on the consequences of not communicating effectively which could lead to loneliness and its attendant negative multiplier effect on the child.

Based on the results and discussion, several recommendations can be made for further study. It is also important to underscore the limitations of the study in providing direction for the replication of the research. The present study provides significant findings in understanding the variance in academic performance of foster students due to the influence of predictor or mediator variables, and raises additional questions for further scientific inquiry.

The researcher recommends that future research should continue to investigate the potential role of demographic characteristics on parenting attitudes, stress, and practices in foster parents versus biological parents.

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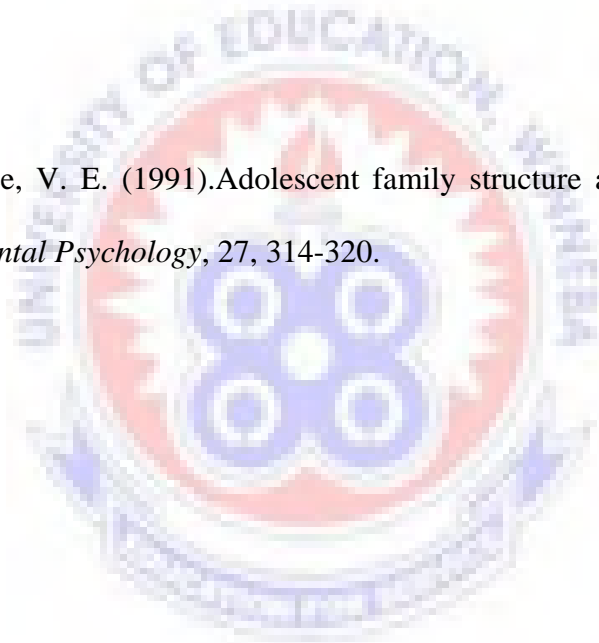
APPENDIX A

SECTION A - RESPONDENTS' BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please help us classify your response by supplying the following facts about your - self and your opinion on the raised issues by ticking an appropriate box. There is no right wrong answer therefore no particular response is targeted.

1. Sex: Male [ ]. Female [ ].

2. Age. 10-12[ ]. 13-15[ ].16-18[ ]

3. Educational level of your guardian or one you stay with: Tertiary [ ] Secondary [ ] Basic [ ] Uneducated [ ]

4. Distance covered to School: Less than 1/2 km [ ]. Between 1/2 and 1km [ ]

Between 1 -- one and half kms [ ]. More than one and half kms [ ]

SECTION B

Parental Stress Scale

Please give your responses to the following items and mark the column ( ) you consider as the most appropriate concerning your fosterage parents

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My parents often have the feeling that I cannot handle things very well.				
2.My parents get upset easily over the smallest mistake I do				
3. My parents generally wake up in a bad mood.				

Parental Stress items Excluded from the Analysis

1.There are some things my parents do that really bother me a lot

2.My parents make more demands on me than most children

3. My parents' react very strongly when something happens that they do not like.

SECTION C

QUESTIONNAIRE ON CHILD ABUSE

Please give your responses to the following items and mark the column ( ) you consider as

the most appropriate concerning your fosterage parents

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.Most of the time, my parents abuse me when they are perplex				
2.My parents insult me before they give me food or anything				
3.I do not have the right to my privacy				

Child Abuse items Excluded from the Analysis

1.My parents frequently insult me for nothing

3.My parents mostly rebuke me public whiles I do not know what I have done wrong

4.I do not have the right to choose my friends

SECTION D

Teacher Support Questionnaire

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.My teacher accepts me for who I am				
2.My teacher listens when I want to talk				

<u>Teacher Support items Excluded from the Analysis</u>

1. I feel I receive enough information from my teacher on what I need to be using in my classroom

2.I feel comfortable using the effective learning taught by my teacher

3.I feel I have received enough support from my teacher to overcome my learning problems

4.My teacher shows interest in my studies

5.My teacher congratulates me when I perform better

6.My teacher explains things I don't understand

SECTION E

Parental Support Questionnaire

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly
3.I am happy with the quality of my parents child rearing practices				
6. My parents always contact me promptly to discuss issues about my schooling.				

<u>Parental Support items Excluded from the Analysis</u>

1. My parents make sure I have what I need at school

2.I have a parent who encourages me to learn

3. I feel the level of homework my parents give me is sufficient.

4.My home timetable is structured by my parents

5.I receive adequate educational information from my parents regularly.

SECTION F

Parental Coping Questionnaire

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.My parents accept the situation as it is				
2.My parents talk about the problems with me				
3.My parents mostly try to forget about a stressful situations				

Parental Coping Strategies items Excluded from the Analysis

1.My parents try out different ways of solving problems

2.My parents mostly analyze the situation to solve it

3.My parents usually set specific goals to solve problems

4. My parents mostly let time take care of the problem

5.My parents usually do not worry about the problems

6.My parents try to talk about my problems as little as possible

7. My parents try to keep up a sense of humor

SECTION G

Students Academic Concept Questionnaire

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.I encourage myself about my education				
2.I become worried when I absent myself from school				

Students Academic Self Concept items Excluded from the Analysis

1.I mostly consult my friends about my education

2.I have set a time aside each evening for my homework

3.My parents do not help me when I have questions about my homework

4.I view children's education as an unimportant part of human development

SECTION H

Parenting Styles Questionnaire

Direction: - Please read each of the following statements carefully and for each item, think about your parents' attitudes and behaviors in treating and handling you and then check whether you agree or disagree and put a check mark (x) on the alternative which you believe best describes your parents' attitudes and behaviors.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.My parents often speak of the good things I do				
2.My parents enjoy talking and playing with me				
3. My parents try to make known the reason that leads them to punish me and the appropriateness of the punishment.				
4.My parents enjoy staying home with me more than going out with friends				
5.My parents respect my interest and view				
6. Because of fear of parents punishment I hide my wrong doings				
7.My parents take into consideration my ideas and opinions				
8. My parents love me more than any-thing else.				

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9. My parents allow me to participate in preparing plans.				
10.My parents reward me for good doings				
11.My parents exert firm control on me in order to accomplish their demands				
12.My parents allow discussion to identify reasons for my failure to accomplish parental expectations				
13. The relation with my parents is based on love and respect.				
14.My parents do not punish me if I make mistakes				
15.My Parents listen to my ideas and opinions				
16.My parents allow me to participate in family discussions				
17. My parents don t care whether I get bad or good grades in school				
18. My parents set rules and laws which I have to follow				
19.My parents allow me to pick my own friends				
20.My Parents allow me to participate in establishing rules and laws				
21.My parents prefer a timid child to a child who expresses his ideas freely				
22. My parents are interested to know the reason that leads them to punish me				

23. My parents administer- punishment for wrong doings				
24. My parents admit that I some-times know more than they do.				
25.My Parents exert firm control so that I develop appropriate behavior				
26.My parents expect me to achieve certain tasks				
27.My parents establish demands that are beyond my capacity				
28.My parents punish me if I get a poor grade in school				
29.When I get poor grades in school, my parents encourage me to try harder				
30.My parents allow me to ask any question				
31.My parents mistreat me				
32. My parents do not allow me to express my ideas and opinions				
33.The punishment that my parents administer are developmentally				

SECTION H1

Parenting Styles Questionnaire that were included in the analysis

Direction: - Please read each of the following statements carefully and for each item, think about your parents' attitudes and behaviors in treating and handling you and then check whether you agree or disagree and put a check mark (x) on the alternative which you believe best describes your parents' attitudes and behaviors.

Statements Authoritative Style	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.My Parents allow me to participate in establishing rules and laws				
2.My parents allow me to ask any question				
3.My parents allow discussion to identify reasons for my failure to accomplish parental expectations				
4.My parents expect me to achieve certain tasks				
5.My Parents listen to my ideas and opinions				
6. My parents admit that I some times know more than they do.				
7.My parents take into consideration my ideas and opinions				

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Authoritarian Style				
8. My parents do not allow me to express my ideas and opinions.				
9.My parents mistreat me				
10.My parents exert firm control on me in order to accomplish their demands				
11.My Parents exert firm control so that I develop appropriate behavior				
12.My parents establish demands that are beyond my capacity				
Permissive Style				
13.My parents prefer a timid child to a child who expresses his ideas freely				
14.My parents allow me to participate in family discussions				
15.My parents often speak of the good things I do				
16. The relation with my parents is based on love and respect.				

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SECTION H2

Parenting Styles Questionnaire that were excluded from further Analysis

1.My parents administer- punishment for wrong doings

2.My parents enjoy talking and playing with me

3.My parents enjoy staying home with me more than going out with friends

4.My parents respect my interest and view

5.My parents set rules and laws which I have to follow

6.My parents love me more than any thing else.

7.My parents reward me for good doings

8.My parents do not punish me if I make mistakes

9.My parents allow me to pick my own friends

10.My parents punish me if I get a poor grade in school

11.When I get poor grades in school, my parents encourage me to try harder

12.The punishment that my parents administer are developmentally

13.My parents don t care whether I get bad or good grades in school

14.My parents allow me to participate in preparing plans

15.My parents are interested to know the reason that leads them to punish me

16. My parents try to make known the reason that leads them to punish me and the

appropriateness of the punishment

17..Because of fear of parents punishment I hide my wrong doings

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLLOGY AND EDUCATION

SELF ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL FOSTER STUDENTS IN OKAI KOI NORTH METROPOLIS IN GREATER ACCRA

Dear Respondent,

I am carrying out a survey examining the relationship of child fostering and academic achievement of basic Education in the Okai Koi North Metropolis in the Greater Accra Region. The following questionnaire is for you as a foster student. It is against this background that you have been selected to participate in the research by completing the questionnaire. It would thus be very helpful if you assist by answering the questionnaire as per instructions at the beginning of each section. You are required to provide the most appropriate answer in your opinion. Your responses will be kept confidential. In any case the questionnaire is anonymous. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

……………………………..

Attuquayefio, Brenda Benedicta

Researcher

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APPENDIX C

FACTOR ANALYSIS ON PARENTING STYLES

Pattern Matrix[a]

	Component		
	1	2	3
q20	-.900		
q30	.774		
q12	.747		
q26	.734		
q18	-.729	-.410	
q3	-.720	.451	
q10	-.622	-.425	
q15	.599		
q24	.552		
q23	.532	.486	
q7	-.442		
q32		.805	
q31		.748	
q19		-.658	-.393
q17	-.310	-.619	
q11		-.598	

q9		.525	-.389
q25		.519	
q27		-.431	
q21			-.776
q16			.673
q1			.663
q13			.586
q29	-.341		.414
q33		.324	.390

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

 Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 16 iterations.

Total Variance Explained

Comp onent	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	5.816	23.265	23.265	5.816	23.265	23.265	5.647
2	4.142	16.569	39.834	4.142	16.569	39.834	4.236
3	2.849	11.395	51.229	2.849	11.395	51.229	3.028
4	1.976	7.903	59.132				
5	1.640	6.559	65.691				
6	1.384	5.536	71.226				
7	1.168	4.671	75.898				
8	.968	3.873	79.770				
9	.920	3.679	83.449				
10	.693	2.771	86.220				
11	.575	2.298	88.518				
12	.486	1.944	90.462				
13	.435	1.738	92.201				

14	.363	1.454	93.654					
15	.326	1.304	94.958					
16	.281	1.123	96.081					
17	.218	.873	96.954					
18	.201	.804	97.758					
19	.149	.596	98.354					
20	.107	.427	98.781					
21	.099	.398	99.179					
22	.074	.297	99.475					
23	.054	.214	99.690					
24	.044	.176	99.865					
25	.034	.135	100.000					

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

Scree Plot
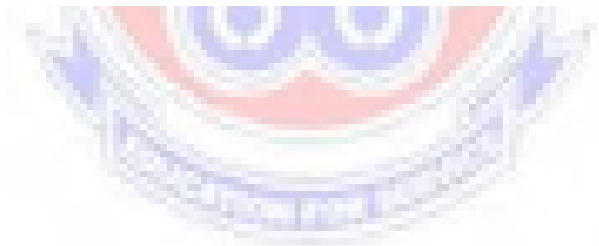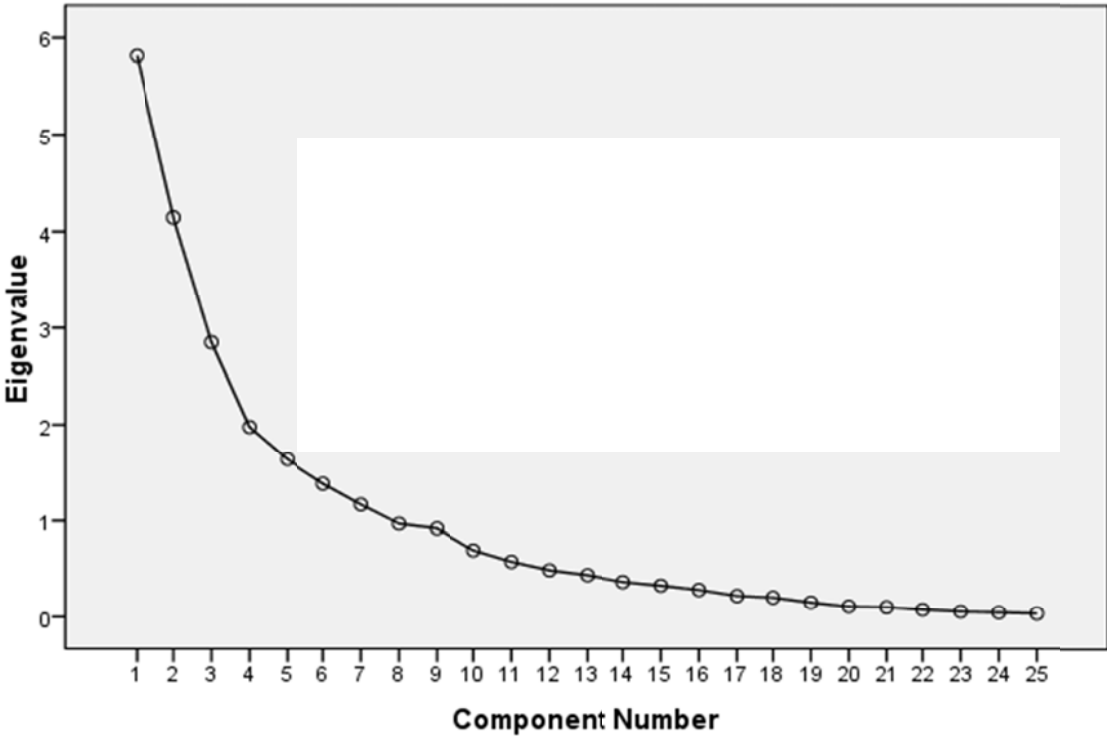
APPENDIX D

CONSTRUCT VALIDITY OF PREDICTORS OF FOSTER STUDENTS ACADEMIC

PERFORMANCE **VARIABLES**

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
PC10	-.655					
PC1	.632					
PC3	.626					
PC7	-.593				.310	
PSS5		.636				
PSS6		-.596				
PSS2		.543	.386			.383
PSS1		.532				
PS6			-.468			
PS3			.383			
PS5			.416			-.310
PCA1		-.327	.300	.326		
PCA6				.315		
PCA3			.667	.311		
PCA5				-.640		
PCA2				-.611		
PSS2	-.341		-.486			

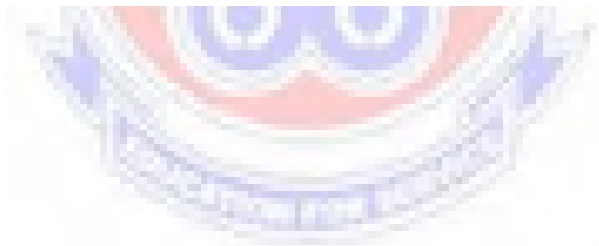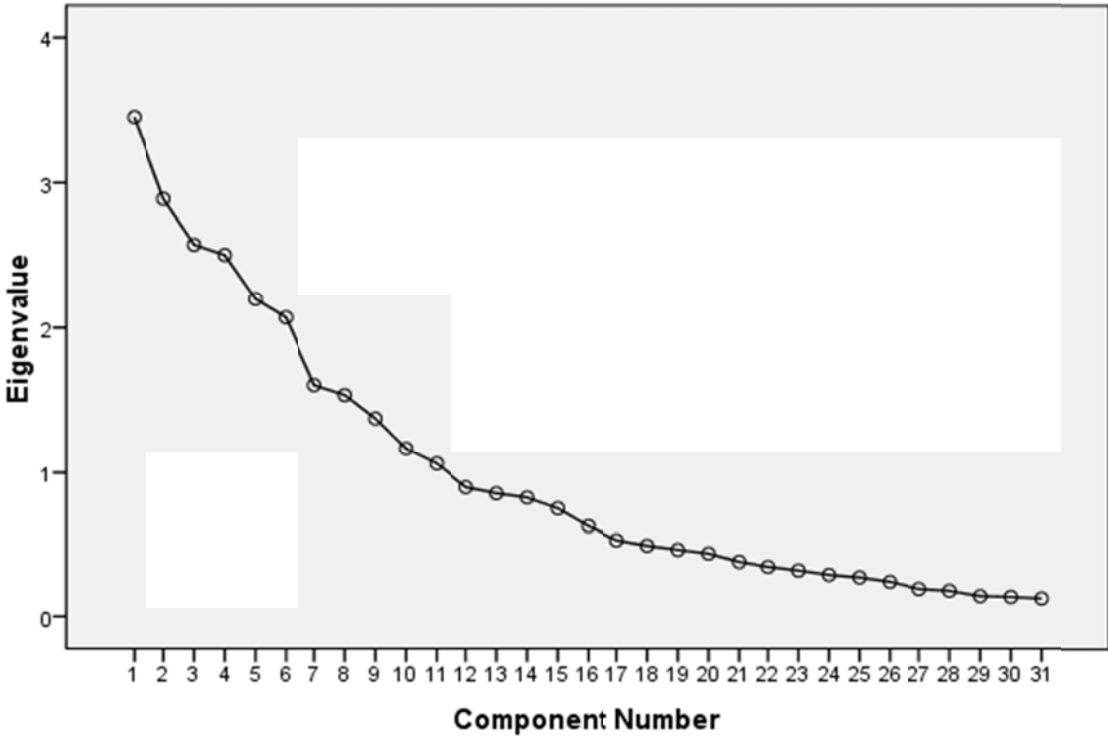|					
TS8				.781	
TS7				-.636	
SAC3		.413		.602	
PC8					.667
PC6				-.360	.609
PC4	-.472	.302			.563
PC9					-.522
PC2					.472
TS4	.316	.337			.468
PSS3					
PS7					
SAC5					
SAC2					.487
SAC4					-.481

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

Scree Plot

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.456	11.150	11.150	3.456	11.150	11.150
2	2.889	9.319	20.469	2.889	9.319	20.469
3	2.575	8.306	28.775	2.575	8.306	28.775
4	2.504	8.079	36.854	2.504	8.079	36.854
5	2.199	7.093	43.947	2.199	7.093	43.947
6	2.071	6.681	50.628	2.071	6.681	50.628
7	1.607	5.184	55.811			
8	1.538	4.963	60.774			
9	1.376	4.439	65.213			
10	1.168	3.768	68.981			
11	1.063	3.431	72.411			
12	.898	2.895	75.307			
13	.856	2.760	78.067			
14	.826	2.666	80.733			
15	.752	2.425	83.157			
16	.629	2.031	85.188			
17	.531	1.713	86.901			
18	.494	1.593	88.494			
19	.465	1.501	89.995			
20	.440	1.419	91.414			
21	.383	1.235	92.650			
22	.348	1.122	93.772			

23	.323	1.042	94.814			
24	.293	.946	95.760			
25	.276	.889	96.649			
26	.245	.790	97.439			
27	.196	.631	98.070			
28	.183	.590	98.659			
29	.146	.471	99.130			
30	.140	.453	99.582			
31	.129	.418	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.