

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SOCIAL  
STUDIES STUDENTS IN SELECTED SENIOR HIGH  
SCHOOLS IN THE WA MUNICIPALITY**



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SOCIAL STUDIES IN SELECTED SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE WA  
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**A dissertation in the Department of Social Studies,  
Faculty of Social Sciences Education, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment  
of the requirement for the award of the degree of  
Master of Education  
(Social Studies Education)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**DECEMBER, 2022**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

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

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....



### Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparations and presentations of the thesis were supervise in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

**Supervisor's Name:** Dr. Isaac Eshun

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **DEDICATION**

To my late father and mother; Mr. Adams of blessed memory and Mrs. Adams Zainab for their support and encouragement not forgetting my husband and children Hawa, Ashraf, Hafiz, Zainab and Maajida and my niece, Mariam



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank the Almighty God for His grace, mercy, wisdom and strength, which he has given me throughout my life and during the period of pursuing the programme. My heartfelt appreciation goes to my supervisor: Dr. Isaac Eshun for his readings, constructive comments and candid suggestions, which made this thesis a success. I also appreciate all my mates' and lecturers in this programme for the direction and support they offered me during this period.



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## ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was on cross sectional stakeholder (students, parents & teachers') perception on some determinants of students' poor performance in Social studies. The design of this study was descriptive case study research design aimed at eliciting information from the respondents on factors that determine students' poor performance in the selected secondary schools and the population of the study comprised 10 selected secondary school teachers who teach Social studies in Wa municipal education zone. Two hundred students, 10 parents and 2 GES officials also formed part of the study population. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire and data were analyzed using mean frequencies and charts for all research questions. The findings of the study revealed that school/government related factors, teachers' related factors and students' factors are some determinants of students' performance in Social studies. The researcher recommended based on the findings that only competent and qualified Social studies teachers should be employ to teach the subject in secondary schools



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Student's academic performance occupies a very important place in education as well as in the learning process. Nuthana and Yenagi (2009) cited by Mendezabal (2013) stated that it is considered as a key criterion to judge one's total potentialities and capacities, which are frequently measured by the examination results. When one encounters real thrill of success, one must experience pique of failure for ones, and from flaws one can learn more than learning from success, and this does not mean human intentionally fails to succeed, no one accept that. On the contrary, human should look at failed experiences in an optimistic way, after going through them, so as to draw the needed experiences for success than to invest in failure in order to success (Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015). The issue of the falling standard of students' performance in social studies at the secondary school level in Ghana is quite alarming. The overriding importance of Social studies in nation building in Ghana can never be overemphasized despite the continuous decline in secondary school student's achievement in the subject in their external examination.

Social studies is the only discipline that gives an opportunity for important social and moral issues such as attitudes to the destitute, poverty, racism and different types of government, cruelty to animals, and children, brutality and injustice to be introduced into school curriculum (Ikwumelu, 2002). Therefore, in Social studies education, students are expose to not only to social issues but issues that are value-laden.

This informed Edozie (2001, p.39) view that Social studies is; a dynamic, systematic and integrated discipline for generating knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours necessary for dealing with contemporary life issues, for understanding man and the factors which influence his relationship with himself in particular and his society generally in a sustainable manner.

Kissock (1981, p.3) opined that Social studies is “a program of study which the society uses to instill in the students the knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions which it considers important concerning the relationships human beings have with each other, their world and themselves”. This implies that it (Social Studies) is a means through which a society propagates its acceptable norms, attitudes, values and behaviours. Social studies therefore, is expected to contribute immeasurably to the development of confidence, hope and positive self-image in over children in conflicting ideologies, values, and attitudes, since Social studies according to Jarolimek (1977), aims at helping young people develop competence that enable them to deal with and to some extent manage the physical and social forces of the world in which they live. It also provides young people with feeling of hope in the future and confidence in their ability to solve social problem. Despite the laudable objectives of Social studies as articulated in the Ghanaian school curriculum there has been a dismay arising from expected outcome of Social studies curriculum implementation. The performance of students in certificate examinations have not been so impressive. Such performances have been source of worries to stakeholders in the educational industry. Lamenting on the poor performance, the chief examiner’s report on the performance of students in Social studies examination in the July 2014 said “the performance is generally poor. It was disheartening to see the degree of ignorance

among candidates of Social studies in their home country”, (Ebonyi State Secondary Education Board, 2014, p.12).

Considering the importance of Social studies in our everyday lives, Ikwumelu and Oyibe (2011) suggested that all the teachers of Social studies at all levels of education need to be familiar with the content, methods and materials of teaching the subject in order to interpret the content of Social studies, correctly and encourage its learning. This is mainly because when Social studies methods and materials are related to content, learning will cease to be fragmentary and memorization of unrelated facts and concepts will end. Unfortunately, as rightly observed by Bozimo and Ikwumelu (2009) that social awareness and social understanding are still not being developed, students still consider either to take for granted what their teachers offer or to reject it out of hand, probably as a result of either poor classroom interaction or the quality of instruction with regard to overall academic achievement of students. Social studies teachers should know that they are the ones who interpret the aims and objectives of Social studies and ensure that the students are educated in line these aims and objectives, since the quality of Social studies output depends wholly on the adequacy in quality as well as the level of devotion of its work force.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that effective delivery of Social studies curriculum content in classroom demands that teachers should have a basic knowledge of all that the students must know, together with an ability to relate the content, methods sequence, and pace of his work to instructional materials to enhance effective communication. In addition, Gulmund (2002) enjoin teachers to pay attention to such issues as mentioned above and apply direct teaching with suitable instructional materials. According to him, strict adherence to the above suggestion will make

Social studies classroom interaction more participatory and enjoyable and enhance the achievement of its instructional and programme objectives.

Assessment of students' academic performance enables one to know whether students' performance is up-to the required standard set at a given time. Any performance that falls below the set requirement mark is described being poor at that particular time. This therefore means that poor academic performance is relative since it is always subjected to a particular standard that could vary from time to time. The priority of everyone pursuing academic work is to be able to excel despite the numerous challenges that he/she encounters in the academic field. Students' academic performance measurement therefore has to receive considerable attention since there are several factors that lead to students' poor performance in Ghana, most especially in social studies. Among others, the factors that are said to affect pupils' performance in school are the socio-economic status of parents, especially the family size, the occupational status and educational level of parents. Others include qualification of teachers, quality of teaching, adequacy of staff and accommodation, efficiency of school management and supervision and adequacy of textbooks, equipment and other school infrastructure (Nsiah-Peprah & KyiiliyangViiru, 2005).

As a wish of every school and parents, passing very well in the final examination conducted by West African Examinations Council (WAEC) is a reality since this examination raises the image of the school. However, when the exam results start falling, the school begins to lose academic credibility and parents begin to look down on them, to the extent of even withdrawing their wards from the school. The causal variable for this unfortunate situation is the poor academic performance of students in schools, especially in social studies.

Ulabar (1984) observed that student's performance in social studies in Ikpoba- Okha local government area has been affected by lack of qualify social studies teachers, lack of laboratory. Teaching aids, poor teaching method, poor motivation, wrong choice of course, financial problem, family problem, inadequate equipment, psychological problem, lack of provision of guidance and counselor and poor health. Factors influencing underperformance of students in social studies have been the subject of ongoing debate among educators, academics, and indeed policy makers and implementers (Harb & El-Shaarawi, 2006). According to Harb and El-Shaarawi, there have been many studies that sought to examine the issue of determinants of students' performance and the findings point out hard work and discipline, previous schooling, parents' level of education, family income and self-motivation as factors that could explain differences in students' grades in social studies.

Going by the arguments put up so far, the issue of students' performance in SHS social studies cannot really be attributable to a particular variable. There are several ways to evaluate a student's "quality" attributable to formal education but the most tractable indicator is how he or she performs in tests (World Bank, 2003). This according to Nzabihimana (2010) is why teachers are central to any consideration of schools, and majority of education policy discussion focusses directly or indirectly on the role of teachers. It is upon these that the study seeks to ascertain the factors causing underperformance in the subject in secondary school. This study unfortunately cannot and in fact will not be able to tackle all the possible factors that determine a student's low performance in social studies at the SHS level.



## 1.2 Statement of Problem

Several factors have been identified as causes of poor academic performance in the social studies subject. A number of studies have been carried out to identify the factors that affect academic performance of students in a number of educational institutions worldwide. Agyeman (1993) reported that a teacher who does not have both the academic and the professional teacher qualification would undoubtedly have a negative influence on the teaching and learning of his/her subject. However, he further stated that a teacher who is academically and professionally qualified, but works under unfavorable conditions of service would be less dedicated to his work and thus be less productive than a teacher who is unqualified but works under favourable conditions of service.

According to Ankomah et al. (2005), high academic performance, as measured by the examination results, is one of the major goals of a school. Even though, Ghanaian public senior high schools are equipped with professional teachers, available statistics shows that 36 percent of SHS in the Upper West Region scored zero in social studies in the 2012 WASSCE. This situation has raised eyebrows and exposed schools to public criticisms, as evidenced by negative comments from the Upper West Regional Minister (GNA, 2013).

This process of teaching and learning bring the individual in contact with educational process. In 2010, the performance of student in social studies in the municipality has left much to be desire. Efforts so far made at improving this seemingly bad situation will not see to be proving the desire result. It would appear from past efforts that the problems have not been either correctly diagnosed, or solution provided have been adequate enough to ameliorate the situation.

The problem that arises from this situation is a decline in the numbers of students enrolling in social studies at the secondary school level. This definitely has a negative overall effect on the economy. Now that the country needs to be self-sufficient the youth must be encouraged to study social studies. Mosha (2014) confirmed that students' performance in social studies were affected by shortage of English teachers and absence of teaching and learning materials. The studies revealed myriad challenges such as incompetency and untrained teachers skipping difficult topics in the syllabus, infrequent use of English Language at school and home, large class size, teachers' responsibilities, inadequate home support, poverty among others affect students' academic performance in social studies.

There has been notable underperformance of learners in Social Studies at high school level in the municipality since the implementation of curriculum reforms in 2005. Learners continue to perform very poorly in Social Studies for almost a decade. The challenge is that if learners fail Social Studies at high school level, the implication is that they will lack understanding of the interaction in social, cultural, economic, civic and political spheres, and the relationship between people and environments. The persisting abysmal performances of students in WASSCE coupled with the lack of research on the factors contributing to poor performances of students in the WASSCE underscores this investigation. The present study therefore identified factors causing students poor performance in order to assist educational authorities to develop appropriate strategies to improve their output.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

This study sought to explain some causes and remedies to low academic performance of students in the subject. The study is aimed at appraising the adequacy of facilities

and equipment available in teaching social studies in junior secondary school. To find out the extent to which students social economic background affects their academic performance in social studies. Finally, to find out the extent to which poor condition of services for teachers and lack of qualified teachers can influence student's academic performance.

#### **1.4 Objective of the Study**

To facilitate the achievement of this study, the following research objectives were considered:

- i. To ascertain the factors that contribute to the low level of students' academic achievement in Social Studies in SHSs
- ii. To identify government related factors that determine senior high school students' performance in Social Studies in Wa Municipality.
- iii. To identify teachers related factors that determine secondary school students' performance in Social Studies in Wa Municipality.
- iv. To find out the extent to which poor teaching and learning strategies influence the academic performance of students in Social Studies Wa Municipality.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

- i. What are the factors that contribute to the low level of students' academic achievement in Social Studies in SHSs?
- ii. What government related factors determine senior high school students' performance in Social Studies in Wa Municipality?
- iii. What teachers related factors determine senior high school students' performance in Social Studies in Wa Municipality?

- iv. To what extent does poor teaching and learning strategies affect the academic performance of students in Social Studies Wa Municipality?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study findings helped to know lighter on the student's poor academic performance in social studies so as to appraise the problems and prospects of the study is significant because social studies is the basic antidote for interaction between man and his environment. It is the researcher's sincere hope and wish that this little contribution will be of immense benefit to motivate their interest towards the study of the subject in schools. Government is likely, to benefit immensely from this study since the recommendation made in the later part of study will highlight the areas that need to be given more attention in the teaching and learning of social studies in senior secondary schools.

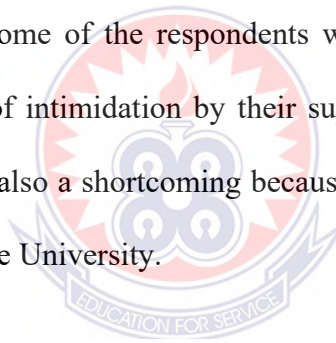
The result of the research work would undoubtedly enable the social studies teachers to improve their teaching method and effective use of teaching aids. It has also placed emphases on needs for students to show more interest in the subject. The outcome of the study also serve as a guide to other researchers in education who may like to make further research on the factors that cause poor performance of students in the WASSCE in other Districts and Municipalities, so that more general information about factors that contribute to falling standards in education especially in Public schools could be obtained and addressed to improve academic performance of students. The outcome of the study contribute to the literature of academic institutions and other bodies worldwide by serving as a reference source. The study would also add to the body of knowledge in the study area.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study is focused on the causes of student's poor academic performance in social studies in the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination at some selected high schools in the Wa Municipality.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

Due to financial constraints, material and time, the sample was delimited to selected schools in the Wa Municipality. Most of the respondents may be initially reluctant to take part in the study since they may feel it is a waste of time because, no monetary value was placed on it. Some respondents also delayed in filling the questionnaire on time, which in turn delay the scheduled completion of the work. Another constraint may have to deal with some of the respondents who feel reluctant to disclose full information due to fear of intimidation by their superiors and colleagues. Time and financial constraints was also a shortcoming because of the size and time schedule of the Graduate School of the University.



### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

The study was divided into five chapters. Chapter One is the introduction which comprises, background to the study, statement of problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitation of the study and the organization of the study. Chapter Two is the review of the relevant literature while Chapter Three is the methodology which includes the introduction, research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, research instrument, reliability and validity of the instrument, data analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter Four deals with the analysis and discussions, and Chapter

Five also deals with the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further study.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter was dedicated for the review of relevant literature in line with themes that were generated from research objectives and questions as well as relevant concepts on the on the subject matter. Consequently, this section employs the use of conceptual framework. Accordingly, this chapter include conceptual review, conceptual framework and summary of the chapter.

#### **2.1 The Concept of Academic Performance**

Lockheed et al. (1991) indicated that lack of motivation and professional commitment produce poor attendance and unprofessional attitudes towards students, which in turn affect the performance of students academically. Babyegeya (2002 p.22) has revealed a number of factors that affect students' academic performance. One of the factors is how students actually learn or intend to learn and what teachers actually teach. In his view, other factors like shortage of books and materials, teaching and teacher education affect students' academic performance. He adds that the type of teachers, their experience professionally, qualifications and commitment to work may contribute to the students' achievements. In addition to his findings, he insists on instruction time in which students spend in actual learning activities.

#### **2.2 Why Students Fail in Social Studies**

The overriding importance of Social studies in nation building in Ghana can never be overemphasized despite the continued decline in secondary school student's achievement in the subject in their external examination. Social studies is the only

discipline that gives an opportunity for important social and moral issues such as attitudes to the destitute, poverty, racism and different types of government, cruelty to animals, and children, brutality and injustice to be introduced into school curriculum (Ikwumelu, 2002). Therefore, in Social studies education, students are exposed to not only to social issues but issues that are value-laden. This informed Edozie (2001, p.39) view that Social studies is;

*a dynamic, systematic and integrated discipline for generating knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviours necessary for dealing with contemporary life issues, for understanding man and the factors which influence his relationship with himself in particular and his society generally in a sustainable manner.*

Kissock (1981:3) equally opined that Social studies is “a program of study which the society uses to instill in the students the knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions which it considers important concerning the relationships human beings have with each other, their world and themselves”. This implies that it (Social studies) is a means through which a society propagates its acceptable norms, attitudes, values and behaviours. Social studies therefore, is expected to contribute immeasurably to the development of confidence, hope and positive self-image in over children in conflicting ideologies, values, and attitudes, since Social studies according to Jarolimek (1977), aims at helping young people develop competence that enable them to deal with and to some extent manage the physical and social forces of the world in which they live. It also provides young people with feeling of hope in the future and confidence in their ability to solve social problem.



Despite the laudable objectives of Social studies as articulated in the Ghanaian school curriculum there has been a dismay arising from excepted outcome of Social studies curriculum implementation. The performance of students in certificate examinations have not been so impressive. Such performances have been source of worries to stakeholders in the educational industry. Lamenting on the poor performance, the chief examiner's report on the performance of students in Social studies examination in the July 2014 said "the performance is generally poor. It was disheartening to see the degree of ignorance among candidates of Social studies in their home country", (Ebonyi State Secondary Education Board, 2014:12). In addition, Oyibe and Mbang (2013) opined that Social studies education in Nigeria for long had been criticized for not quite preparing students for effective living in the society. According to them, that inability of Social studies education to actualize its expected goals of preparing students for worthy living is proved beyond reasonable doubt by the poor level of performance of Social studies students in external examination".

Poor performances of Social studies students had been attributed to a number of factors by Social studies educators. For instance, Chukwu (2009) attributed it to poor teachers' qualification and content presentation while Mkpa (2001) attributed it to wrong selection and poor uses of Social studies instructional methods and materials, others pointed accusing finger to poor teaching methods involving selection and application of orthodox or traditional methods in Social studies classroom (Mezieobi, 1991). Ede and Onyia (2002) observed that poor teaching techniques by teachers, lack of interest and poor concentration by the students that offer Social studies in the Nigerian secondary school examination among other factors are responsible for the dismay performance of students in the subject. Considering the importance of Social

studies in our everyday lives, Ikwumelu and Oyibe (2011) suggested that all the teachers of Social studies at all levels of education need to be familiar with the content, methods and materials of teaching the subject in order to interpret the content of Social studies, correctly and encourage its learning. This is mainly because when Social studies methods and materials are related to content, learning will cease to be fragmentary and memorization of unrelated facts and concepts will end.

Unfortunately, as rightly observed by Bozimo and Ikwumelu (2009) that social awareness and social understanding are still not being developed, students still consider either to take for granted what their teachers offer or to reject it out of hand, probably as a result of either poor classroom interaction or the quality of instruction with regard to overall academic achievement of students. Social studies teachers should know that they are the ones who interpret the aims and objectives of Social studies and ensure that the students are educated in line these aims and objectives, since the quality of Social studies output depends wholly on the adequacy in quality as well as the level of devotion of its work force.

Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that effective delivery of Social studies curriculum content in classroom demands that teachers should have a basic knowledge of all that the students must know, together with an ability to relate the content, methods sequence, and pace of his work to instructional materials to enhance effective communication. In addition, Gulmund (2002) enjoin teachers to pay attention to such issues as mentioned above and apply direct teaching with suitable instructional materials. According to him, strict adherence to the above suggestion will make Social studies classroom interaction more participatory and enjoyable and enhance the achievement of its instructional and programme objectives. It is upon these that the

study sought to ascertain the perception of secondary school teachers on some determinants of students' performance in Social studies.

### **2.2.1 Language policy as a barrier to learning Social Studies**

The language policy in Ghana refers to how the Ghana government intends to safeguard, develop and exploit language capacity among its people. According to the language policy document of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MESC, 2003:4), English is the medium of instruction from primary 4 onwards in all primary schools in Ghana. The policy was developed to enable learners to be proficient enough in English. Another reason why English became an official language in Ghanaian schools is because by the end of the primary school cycle learners might gain access to further education as well as to language communication. At the same time, Aston (2011, p.14) argues that English can be thought of as being a foreign language to the majority of Namibians. Therefore, this may lead Ghanaian learners to study and master English because it is not their mother tongue. The language policy in Ghana stipulates that every school-going child in Ghana should acquire adequate proficiency in English at primary school level so that learners can learn the curriculum content with ease (MEC, 2003, p.63). Government implemented the decision through a language policy for schools, which states that learners should be taught in their home language from primary 1 to 3, while from primary 4 onwards, learners must receive instruction in English (MESC, 2003). The question here is why English is only introduced within schools from primary 4 onwards and not from pre-primary stage onwards.

Furthermore, if transition from teaching through local languages to English should start at primary 5, is this might not have negative impact on learning other subjects,

particularly Social Studies? The point is that learners may take longer to adapt to a new language of instruction. In this respect, they may not understand the content of the subject easily and their academic performance may be influenced negatively. In support of this argument, Aston's (2011) study suggests that policy writers may need to re-evaluate the policy and reintroduce English as a compulsory medium of instruction earlier, from the preprimary stage onwards.

In this regard learners may be familiar themselves with the language earlier and hence study other subjects easier. Moreover, Dhurumraj (2013) argues that language plays an important role in understanding technical terms in subjects. Dhurumraj (2013) claims that when learners learn in a language that is not their mother tongue, learning becomes more difficult because they may not understand the technical terms used. This in turns affects learners' academic performance. The main concern that people perceive is that this policy increases learners' poor performance in subjects such as Social Studies and Mathematics. In support of this argument, Harris's (2011) study discloses that learning subject content through English is one of the contributing factors to the high failure rates in Ghanaian schools. This may also be seen as a possible factor contributing to learners' poor performance in Social Studies at upper primary school level in Ghana.

Furthermore, for decades, learners in junior high school through secondary schools performed poorly in Social Studies due to the fact that they lacked adequate proficiency in the language needed to cope with the curriculum. This problem has not been addressed or rectified. What the researcher experienced as Social Studies teacher is that sometimes some of the Social Studies test and examination questions focus on general knowledge but is related to the subject content, meaning learners may not be

able to answer them and it may be difficult for them to understand these questions because of the language barrier. During the class and term tests as well as examinations, learners may misinterpret the questions and provide incorrect answers due to the language problem.

Therefore, the researcher raises the concern that English as the primary medium of instruction in the Ghanaian curriculum may need to be revisited to address issues of continuing high failure rates of many learners in Social Studies and other subjects. In support of this, Dhurumraj (2013) reports that the medium of instruction at schools affect learners' performance because learners are unable to interpret the questions in examinations. This means that learners are unable to provide a correct answer due to language difficulties. The linguistic researchers also indicated in their studies that learners would not be able to produce subject content knowledge due to the lack of language proficiency. It is clear that a lack of a suitable level of proficiency in English might indeed be one of the barriers that impact negatively on learners' performance in Social Studies.

### **2.3 School Related Variables as Determinants of Students' Performance in Social Studies**

The school and the classroom are the laboratories from where the teacher operates. Therefore, the skills and knowledge a social studies teacher carries to the classroom would make further impact if the school and classroom(s) from where he/she teaches were conducive for teaching and learning. According to Lai, Sadoulet and Janvry (2009), common sense suggests that school quality should affect students' performance; however, there is limited rigorous supporting evidence. According to Lai, Sadoulet and Janvry (2009), in explaining students' performance, they are

predominantly done by explaining teacher characteristics, leaving very little role for other school resources and peer quality. There have therefore been great challenges in rigorously assessing the impact of school quality on students' academic performance.

According to Asikhia (2010), the importance of the location of the school, the appearance of the physical structures of the school cannot be over-emphasized in accounting for the performance of students in schools. The location of the school according to Asikhia (2010), will determine the patronage and to some extent the caliber of students and teachers, it will attract. It is common knowledge that students who perform very well at the Junior High School (JHS) level may not be tempted to go to schools in an obscure location with poor physical structures. Indeed, schools such as those will most probably not attract highly qualified students and teachers.

Betts, Zau and Rice (2003) found in an earlier research that, schools in less affluent areas tended to have less experienced, less educated teachers who were less likely to hold full academic credentials and these were schools likely to have the lowest test scores. Highly qualified and experienced teachers are more likely to move to schools with good-looking infrastructure and located in an area that is easily accessible. When this happens, the probability is that unqualified teachers and students with poor grades at the JHS level will be compelled to go to schools that are outlandish and have poor infrastructure. This will further de-motivate both teachers and learners leading to poor academic performance.

Although from research, teacher experience and qualifications are not the only determinants of students' performance, they play vital roles in determining the level of a student's performance in social studies across schools. The quality and level of

teacher motivation will determine largely the performance of the students. A school that for one reason or the other has a crop of uncommitted teachers will suffer in terms of academic performance of the students. The school plant determines largely the level of commitment and cordiality that exist between teachers and students', teachers and teachers and finally also between students and students. Where the school is run in a manner that teachers are dissatisfied it will be difficult to give of their best no matter the location and quality of the school infrastructure. The students then become the ultimate losers because for now, teachers are longer paid by the results of their students as it used to happen in Ghana in the 1930's and 1940's where teacher's payment was linked to the percentage pass of students/pupils in schools.

One other school factor that could trigger poor performance from students is the classroom environment. Sometimes when a school is reputed to be a good school because of the location, quality of teachers, appearance of the physical infrastructure among others, enrolments tend to be very high. With time, if not well managed, the learning environment will become uncondusive as there will be overcrowding in the classrooms. In a study, Porter (2002) found that, students made gains that were more academic when instruction was effectively connected to assessment. However, where there were large classes' teachers moved away from giving adequate assignments to students because of the work load of marking. It also affects classroom management and class discipline. Teachers cannot also individualize in their teaching. This according to Nzabihimana (2010), teaching subjects that need great concentration like Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Math among others, are likely to be negatively influenced by a high pupil-teacher ratio. When this happens, students are not properly assessed and this affects them ultimately. Having explored some of the teacher and

school related variables as determinants of students' performance in social studies in SHS; it will be worthwhile looking at the extent to which some home factors also determine students' performance in social studies in SHS.

### **2.3.1 Teachers as determinants of students' performance in schools**

The role or impact of teachers on the performance of students' in schools across all subjects can hardly be doubted. Sanders (2000), in a study concluded that "differences in teacher effectiveness are the single largest factor affecting academic growth of the population of students". According to Betts, Zau and Rice (2003), arguably the most important school resource is the teacher and the many dimensions of their training, including years of teaching experience, their official teacher certifications and subject authorizations, their highest academic degree, and their field(s) of study at college. The teacher related determinants to be discussed in this paper are gender and teacher academic qualifications.

The gender of teachers appears to be one variable thought to play a role in the performance of students in schools. Unfortunately, most of the studies carried out on the influence of gender and students' performance appear to be concentrated in Mathematics and Science. Over the years however, a number of studies have shown that the perception that males do better in virtually every field than females is fast been rethought (Eniayeju, 2010; Abubakar 2011).

In the field of social studies, Fitchett (2010) found that, demographically, teachers working in the field of social studies remained disproportionately male compared to practitioners in other subject areas. He states further that, previous researches on gender within social studies have intimated that the male orientation of the social



sciences dissuades many young women from entering the field. From the point of view of Fitchett therefore, it may not be fair to compare the influence of female gender on social studies students' performance when there is numerical advantage to the male gender. The discussion so far has not given any clear indication of the influence gender has on students' performance. Besides, it appears all the studies conducted to determine gender influence both on mathematics and science. It may therefore not be adequate, based on this to state that a particular gender has a better influence on the performance of students in secondary schools.

Data on the influence of gender on the performance of students' in the field of social studies is virtually nonexistent in Ghana. According to Arain (2011), the importance of teachers is widely accepted because of their impact on students' performance. He contended further that; research has shown that improved teacher variables were most likely to produce substantial gains in students' performance. One of these teacher related variables that could lead to gains in students' performance is teachers' academic status. In a study to determine the effects of different teacher certification levels on students' achievement, Goldhaber and Brewer (2000), found that the type of certification a teacher held was related to students' outcomes. For instance, they found that students of teachers with standard certification in Math did better than students with teachers that had either no certification or private school certification in Math.

In another study, Goe and Stickler (2008) supported earlier findings of Frome, Lasater and Cooney (2005) which indicated that completion of an undergraduate or graduate major in mathematics was associated with higher students' achievement in high school and middle schools. This may not apply to social studies because social studies integrate a number of otherwise distinct subjects of history, geography, economics,

government among other subjects and therefore it may prove difficult to have adequate mastery in all these otherwise distinct subject areas. In addition, these findings may not be conclusive as there are private SHS in Ghana who employ relatively unqualified teachers in terms of certification and yet their students' in some instances perform better than some public SHS students with very qualified (certification wise) teachers. This therefore indicates that, certification aside there are other teacher related variables that account for students' performance in SHS in Ghana.

In Ghana, there are many teachers of social studies who are single social science/arts specialists. In most cases, they have academic qualifications in subjects such as history, economics, geography, political science, integrated development studies among others. Therefore, their approaches to the teaching of social studies still follow the way they teach the content of history, geography, and economics. Meanwhile, social studies require an integrated approach whereby all the single social sciences/arts subjects making up social studies lose their distinct orientation or identity. This will most likely affect the performance of students. It is important to add that, the problem of non-specialist's teachers teaching social studies is not peculiar to Ghana.

According to Adeniyi (1982), 81.3% of social studies teachers randomly selected in secondary schools in the Ilorin Local Government Area of Kwara State in Nigeria, were professionally unqualified to teach social studies at the time of the study. In the same way, Adinoyi (1986), in a similar study, also found in randomly selected secondary schools that 76% of social studies teachers in Okene/Okehi Local

Government Area of Kwara State now Kogi State in Nigeria had no teaching qualifications in social studies.

## **2.4 Home Related Variables as Determinants of Students' Performance in Social Studies**

The home of the student as a determinant of his/her performance in school is apparent. A close look at the types of home, the Socio-Economic Status (SES) of the family among others, will indicate that, there is a relationship between the home and students' performance. Brecko (2010) contended that, a key goal of education is to ensure that every student has a chance to excel, both in school and in life. She argued further that, children success in school determined their success as adults, determining whether and where they go to College, what profession they enter and how much they earn.

According to Loop (2012) the actual schooling is not the only contributing factor that could assist a child's learning and achievement in school. Loop (2012) contended further that, although the academic environment is important, each student's individual home situation greatly influences educational goals and progress. Therefore, school performance in secondary and primary schools do not depend on a student's mental and physical abilities alone. The family and social background of students greatly influence school performance (Paul, 2012).

The relationship between the child and the parent is a crucial home factor that influences the child learning and achievement. Parents who are responsive to their children needs can influence the performance of their children in schools. Parents' educational aspirations exert a significant influence on students' achievement.

Therefore, all other things being equal, parents who have aspiration that challenge, inspire and motivate their children should correlate with their children performance in school. If a child comes from a home where parents are not responsive to their physical and emotional needs such students become depressed and if the situation is not handled well it will go a long way to affect their performance. Students belong to homes of different socioeconomic backgrounds and this affects them in diverse ways (Paul, 2012; Loop, 2012). The school according to Paul (2012) is no doubt important in a student's achievement. Recent researches however indicate that, parents are even more important in terms of students' performance in schools. According to Paul, recent researches has shown that, parental involvement in checking the homework of their children, regular attendance of school meeting, discussing school activities with their children has more powerful influence on students' academic performance than anything about the school the student attend.

Students of varied family backgrounds attend educational institutions in Ghana like other countries. These differences range from parents' level of education, interests in education, material support to their children among others. It is most probable that educated parents will be more inclined to giving good education by providing the needs of their children. It must however be added that, there are some parents who are well educated yet pay very low attention to the education of their own children. If this scenario persists, students of parents who pay little attention to their children education will perform poorly in schools. It must also be added that, there are situations where illiterate parents pay more attention to their children education even though they are illiterate themselves. To such illiterate parents, they do not want their children to suffer the deprivations they had to endure. It may therefore be true that

parents' level of education is a strong determinant of students' performance in school. A home that encourages learning is perhaps the most accurate predictor of success at school.

## **2.5 Entry Grades of Students in Social Studies from BECE**

The entry grades of students from one level of education to the next level can have an impact on their performance. Usually, students who enter the Senior High School with good grades perform better than those who enter with low grades. However, a few of them who enter with low grades improve upon their performance in the course of time. On the other hand, some who entered with high grades may not do well in class exercises or examination. This may be due to the fact that they acquired the high grades through foul means. According to Onivehu and Asare (2002), grades awarded to learners show the level of attainment or achievement of individual learners and also that of the group of learners, and their strength and weaknesses. Students' grades summarize and reflect their performance during each term, semester or year.

Grades are criteria for screening and selecting of candidates for programmes, selecting students for awards and screening and placement of students into positions and on specialized jobs. Onivehu and Asare (2002) say that students' scores or marks serve as motivation function and guidance function to them. This implies that the grades of students can help them make good career choices with the help of the school counsellor. Tamakloe, Attah and Amedahe (1996) indicated that the best predictor of future performance is present performance. Generally, junior high school graduates who enter the senior high school with low grades do not perform well in both internal and external examinations written at the end of their courses. The probability of students who enter with low grades performing very well is low. If the raw materials

are not good, automatically the product may not be good. According to Okumbe (1998), students who are selected into the next level of educational ladder are the raw materials for the institution. Most often than not, students of public rural schools score low marks.

## **2.6 Students' Attitude towards Learning Social Studies**

The negative attitude of some students towards learning contributes to their low academic performance. Many students do not show much interest in learning social studies, some claim lessons at school are not interesting and therefore play truancy, and spend school hours with peers in town. This is especially true of those who are dull. Such students fail to take part in class exercises, tests and internal examinations. As a result, their performance in the end of course examination falls below standard. Neale, Gill and Tisner (1970) assert that children with favourable attitudes to a subject study and learn more about the subject than those whose attitudes are less favourable. Neale, Gill and Tisner add that such students gain satisfaction from learning the subject. This explains the massive failure of students in social studies.

According to Biehler (1978) attitude can influence both cognitive and psychomotor abilities of people. Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) says some students refuse to attend school regularly because they do not find teachers' lessons interesting or they have friends who are able to engage them in activities on their way to school. However, other students are regular and punctual but will never do their homework. Students do not see the need to learn after school. Such students always find examination questions very difficult. Nowadays, students of senior high schools are interested in "boyfriend girlfriend" affairs than in learning; they go to preps not to learn but to converse with their sexual partners. At the end of the day, they cannot write and pass their

examination because no effective learning has taken place and therefore engage in examination malpractices like taking foreign materials to examination halls.

## **2.7 The Social Studies Curriculum**

The curriculum is considered central to the education process. According to Du Preez and Reddy (2014, p.13), a curriculum is a social construct and it must therefore be accepted that there is no general interpretation of this concept; rather, it should be explained in the context in which it is used, leading to various ways of interpretation. This means that different authors explain the concept of curriculum according to the way they use it or the way they understand it. For example, Carl (2012, p.29) defines a curriculum as a broad concept that may include all school planned activities and therefore also subject courses that are offered during the normal school day. In line with this, the MEC (2010, p.1) describes a curriculum as an official policy for teaching, learning and assessment that gives direction for planning, organizing and implementing teaching and learning. Although the definitions of 'curriculum' differ for these authors, their identification of the different aspects and relevance of curriculum interconnects. The above explanations led to the researcher's understanding of a curriculum as a well-designed plan of teaching and learning processes that includes both teaching and learning activities that need to be done in and outside the classrooms.

### **2.7.1 Change of the Social Studies curriculum**

The world has always been changing, but the question is, what is change? According to Morrison (1998:13), change can be regarded as an active and continuous process of development and growth that involves a reorganization in response to needs identified. In relation to curriculum change, Mweti and Van Wyk (2009) state that the

curriculum should inspire learners to seek to fulfil their full potential as contributing and responsible citizens. Internationally, there is a similarity with the underperformance of learners in Social Studies, for example, according to Routman (2014, p.42), there has been only a few remarkable positive changes in measurable results in most American schools, so far, mainly in Social Studies. This means that learners are not performing well in the abovementioned subjects after the curriculum reforms and combination of the two subjects (History and Geography) into one subject, Social Studies, at primary school level.

Successful reform in education requires sufficient time. The great challenge of curriculum reform lies in the implementation stage (MEC, 2010, p.5). Achieving some measure of success in a tangible way is a critical incentive during implementation. This implies that curriculum implementers, who are mostly teachers, need to be committed in order to succeed and reach curriculum goals. Some studies indicate that policy makers produce curriculum changes without any consultation with teachers (Evan, 2000, p.17). Similarly, Carl (2005, p.223) argues that teachers are not involved in curriculum development, but are only participants during the implementation phase when they receive training in teaching the new curriculum.

In this study, the question may arise: Is the Social Studies curriculum relevant with regard to content and meeting learners' needs if educators were not involved in the development of the curriculum? The researcher argues that teachers are more familiar with what the learners need as well as their difficulties. In support of this, Routman (2014, p.42) states that teachers of language and Social Studies in upper primary school levels can incorporate these subjects into teaching processes, for example Social Studies teachers can teach learners how to access, read, summarize and discuss



current events in their History lesson and provide insight into the world in which the learners live. The change of the education system included a curriculum aimed at seeking an appropriate approach to addressing the education imbalances of the past.

The researcher understands that curriculum is changed or renewed for particular reasons. Hence, planning is a prerequisite. The underlying reason for curriculum changes and planning is not to fail learners, but rather relates to the kind of society required or the kind of future citizens that are anticipated. During curriculum change, learners' activities in the existing curriculum are revised and new activities are designed to suit the new curriculum. Therefore, teachers are expected to change learner activities in order to suit and accommodate the revised curriculum in teaching and learning. If teachers fail to revise activities and design them based on the existing curriculum, it may affect learners' performance.

### **2.7.2 Implementation of curriculum change**

The process of curriculum changes and implementation has been and still is a challenge in education, as debated by various authors. Fullan (1993, p.37) argues that the implementation of curriculum change involves a change in practice. Such change, as pointed out by Fullan (1993), involves three aspects: the possible use of new or revised materials, the possible use of new approaches and the possible alteration of beliefs. Change involves moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar; from the known to the unknown. This notion can apply to teaching: Teachers should teach learners from the known to the unknown. Similarly, a familiar teaching approach is abandoned and a new one is implemented in the teaching and learning process. In general, teachers are currently facing challenges particularly with regard to curriculum change,

for example all lessons should be planned according to the requirements of the new curriculum to attain effective teaching and learning.

Furthermore, studies conducted by Kandumbu (2005) and Iiping and Kasanda (2013) report that the implementation of educational change is a challenge in some schools in Namibia. Swarts (2003, pp.27–28) claims that lack of implementation arises from the lack of trained teachers, unmanageable large class sizes and unavailability of resources. This means that the factors mentioned above may negatively influence learners' academic performance. However, this does not mean that these factors are the ones that necessarily contribute to learners' poor academic performance in Social Studies; hence the factors involved in this study were investigated during the data collection. Fullan (2001) states that in order to enable teachers to take ownership of the proposed change, subjective realities should be considered. This refers to change causing fears among teachers. Furthermore, curriculum change in Ghana is experienced by teachers as a threat rather than an opportunity; as something to be avoided, if possible, rather than something to be welcomed. Teachers need to consider how to minimize the above-mentioned reasons so that these reasons do not contribute to learners' poor academic performance.

In contrast, O'Sullivan (2002, p.222) claims that the successful implementation of educational change always depends on the extent to which teachers are prepared to implement the change process, therefore, teachers' attitudes towards any change contribute to the success or failure of its implementation. This means that curriculum implementation will require dedicated and committed teachers who will be willing to introduce and implement the new curriculum and acquire the new approaches for teaching this curriculum. It also shows that the implementation of a new curriculum

demands the efforts of teachers, school management and principals. Furthermore, Carl (2002, p.247) states that teachers must change their attitude become committed and must be self-empowered. This means that teachers should have a positive attitude in order to embrace change and treat it as normal. Teachers should not see curriculum change as a threat, but should work hard so that they are able to challenge the situation of learners' poor academic performance. They should see and understand that curriculum change is a way they can develop and grow in terms of the teaching and learning process.

In this study, the researcher claims that if teachers become positive, show interest in teaching and are committed and innovative, they will become specialists in their subject area, for example Social Studies, and it might be easy for them to become curriculum change implementers. This means within the new curriculum change; teachers should be seen as both agents and implementers of curriculum change. Principals and school management should help teachers and encourage them to adapt to the curriculum change. The point here is, during the implementation of the curriculum reform in Ghana, teachers can also design a variety of activities on topics to develop various study skills that learners require in Social Studies. This process should be developed in the next grades.

Moreover, curriculum implementation is the phase where design is put into practice. This is also seen as a management system with the aim of changing or improving the curriculum. According to Okogu (2011, p.49), poor planning will affect the implementation of the curriculum negatively. For this reason, learners' academic performance might also be affected negatively. Therefore, sound planning should be effectively utilized in order to minimize unsuccessful curriculum implementation and

underperformance of learners in Social Studies. The researcher's opinion is that, in order for the curriculum to be effectively implemented, it would be wise to continuously evaluate it by taking into account the situations that may hinder successful implementation, while also reviewing those aspects that promote successful implementation. The factors that could possibly hinder successful implementation, such as resistance and lack of resources, should be considered during implementation. Because change brings fear, causing individuals to hold onto what they know best, it is necessary to manage change with support and sympathy. In addition, the implementation of the curriculum can be hindered by a lack of adequate resources and other relevant aspects.

There are however also factors that may contribute to the success of curriculum change, as was mentioned earlier in this paragraph. Ministry of Education, The National Institution for Educational Development (NIED) (2003) suggests that in order to implement the changes that the reformers proposed, teachers are required to have a clear idea of how to teach well in a learner-centered way. In contrast, Nyambe and Wilmot (2008, pp.18-21) argue that teachers lack knowledge and skills in implementing learner-centered pedagogy, as well as confidence in their own professional ability to adequately interpret and practice a curriculum change or learner-centered approach. This shortcoming might contribute to the lack of ability of teachers to implement curriculum change, and once teachers lack ability, knowledge of the subject and commitment to present curriculum change and apply a learner-centered approach, it may influence learners' academic performance. Therefore, it is important to include teachers in the process of curriculum change/revision of their subject area of specialization and to meet the demands of curriculum implementation.

According to the MoE (2013), policies are one of the factors that may contribute to learners' poor performance. It was therefore also important to investigate how policies have shaped the curriculum.

## **2.8 Challenges Impacting Effective Learning of Social Studies**

### **2.8.1 Motivation**

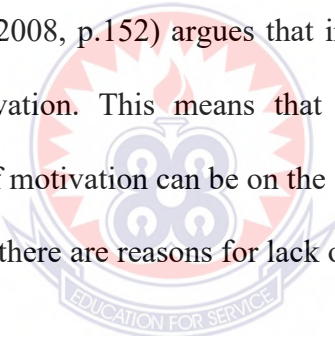
Various theorists define motivation in different ways. Martin and Dowson (2009, p.328) explain motivation as a set of interrelated beliefs and emotions that influence and direct behaviour. In the same line, Goetsch (2011, p.89) explains that to be motivated means that one is driven to do something. Based on the above description, motivation can be explained as a way of influencing someone's behaviour. According to Bush and West-Burnham (1994, p.224), motivation is something that drives people and makes them feel good about doing those things. Hodgetts (1990, p.42) defines motivation as a force that pulls a person towards a desired objective. Common among these definitions is that it makes people determined and eager to do their work in harmony and to reach their desired objectives. Children who perform low or above average academically need the desire or motivation to do well and to succeed at school. If children have a lack of motivation, coupled with low parental involvement in school work, this may cause poor performance. In support of this, Smit and Fourie (2010) state that learners do not learn if they are not motivated. Therefore, learners need to be motivated towards working hard at school, for example by giving them praise for doing well or working hard, and setting realistic goals and expectations and rewarding them if they meet these expectations.

Learners need motivation from both their parents and the school in order for them to perform well. According to Palestini (2005, p.64), the theory and research in the area

of motivation provide a systematic way of diagnosing the degree of motivation and of prescribing ways of increasing it. The principal has to motivate educators to work towards the achievement of the school's goals. Among the school's goals is learners' performance. Teachers also need to motivate learners to work towards the achievement of Social Studies goals.

### **2.8.2 Lack of motivating and rewarding individuals**

According to Fox (2006, p.204), performance depends on the motivation and ability of individuals. He states that individuals must be willing to do the job, know how to do it, be able to do it and receive feedback on how they are performing. This implies that if there is a motivation and individual reward, there will be good performance. In support of this, Christie (2008, p.152) argues that implementation of policy depends partly on people's motivation. This means that people should be motivated to implement policy. Lack of motivation can be on the side of both teachers and learners. The literature reveals that there are reasons for lack of motivation, namely:

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- Laziness
  - Being too stressed or nervous
  - Fear of what others might say
  - Fear of failure due to failure in the past
  - The feeling or belief that there are other, more important things to do.

The above-mentioned reasons may stifle motivation. Demotivation may contribute to learners losing interest in a subject, and may therefore be the cause of poor performance in that particular subject.

### **2.8.3 Lack of motivation and support among teachers**

Teachers are key role players in the teaching and learning process, because they must play their role to lay a strong foundation for learners' education. Although teachers are regarded as the foundation layers of learners' education, they face challenges such as criticism, as parents and society often perceive them as uncommitted, irresponsible and not devoted. The issue of motivation among teachers is a great concern in Namibia, because if teachers are not motivated, they may be inactive and unwilling to go the extra mile to assist learners to perform better. Of course, this influences learners' academic performance. Terhoven (2012, p.6) claims that motivation is crucial for change and development. Therefore, teachers need to be motivated in the teaching and learning process. Hence, motivation is an important aspect in the teaching and learning process. Adeyemo, Oladipupo and Omisore (2013, p.36) argue that the negative performance of learners in terms of educational goals and objectives can often be associated with the low motivation of teachers. They further state that efficient teaching and high morale will occur when there is strong motivation in terms of salary and innovation.

Teachers must therefore be motivated through various ways, which may include education seminars, workshops, upgrading tests, providing the required subject facilities and incentives. This would go a long way in motivating teachers, which will in turn improve learners' performance. In addition, the study of Adeyemo et al. (2013, p.36) found that teachers are unhappy with service conditions, uninspired and unmotivated. This means that the outputs and inputs are not adequate and this creates frustration and job disappointment, which in turn may affect the academic performance of learners. Teachers should therefore be allowed to attend conferences,

training sessions, seminars and workshops in order to increase their growth and morale to produce at a high level. This may help to improve learners' poor performance, also in Social Studies. It is clear that motivation has both positive and negative impacts on learners' performances. For that reason, teachers need to be motivated. If teachers are not being motivated, then classroom practice may have influence learners' performances negatively.

#### **2.8.4 Classroom practice**

According to Acharya (2009, p.9), open learning creates possibilities not only for changes in administration and management strategies, but also for the way in which education is designed in terms of content, teaching methods, support for learners and assessment strategies. It requires that learners become involved in what, how and when they want to learn. Furthermore, teaching and learning approaches as well as classroom practice serve as the only way of opening up learners' minds. Teaching and learning classroom practice approaches employed by teachers may contribute to learners' performance.

#### **2.8.5 Overcrowded classrooms**

The study of Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego (2002, p.16) focused on a specific South African context, but lessons can be learned from this. They indicated that overcrowded classrooms in some schools in Potchefstroom are a serious problem. Sichombe, Kapenda and Nambira (2011, p.92) argue that overcrowded classes contribute towards learners' poor academic performance. In the same line, Shah and Inamullad (2012), Khan and Iqbal (2012) and Mboweni (2014) maintain that large classroom sizes affect the teaching and learning process, for instance teachers have to face different problems such as poor performance of learners, poor discipline,



behaviour problems, noise, evaluation problems and uncontrolled and unmanageable classrooms.

In general, in overcrowded classrooms learners are seated closely together, which lead to teachers and learners not being able to work and move freely. In the situation of overcrowded classrooms teachers are limited in terms of walking around the classroom and reaching each and every learner in the classroom. Legotlo, Maaga and Sebege (2002) argue that in the North Western province in South Africa, some schools' class sizes have been identified as a determinant of and a contributing factor to poor academic performance. It was noted that in some schools there are more than 40 learners in one classroom. These conditions lead to other problems, such as unacceptable behaviour, not paying attention to each individual learner, and poor discipline in the classroom during the teaching and learning process.

A study by Kraft (cited in Legotlo et al., 2002) revealed that class sizes of above 40 learners have a negative effect on learners' achievement. This may be true, because too large class sizes may cause problems of ineffective classroom management, poor supervision and activities, and poor discipline in the classroom, while small classroom sizes are more manageable and allow individual attention. In addition, large class sizes may also have an influence on teacher performance, which might have a negative spill-over effect on learners' performance.

#### **2.8.6 Lack of trained and qualified teachers**

Shinovene (2015) reports that the Minister of Education, Hanse-Imarwa, informed her fellow parliamentarians during the budget discussion of her ministry in March 2015 that the continued shortage of teachers will haunt the country for a long period. She

further announced that she is also investigating the number of unqualified and underqualified teachers in the government system and warned the parliamentarians (house) that they will be amazed by the number of unqualified and underqualified teachers in the system. This clearly indicates that Ghana is affected by a shortage of qualified teachers. Research carried out by a number of researchers proved that Africa has a high shortage of experienced qualified and effective teachers in some learning areas such as Mathematics and Social Studies. Teachers who are untrained and underqualified do not know how to explain the content of Social Studies because they do not have any background to the subject. Therefore, inadequate teacher preparation and teachers' limited background to some extent may contribute to poor performance in teaching and learning. This means that as a result, learners do not perform well in subjects taught by untrained or unqualified teachers.

### **2.8.7 Availability of teaching resources and use of teaching and learning materials**

Adekunle (2001, p.2) describes teaching resources as anything that can assist the teacher in promoting meaningful teaching and learning. He gives examples of resources in Social Studies, namely humans, places, material resources and instructional material. This section deals with the availability of teaching resources and the use of teaching and learning materials. Kandumbu (2005) identified a lack of resources as one of the challenges facing the primary education sector in Ghana. This refers to the lack of libraries; computer facilities; and teaching and learning materials, such as textbooks, atlases, maps and education posters, in some primary schools in Ghana. In addition, many learners do not have the required textbooks and sometimes a class of 40 learners is required to share a few copies of a textbook. This researcher

concur with Kandumbu's argument due to the researcher's own experiences in Ghana, 2011, when learners were required to share Social Studies textbooks as well as atlases, of which there were only 11 for the entire school.

As a Social Studies teacher the researcher often observed teachers trying to collect some resources on their own due to the lack of available, sufficient teaching and learning resources or materials at some schools. Similarly, Stodolysky (1998, p.9) states that Social Studies programmes place emphasis on learners' ability to find information in a variety of resources. This is because some programmes emphasize inquiry and critical thinking; others pursue social and affective goals along with cognitive outcomes. The researcher's argument in this regard is that if the Social Studies programme emphasizes learners' abilities, this may not contribute towards the poor performance of the learners. Some schools have sufficient resources, but teachers do not use them effectively. In some cases, teachers may have borrowed the effective materials from the subject head teacher, but do not adapt them at all.

Teachers need to adapt teaching and learning materials to suit their learners, while the head of department and the subject head have to monitor how teachers are adapting the borrowed materials and implementing them. They should help teachers and encourage them to adapt the resources borrowed. The next section will focus on parental involvement in their children's education.

## **2.9 Attitudes Affecting Learners' Learning and Academic Performance**

Learners' learning may be affected by negative attitudes. 'Attitude', is explained by Hornby (2010:80) as the way one thinks and feels about something or somebody, or the way one behaves towards somebody or something that shows how one thinks and

feels. Both teachers' and learners' attitudes may affect learners' learning and academic performance.

### **2.9.1 Resources**

The challenge of a lack of resources in schools is a matter of concern worldwide. The lack of resources, such as textbooks, physical infrastructure and laboratory equipment has led to the learners losing interest in the subject, and hence poor performance (Mwenda et al., 2013:98; Makgato & Mji, 2006; Amukowa, 2013, p.105; Mwaba, 2011, p.33). The above statement is supported by the findings of Onwu (1999) where he compared schools with resources with schools with no resources, and found that schools that lacked resources performed poorly. The lack of resources leads to a failure to enhance effective learning, as the subject then only remains taught in theory (Makgato, 2007, p.91; Dhurumraj, 2013, p.51). It also limits written work as the teachers cannot give homework because the learners share books (Onwu, 1999). Muzah (2011, p.192), Makgato (2007, p.96), and Dhurumraj (2013) believe that the availability of practical lessons clarifies and reinforces scientific concepts. It further enhances the learner's interest in science, increases their manipulative skills and memory of the content, makes the subject relevant, helps learners to acquire skills, it promotes discipline, and also assists them in solving problems. However, the subject remains to be teacher-centered, and instructed in a talk-and-chalk method which bores and demotivates the students (Onwu, 1999; Lebata, 2014, p.80). Therefore, research indicates that for the effective teaching and learning of science adequate and relevant resources need to be available, as they make up an essential component (Dhurumraj, 2013, p.49). Yara and Otieno (2010, p.126) indicate that the availability of teaching

resources enhances the effectiveness of the schools as they can bring about good academic performance in the students.

### **2.9.2 Learners' attitudes**

Learners' attitudes towards their subjects, teachers and other learners are important in the academic learning process. Not only learners' attitudes towards the above-mentioned aspects are important, as their attitudes may also influence the introduction and implementation of the specific approach of the curriculum. Learners can develop a positive attitude towards teaching and learning if they are familiar with the topics and can draw from their own experience during the teaching and learning process. It is therefore necessary that teachers determine and consider learners' attitude towards the subject before introducing lessons. Moreover, learners' attitude towards the subject matter often leads to a process of selective attention. For instance, what the learner learns is determined in part by his or her readiness to receive the subject content. If learners show positive attitudes towards the teacher and subject, it may help the learners to concentrate during the lessons and to perform better in that particular subject.

If learners show interest in Social Studies, for instance, it may influence them to participate in classroom discussions willingly and will enable them to do their best in that subject. Not only do learners' positive attitudes contribute to their academic performance, their negative attitudes may also have an impact on the learning process. Negative attitudes may cause poor performance in schools. If learners do not like their teacher, or are irritated by the teacher's voice, for example, they may not be able to follow the lesson presentations and perform at their optimum level. These negatives thoughts may influence the learners not to listen to the instructions of the particular

teacher. Some learners dislike the subjects Mathematics and Social Studies and therefore show no interest in the subjects. These negative attitudes towards the subjects can hamper the learning process. Learners' attitudes are not the only ones requiring scrutiny in terms of attitude issues. Teachers' attitudes also need to be studied, because they are important in learners' learning process.

### **2.9.3 Teachers' attitudes**

Positive attitudes and actions employed by teachers can ultimately make a difference in the lives of their learners. Negative attitudes and actions of teachers will be emulated by their learners. Attitudes encompass a teacher's level of enthusiasm, resourcefulness, knowledge of the subject and willingness to help, and play an overall role in classroom performance. Gourneau (2005, pp.3– 6) argues that attitudes and actions include genuine caring and kindness of the teacher, willingness to share the responsibility involved in a classroom, a sincere sensitivity to learner diversity, motivation to provide meaningful learning experiences for all learners, and enthusiasm for stimulating learners' creativity. Effective teachers willingly share information with learners, are enthusiastic and patient, care about their learners and are motivational and rewarding. They encourage learners to participate in classroom activities as well as to work very hard to do their best in their academic work.

Teachers' negative attitude towards Social Studies makes it difficult for them to create learner interest in the subject, motivate learners and influence learners' attitudes towards the subject positively. Teachers should establish a sharing environment. Effective teachers should not overrule learners instead of encouraging the exchange of ideas in the classroom. It is also important to allow learners to participate and take responsibility to do their activities on their own. Both teachers and learners need to

contribute to the learning process. Therefore, each individual teacher as well as the learners need to look at their own attitudes so that learning can make a difference in their lives. Encouragement of learners relates to the importance of stimulating learners' creativity. Effective teachers may open learners' minds by teaching them to think critically and develop the ability of reasoning. Learners may appreciate and be motivated when teachers design lessons that consider their interests, skills and needs.

Encouragement can help learners to work hard to follow their teachers' directions. Therefore, if learners are not encouraged to study or motivated by their teacher, they may end up not performing well. Good academic performance or results are often obtained when the learning process is facilitated through a positive relationship between teachers and learners. In some cases, this good relationship becomes so intense that learners start to emulate and try to adopt the characteristics of teachers, such as speech, and experience the desire to be close to their teacher. However, if there is no sound relationship between teachers and learners, it may cause learners to hate the subject and not pay attention to that particular subject. In the researcher's experience, some teachers show consistent negative attitudes towards subject preparation.

Sometimes, these teachers become visibly angry due to frustration if they cannot handle the classroom and end up shouting instead of teaching. Some end up using "If only" statements, for example "If only I had enough time", "If only I had fewer learners" or "If only my learners come to class better prepared". Therefore, a shift in teachers' attitudes and perceptions may contribute to poor performance, because they are not taking action – instead of putting more effort into their teaching, they simply use "If only" statements, which will not solve any problems. Teachers should change

their negative attitudes towards Social Studies as well as other subjects. Attitudes are difficult to change, because they are such complicated constructs, but when teachers recognize the components of attitudes that negatively impact on them, they can take action to address them.

Being proactive and taking steps to improve their attitudes towards subjects can help teachers to be more effective, knowledgeable and enthusiastic Social Studies teachers. Positive attitudes make it easy to approach the content of Social Studies, while negative attitudes make it difficult to approach the content and implement the new curriculum. Therefore, teachers need to be influenced in order for them to positively change their attitudes towards the subject, for example by exposing them to the advantages of using a specific effective approach, offering workshops, or observing somebody using it and discussing the weaknesses and strengths after the observation. If teachers do not have positive attitudes towards implementing the recommended teaching learner-centered approach, they will experience difficulty in terms of allowing learners to participate in the lessons and do the activities. This may lead to learners' poor performance in the subject. In this section, the negative attitudes of both teachers and learners were explained. For example, if teachers do not have a positive attitude towards implementing the recommended teaching methods then they will most probably experience difficulty in terms of allowing learners to participate in lessons and make them interested in the subject.

#### **2.9.4 Teachers' capacity building programmes on performance**

Capacity building is something to do with the allocation of, and investment in physical resources, intellectual or human especially when other intervening variables have failed within a given institutional or social context (Egbo, 2011). In education



sector it implies that the efforts made by educational stakeholders to improve inservice teachers' abilities, skills and expertise towards their teaching professional is what referred as capacity building among them. Generally, capacity building programmes through in-service training aim at making teachers be up to date and competent in teaching, hence possibilities of contributing to good students' academic performance. Adeniyi (1993) noted that development of manpower in a country depends on the quantity of well qualified teachers within the country. This implies that there is no way on how education objectives of a country can be achieved when learners are taught by incompetent teachers. Thus, there is a close relationship between teacher's competency and performance.

A competent teacher is one who meets teacher's professional qualities. Ajayi (2009) says that professional qualities of a well-trained teacher include sense of organization, subject matter mastering, able to clarify ideas and motivate learners, able to involve the learners in meaningful activities when teaching, good imagination, management of the details of learning and regular monitoring of students' academic progress through tests and examinations. Eggen and Kauchak (2001) explained teacher's mastery of subject matter in three ways which are: knowledge of content, knowledge of pedagogical content, and general knowledge on pedagogy. This means that there is a need for a teacher to be familiar with what he/she is supposed to teach, and how to teach it so as to enable students learn what is aimed to them. Kimui (1988) argues that instructional resources cannot be used in any manner simply because they are supposed to be used. Hence, the selection of the resources depends on the degree of awareness on teachers on the availability, importance and potentialities of the existing

resources. This implies that poor selection and use of instructional resources may lead to poor performance among students in a particular subject.

According to Gurney (2007), the five factors for effective teaching which provide a good teaching foundation are: teacher knowledge, enthusiasm responsibility for learning; classroom activities that encourage learning; assessment activities that encourage learning through experience; effective feedback that establishes the learning processes in the classroom; and effective interaction between the teacher and students, creating an environment that respects, encourages and stimulates learning through experience. The implication is that, good performance in both internal and external examinations which enable students be academically committed and desired to pursue the subject to further levels of education for career purposes is a result of effective teaching. Learners normally gain a lot from teacher's attitude to the subject and his/ her competence in relation to the subject matter.

#### **2.9.5 Influences of teachers on students' academic performance**

The other consequence is low number of teachers to students' ratio especially in most of the public schools. The pupil to teacher ratio stands at an average of 52:1 and is as high as 72:1 in some regions. The few teachers in the government payrolls are poorly remunerated as a result most of them take up part time employment or private business enterprise in order to make ends meet. Corcoran *et al.* (1988) found out that; the problems of poor working conditions to teachers result in higher absenteeism, reduced levels of effort, and lower effectiveness in the classroom, low morale, and reduced job satisfaction. Where working conditions are good, they result in enthusiasm, high morale, cooperation, and acceptance of responsibility. Teachers have been shown to have an important influence on students' academic achievement.

They also play a crucial role in educational attainment because they are ultimately responsible for translating education policy into action and principles based on practice during their interaction with the students (Afe, 2001).

Both teaching and learning depends on teachers. Uchefuna (2001) clarifies that no wonder an effective teacher has been conceptualized as one who produces desired results in the course of his duty as a teacher. In Tanzania, URT (2012) reports that, the total number of teachers in secondary schools more than doubled between 2007 and 2011 (from around 23 000 to 52 000). But, given the large rise in enrolment, the Students-teacher ratio (STR) in 2011 is the same as in 2007; the STR is 34:1. Despite the greater number of secondary teachers, the proportion of female teachers has remained around 30% on average for all secondary schools. However, private secondary schools tend to have significantly lower-class sizes than government schools. The PTR in government schools in 2011 was 38:1 compared with 22:1 in private schools. Data on teacher qualifications show that 85% of all secondary school teachers had 36 degrees (31%) or diplomas (53%). About 15% of teachers were not qualified to teach at secondary level (URT, 2011b).

## **2.10 Influence of Parents' Levels of Education on Student Academic**

### **Performance**

The home environment also affects the academic performance of students. Educated parents can provide such an environment that suits best for academic success of their children. The school authorities can provide counseling and guidance to parents for creating positive home environment for improvement in students' quality of work (Marzano, 2003). Many scholars pointed out that the academic performance of students heavily depends upon the parental involvement in their academic activities to

attain the higher level of quality in academic success (Barnard, 2004; Shumox and Lomax, 2001). Students with high level of socioeconomic status (SES) perform better than the middle-class students and the middle-class students perform better than the students with low level of socio-economic status due to their parents or family members involvements in their education (Kahlenberg, 2006; Kirkup, 2008). Krashen (2005) concluded that students whose parents are educated score higher on standardized tests than those whose parents were not educated. Educated parents can better communicate with their children regarding the school work, activities and the information being taught at school. They can better assist their children in their homework and participate at school (Trusty, 1999).

### **2.10.1 Influences of parents' income in academic performance in secondary schools**

The literature on achievement consistently has shown that parent education is important in predicting children's achievement (Klebanov et al., 1994; Haveman & Wolfe, 1995; Smith et al., 1997). The mechanisms for understanding this influence, however, have not been well studied. In general, family process models (Linver et al., 2002; Yeung et al., 2002) have examined how parenting behaviours, such as the structure of the home environment influences children's achievement outcomes. Alexander et al. (1994) found that parents of moderate to high income and educational background held beliefs and expectations that were closer than those of low-income families to the actual academic performance of their children, Low-income families instead had high expectations and performance beliefs that did not correlate well with their children's actual school performance.

Halle et al. (1997) found out that mothers with higher education had higher expectations for their children's academic achievement and that these expectations were related to their children's subsequent achievement in Mathematics and Reading. They also found out that these more positive beliefs and expectations predicted higher amounts of achievement related behaviour by mothers in the home as well as more positive perceptions of achievement by the children. Otieno and Yara (2010) asserted that, learners from low socio-economic status families tend to value domestic activities more than schooling. Such children are subjected to child labour and have little time for studies. They indicated that in most developing countries, there are many families whose members despite their full days hard labour do not find it possible to make two ends meet. Children of tender age in such families have to work for their living. These coupled with little government financing of education sector makes many families unable to meet the requirements of their children's education thus contributing greatly to their poor academic performance.

## **2.11 Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The conceptual framework designed by the researcher is as shown in Figure 2.1.

### **2.11.1 Description of the framework**

Figure 2.1 shows how independent variables affect dependent variable. For that case, teaching methodologies, teachers' "professional development programmes and students" academic related characteristics were investigated as independent variables, and the performance in social studies as dependent variable. The framework had been constructed based on constructivists' arguments that learning is an active and constructive process, and learners construct their own understanding and knowledge; it is influenced by the prior knowledge; and it should be related to the real-life

environment. Therefore, the shown independent variables were considered by the researcher as possible factors which might affect academic performance of social studies subject.

***i) Teaching and learning methodologies***

According to Rundell and Fox (2007), methodology is the methods and principles used for doing a particular kind of work, especially scientific or academic research. Also, Business Dictionary (nd) defines methodology as a system of a broad principles or rules from which specific methods or procedures may be derived to interpret or solve different problems within the scope of a particular discipline. Basing on the given definitions and purpose of the study, the research was set to assess teaching and learning methodologies used in teaching and learning social studies subject. Hence, for the sake of this study, teaching and learning methodologies refer to methods, and teaching and learning resources used by teachers. This is because academic performance depends much on teaching and learning methods used by teachers; availability and usage of teaching and learning facilities; and on whether teachers and students are motivated for recommended teaching methods. The currently designed 2010 social studies teaching curriculum takes the ideas with the use of methods and techniques of the constructivist.

So, social studies teachers should prefer suitable methods, approaches and teaching materials according to the programme and prepare activity-based learning environment. Viswanathappa and Jangaiah (2008), write that classroom should be an atmosphere of inquiry and discovery, with emphasis on problem solving and reflective critical thinking, rather than a mere coverage of subject matter. It implies that motivated teachers' creativity, availability and usage of the facilities do lead to

good academic performance among students. The study therefore, was aiming at assessing the way how social studies subject was taught. It was mainly focused on whether teaching and learning was active and participatory or not; and whether the process enabled students to relate what they learn to their real life as it is argued by the constructivists. Then, the reasons for poor performance in the subject among students had to be recognized.

### ***ii) Teachers' professional development programmes***

Teacher's professional development refers to provision of occasions for teachers to reflect critically on their practice and to fashion new knowledge and beliefs concerning content, pedagogy, and learners (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). It means that the programmes run by educational stakeholders to improve in-service teachers' abilities, skills and expertise towards their professionalism is what is referred to as teachers' professional development programmes.

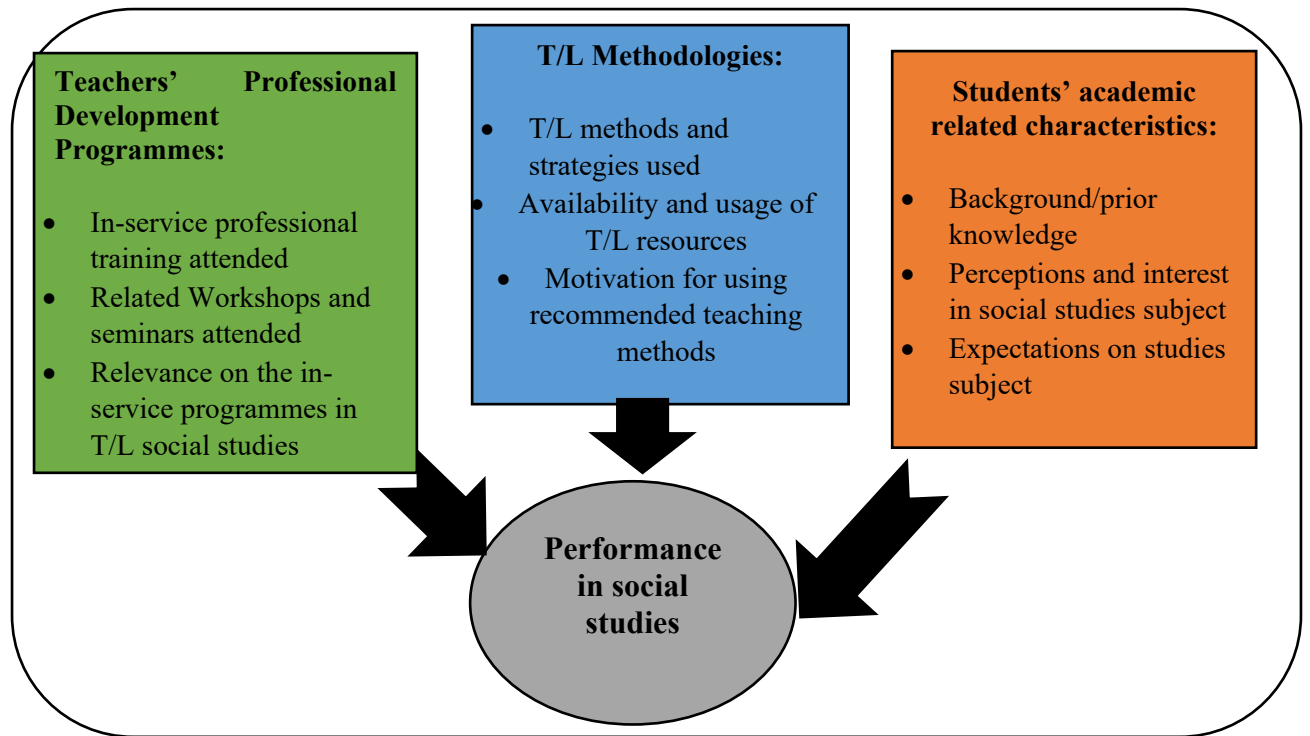
A study by Ochieng (2013), indicated that teacher's ability to deliver the content depends on both his/ her qualifications and the in-service courses which keep him up to date with the new development in teaching method of the subject. This means in-service training is an endless process for teachers throughout their teaching professional life. However, the question was: *Were geography teachers in community secondary schools offered in-service training?* Since teachers' capacity building programmes affect academic performance, the study was intended to determine the availability of the programmes and their relevancy on teaching and learning social studies in the schools. To emphasize on the importance and sustainability of teachers' professional development programmes the Government through the Ministry of Education had prepared Education circular on in-service training for secondary school

teachers. According to the Circular, in-service training for secondary school teachers at district level is under district councils. Each council has to budget for the training, identify the areas which teachers need to be trained, coordinate training and make follow up on how teaching and learning has improved after a particular training. The circular highlights that: The Ministry of Educational and Vocational Training was responsible to organize and co-ordinate in-service training for teachers at national level.

### ***iii) Students' Academic Related Characteristics***

According to Omari (2011a), students' characteristics refer to levels of development, abilities, aspirations and interest towards learning. Students' characteristics are among the potential factors that might contribute to poor or better academic performance of students (ibid). Hence, the objective was set to examine students' academic related characteristics particularly with respect to performance of social studies subject. The focus was on students' background whereby kind of previous primary schools in relation to the medium of instruction in secondary education was considered; the effect of their prior knowledge in teaching and learning social studies; their perception on social studies performance; and their expectations in relation to the subject. *Are they aware on importance of social studies subject to their current and future life?* With good background, positive perceptions and expectations to social studies subject students might perform better in the subject and vice visa.





**Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework**

**Source:** Author's construct, 2021.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research methods, the population under study and the information collection techniques employed to answer the research questions. It specifically discusses the design of the study, and the interventions used.

#### **3.1 Philosophical Underpinnings**

According to Guba (1990), philosophical underpinnings are the basic set of beliefs that guides the research study. It is of a common knowledge that the philosophical underpinnings of research usually borders around the researcher's ontology and epistemology. Ontology as espoused by Grix (2004) implies how one sees truth or social reality. He, however, espoused that epistemology is about what constitutes how truth or reality can be achieved.

The researcher believes that truth and social reality can are always objective. Hence, the ontology that forms the basis of this study is based on the context of the study. The ontology allowed the researcher to freely use divers methods, techniques and procedures typically associated with the methodology and methods of the study. The focus of the study is to explore factors influencing academic performance of social studies students in selected senior high schools in the Wa Municipality where situations may differ. It is therefore appropriate to employ an ontology that allows the researcher to be open-minded.

Consequently, the researcher's epistemology is based on the believe that reality in this world can best be known when practical approaches are employed to the specific context or situation. Individuals construct their own meaning and understanding of issues based on the context and information present. This is applicable to the study because the factors influencing academic performance of social studies students in selected senior high schools in the Wa Municipality may best be known based on the social constructions by individuals involved in the phenomenon. This may be attributed to the differences in the learning characteristics and social context in which the schools exist in Ghana. Hence, the use of multiple methods to collect and analyse data in order to understand the unique characteristics of the school contexts and its effects on the teaching of social studies was necessary.

### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) indicated that research paradigm are philosophical framework that a researcher uses to underpin his/her. The research paradigm is essential to underlying the approach adopted for the study. Among the several paradigms that exist, pragmatism was the viewpoint to of the researcher. It allowed the researcher freedom to choose the methods, techniques and procedures of research that best meet the needs and purpose of the study. The pragmatist research philosophy allows the data collected to be analysed in the appropriate manner where multiple techniques were employed based on the context of the situation. Data, evidence, and rational considerations shape knowledge on the factors influencing the academic performance of Social Studies students in selected senior high schools in the WA Municipality. Essentially, the paradigm used for the study helped develop relevant, true statements that serve vividly explore the situation of concern.

### **3.3 Research Approach**

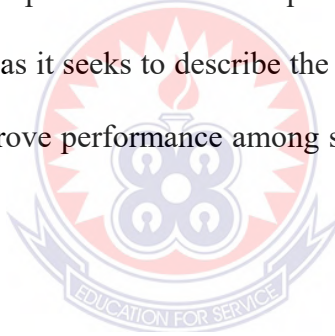
Research approach is a step-by-step process by which data is acquired and analyzed in a research study (Babbie, 2012). Therefore, the mixed method approach was therefore used in the study. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) stipulated that mixed methods approach involve consolidation of qualitative and quantitative data in a research study. The mixed method focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies (Issaka, 2021). The philosophical and paradigmatic viewpoint of the researcher allowed the study of “factors influencing academic performance of Social Studies students in selected senior high schools in the WA Municipality” to be studies using the stated approach. The mixed method design focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.

Hence, to explore issues involved in the study of the factors influencing academic performance of Social Studies students in selected senior high schools in the WA Municipality, by employing multiple methods based on the context. This was best done through the efforts to gather in-depth data from respondents through interviews and administering of questionnaires.

### **3.4 Research Design**

Study Design is a plan, which determines how the approach to studying a peculiar problem should be done and it helps do away with the circumstances where the empirical data collected does not solve the research problem. Therefore, it is the benchmark that guides the researcher in a study.

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure (Kothari, 2004). This study adopted the embedded mixed method design. The design was used on the basis that it allows collection of data from different groups of respondents with multiple methods. The design allows one dataset as a supportive or secondary role in a study based primarily on the other data type (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2003). The premises of this design are that a single data set is not sufficient, that different questions need to be answered, and that each type of question requires different types of data. In this study, the researcher employed used qualitative data as a supportive element to the quantitative data. Thus, the researcher embed a qualitative component within a quantitative design. This design is appropriate for this study as it seeks to describe the measures that can be employed to reduce failure and to improve performance among some selected SHS students in the Wa Municipality.



### **3.5 The Study Setting**

Study setting is the precise location where a research is conducted. This study was undertaken among five senior high schools in the Wa Municipality.

### **3.6 Eligibility Criteria**

Eligibility criteria of any research are about study variables (dependent and independent) that will be or are considered worthy for the study. This study seeks to explore the measures that can be employed to reduce failure and to improve performance in social studies senior high schools in the Wa Municipality. Therefore, to be considered worthy or eligible for this study, a participant must be a student, a teacher, head teacher or a parent of wards in the school. In addition, government

institutions and non-governmental organizations that deal with educational welfare and development would be considered for the study to seek their efforts being made to improve upon the situation.

### **3.7 Population of the Study**

The population of the study comprises teachers, officials from the Municipal Education Directorate, students across the five schools, and parents of students in the WA municipality. The choice of these respondents stems from fact that they are in better position to know how the factors that hinder their performance in the subject in their schools and other schools in the municipality as a whole.

### **3.8 Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

Sampling is the process or technique of selecting a suitable sample out of a population for determining characteristics of the whole population (Adams et al., 2007). A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole population (Webster, 1985). In this study, sample referred to school students, teachers, parents and other stake holders in education. The sample of the study were 222 participants. The table below shows the sampled groups for the study.

**Table 1: Sampled groups for the study**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Groups</b>	<b>Sample Selected</b>
1	Wa Senior High School	40
2	Wa Senior High Technical School	40
3	Wa Islamic Senior High School	40
4	St. Francis Xavier Senior High School	40
5	Wa Technical Institute	40
6	Teachers	10
7	Parents	10
8	Official from GES	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>222</b>

Source: Author's construct, 2021.

According to Kumekpor (2000) and Kwabia (2006), the worth of any educational research findings depends on the extent to which the sample reflects or represents the target population. The study employed multiple probability sampling techniques. The study employed cluster sampling technique, stratified sampling technique and random, and convenience sampling techniques. In view of this, the cluster sampling technique was used to sub-divide participants into students, parents, teachers and officers of the Municipal Education Directorate. Further, stratified sampling technique was used to group students according to their respective schools. The random sampling techniques was employed since all members of the population has equal chances of being selected for the administration of the questionnaires.

Sample for interviews was based on saturation. Consequently, participants for the interview were selected based on the researcher's convenience.

### **3.9 Instrument for Data Collection**

The instrument for data collection of this study was a researcher-developed questionnaire and interview guide.

#### **3.9.1 Questionnaire**

Questionnaires are often used to collect regular or infrequent routine data, and data for specialized studies just like the studies being conducted. A questionnaire demands respondents to fill out the form themselves, and so commands a high level of literacy. Questionnaires, like interviews, comprises of either structured questions with blanks to be filled in, multiple choice questions, or they can contain open-ended or unrestricted questions where the respondent is urged to reply at length using their own words and understanding of the issues being researched upon.

For the purpose of this study, close-ended questions were included in the questionnaire that were designed and administered for the sake of the study so as to enable the researcher gather all the needed information towards the successful completion of this research work (Jacobson, et al, 2009). The questionnaires was administered in person to reduce collection errors giving genuineness to the general outcome of the study and aid respondents who may face difficulties comprehending certain questions. The questionnaire was in two sections, one and two. Section one dealt with the personal data of the respondents such as name of respondent and status and name of school. While section too consisted of pertinent issues of the subject matter. The instrument was weighted on a four (4) point rating scale for the respondents to make their responses as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).



### **3.9.2 Interview guide**

A semi-structured interview guide was used to solicit information from the Social Studies teachers on the factors influencing students' academic performance in social studies in selected senior high schools in the Wa Municipality.

### **3.10 Reliability and Validity**

Reliability, which implies the consistency of a measure, was ensured in the study. Considering the reliability of the questionnaire, the most commonly used statistic, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient with a minimum of 0.7 was adopted. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0 to 1. Where the computed alpha coefficient was greater than 0.80, then, this was considered as an acceptable level of internal reliability (Bryman, 2008).

The face validity of the instrument was carried out. To ascertain this, the researcher presented two copies of the questionnaire to teachers in the school to be pilot-tested. They were requested to assess the suitability of the language, the comprehensiveness, adequacy and relevance of the items in addressing the research questions, bearing in mind the purpose of the study. Their comments, suggestions and correction were accommodated and used to modify the instrument.

### **3.11 Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data**

Trustworthiness refers to the quality, authenticity, and truthfulness of findings of qualitative research. It relates to the degree of trust, or confidence, readers have in results. This refers to quality criteria that explains the value of qualitative research. In ensuring trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability were addressed.

### **3.11.1 Credibility**

This aspect of trustworthiness implies the level how acceptable or credible the research is. It thus explains that important and relevant data needs to be collected for the study. This means that comments and conclusions can be supported or rejected by participants, and with that (if necessary) readjusted to best represent the nature of the concept investigated (Bryman, 2017). In this study, the researcher used more than one method to make sure the findings are complementary. After the conduct of the entire study, a summary of the findings was made available to respondents for their comments.

### **3.11.2 Dependability**

Zuure (2018) viewed dependability as the consistency in research findings and thus, relates to reliability. This suggests that research findings could be repeated when conducted in a different context. For this research, all methods used for the research are explained in detail, in this case, it would not be wrong to say that the data presented are accurate, and conclusions are drawn based on that data collected.

### **3.11.3 Confirmability**

Trustworthiness of the study called for adherence to confirmability. Confirmability questions how the research findings are supported by the data collected. This is a process to establish whether the researcher has been biased during the study; this is due to the assumption that qualitative research allows the research to bring a unique perspective to the study. Under this study, I ensured confirmability by presenting and interpreting the original data gathered from research participants to establish the credibility of the research findings. Thus, the data presented and analysed are a true reflection of the views of research participants.

### **3.12 Procedure for Data Collection**

Data collection is the process of assembling and determining evidence on targeted variables in a conventional logical manner, which then allows one to answer related queries and evaluate results of a study (Weimer, 1995). The data collection part of research is mutual to all fields of study including physical and social sciences, humanities and business. The common types of data collection methods are through registration, administration of questionnaires, through interviews, direct observations and finally through reporting. All these methods of data collection are normally used under different circumstances during research work and sometimes two or more of these methods may be used to complement each other. For the purpose of this study, interviews and questionnaires were administered to participants, which enabled the researcher gather all vital information required for this study in the Wa Municipality.

Primary sources as well as secondary sources of information were employed since the study is a fact-finding and analytic type. The primary source of data was questionnaire administration while the secondary data will be pulled from journals, articles, newsprints and other trusted internet sources by using the google chrome as a search engine.

### **3.13 Data Analysis Procedure**

In analyzing the data, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used for the process. Descriptive analysis was relied on to analyze the quantitative data. Mean scores and standard deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions. Quantitative approach is more useful in quantifying data and statistical modelling and hence statistical tools such as percentage and frequency distribution tables were used to show the relationship between frequencies of the data. Real limit of numbers were

used in analyzing the data: 0.50-1.49, 1.50-2.49, 2.50-3.49, 3.50-4.00. After the administration and retrieval of the administered questionnaires, the validity, reliability and the consistency in responses by the survey respondents were adequately checked.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23.0) was used to analyze the means for the data from the field. Specific comments and issues raised by respondents were transcribed, analyzed and summarized into tables with their various descriptions represented under the respective tables. Consequently, qualitative data were analysed using thematic analyses where themes were generated for the process. The embedded design allowed both quantitative and qualitative data to be analysed together. However, the quantitative data was seen as dominant in the study.

### **3.14 Study Ethical Considerations**

There are ethical issues surrounding every human activity, including social research. Before the research process can start, the researcher needs to think about getting consent to carry out the research by contacting our research collaborators, then the study was approved in writing by the head teachers of the schools. The aim of research is to produce knowledge but it cannot happen without any cost. Human dignity is to be valued throughout the research process. When it comes to the research process, some of the main ethical challenges are to do with the behaviour of the researcher, collection of the data and use of the data (Eskola 1998; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

It can be argued whether such consent is always needed, especially when talking about ethnographic research. In ethnography, where covert participant observation can be used as a data collection tool, an ethnographer may carry the research out

without the participants knowing that research is taking place (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007). In this study, the researcher told the interviewees and the representatives of different stakeholder institutions the time data will be collected. As already stated, descriptions of conversations that the researcher had with the project participants were recorded in both audio and written and was later transcribed for the study.

Another frequent concern about ethnographic research is maintaining privacy. The concept of privacy is complex, and the division of private and public is rarely clear-cut. However, the researcher will need to consider the possibility of harm that will be caused by the publication of the findings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In this study, a lot of information the interviewees gave about themselves were left out in order to ensure anonymity. When it comes to the case of school children, maintaining anonymity proves to be difficult. However, their real names were not used in this study, and the encounters were recorded with care. The researcher came into the research situation with personal opinions and understandings (Holliday, 2007).

### **3.15 Conclusion**

The rationale for undertaking this study, is to find out factors that account for the falling pedigree of academic performance of students in the social studies subject in SHSs in the Wa Municipality to be able to propose measures to improve performance. The study intends to use the findings as a basis to sensitize students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders who hold the elms of education at heart.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the results of the findings and the discussion on them. It is presented in two parts. The first part analyses the background information on the respondents, thus students, teachers, the headmistress, old students and parents/guardians. The second part presents the results with their discussions according to the research questions. Scores for items in the questionnaire and interview schedule are sorted out according to variables organized into frequency distributions and expressed in percentages.

The preceding chapter described the research design and methodology for this study. SavinBaden and Major (2013, p.570) argue that the purpose of the findings section is to provide an opportunity to present what has been discovered through the process of study. The purpose of this chapter is to present both the findings and an analysis of data collected. The chapter also explains how accumulated data were collected, how codes were assigned and how themes were identified. The chapter starts by explaining the context of the study and provides a brief biographic description of the selected schools and the participants from each school. This is followed by a discussion of how information was obtained and a presentation of the findings according to the categories and themes that emerged.

Over the past few years, there has been huge public investment in the school system especially at the basic and secondary school levels of education in Ghana. The Senior High School (SHS) is the second level of the educational ladder after the basic school

in Ghana. At this level, most parents begin to appreciate what their wards will get out of it to become worthwhile citizens. Many subjects are taken at the SHS level. No matter the programme, a student is undertaking, there are a number of core subjects common to all students. Among these core subjects is the study of social studies. The other core subjects are English Language, Mathematics, and integrated science. To move to a higher level for tertiary education in Ghana, a student is expected to pass the core subjects. It makes sense therefore, that failure to perform creditably in any of the core subjects may end the academic aspirations of both parents and students. It is because of this that all responsible parents invest in different ways including extra tuition for their wards to perform well. However, in spite of the investments put in by parents and governments over the years, the performance of students in the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSSCE) in social studies appear not to be very satisfactory especially to parents. This paper unfortunately cannot and in fact will not be able to tackle all the possible factors that determine a student's performance at the SHS level especially in social studies. It will however be appropriate to give a scenario of students' performance in social studies in Ghana over a couple of years and proceed to identify possible explanations for the trend of performance.

#### **4.1 Factors that Contribute to the Low Level of Students' Academic**

##### **Achievement in Social Studies in SHS**

##### **4.1.1 School factors that affect students' academic performance in Social Studies**

In line with efforts to tackle the above research objective, school factors that affect students' academic performance in social studies are analyzed and discussed. As the data reveals, 30% of the respondents indicate that; they feel happy with the school's

method of preparing students for the final WASSCE examination. This undoubtedly has created certain pessimism among students. Nonetheless, 60% of the respondents rejected the assertion indicating that, most of the students are unsatisfied with the various preparations laid down by the school prior to the WASSCE final examinations. However, 10% of the respondents could not provide any meaningful contribution to the issues being discussed. The head teachers in line with their responsibilities sets clear targets and standard aimed at improving on teaching as well as making follow up to see that teachers actually try to meet targets. In terms of the ability of teachers to complete their respective subject syllabuses, the study observed that, 30% of the teachers answered in the no affirmative. Majority of the teachers (60%) provided a contrary view indicating their inability to complete their syllabuses in the respective subjects being taught. Moreover, 10% of the teachers were uncertain. It is also worthy to note that the students being studied goes into the final WASSCE ill-prepared a this undoubtedly account for the poor performance of students in social studies. This results which undoubtedly is a school factor relates to Chowa et al. (2012) assertion. According to Chowa et al. (2012), it is significant to have good home and school environments such that they can vigorously help children to become confident and useful teachers.

With regards to how often teachers come to school, majority of the respondents representing 70% said teachers come to school all the time. This encourages students' attendance. Contrary to this, 20% of the teachers said they come but not all the time, but rather sometimes. Meanwhile 10% of the respondents claimed teachers do not come in most situations. Teachers' guidance to the final year students in discussing past questions is always felt whenever school is in session. Teacher attendance which



also influences student attendance has a high correlation with students' academic achievement in social studies. This implies that, the accomplishment of a students in school is determined on normal and standards in school attendance. At this stage a relationship is established with Allen-Meares et al. (2010) who declare that, poor attendance caused by truancy or unexcused absence from school, cutting classes, tardiness, and leaving school without permission is seen as important in determining pupil's academic performance.

A question relating to teachers' duty in encouraging final year students reveal that, 12 respondents (15%) held the view that, it is teachers' responsibility to ensure that students understand each lesson. On the issue of teachers assisting in providing students with extra tuition, 20 respondents (25%) said this could be one of the best that could go a long way to improve on the performance of average students. Furthermore, 32 of the respondents representing 40% indicate that, teachers in certain situations refer students to other students that can help with their studies. In addition, 16 respondents expressed in percentage terms as 20% thought teachers do not care about students during their preparation towards their final WASSCE examination. An example was given as a typical responsibility of teachers is their preparedness to give two or three exercises in a week.

The modalities contained do not function in isolation since quality physical facilities provide the required ambience for such tasks to become realistic. Harbison and Hanushek (2012) confirmed that, excellence of the physical facilities provides the required ambience which positively determines positive student performance in social studies in their respective schools.

#### **4.1.2 Unavailability of social studies materials**

During the review of the resource files, the researcher found that most of the files are not well equipped. The researcher did not find any teaching resources except for end-of-year Social Studies question papers of 2019 and an April term test of 2020. There are no materials to be used as teaching and learning materials. This was confirmed by the three teacher participants who mentioned during the interviews that they do not have teaching and learning materials for Social Studies. Textbooks were also a major concern for the three participants.

According to these participants there is a lack of teaching materials. Teachers were therefore requested by the principals to create their own teaching and learning materials. This issue of creating teaching and learning materials has been supported by the MoE (2018, p.3), which states that teachers in Social Studies should be innovative and creative by developing their own teaching materials linked to their practice. During the classroom observations at the researcher observed that learners from two schools did not have textbooks during the time the study was conducted. One of the participants argued that it is time-consuming to teach without textbooks. Therefore, teachers are forced to make copies because of the lack of textbooks.

#### **4.1.3 Teachers as determinants of students' performance in Social Studies in schools**

The role or impact of teachers on the performance of students in schools across all subjects can hardly be doubted. Sanders (2000), in a study concluded that "differences in teacher effectiveness are the single largest factors affecting academic growth of the population of students". Teacher-related aspects, namely qualifications, attendance of workshops and being untrained and teaching strategies as factors that may contribute

to learners' underperformance. All teachers in the five participating schools confirmed that they did not attend any workshops regarding to the teaching of Social Studies. Two out of the ten participating teachers teach Social Studies without any teaching qualifications. After obtaining a diploma certificate, they did not further their studies. These teachers are therefore implementing the Social Studies curriculum without any subject knowledge or any teaching skills.

According to the National Curriculum for Basic Education (MEC, 2010), "teaching emphasizes the varied process and learning experiences needed for the creation of knowledge, rather than relying predominantly on the transmission of knowledge by the teachers".

With regard to the issue of untrained teachers, the researcher argues that Social Studies teachers, whether specialists or not, need to be trained in the best strategies for teaching the subject that will accommodate the needs and diversity of their learners. Failure to do so could adversely affect learners' performance in Social Studies. In this study, it was observed by the researcher that most teachers used a traditional teaching method, namely the well-known teacher-centered approach. Their lessons were predominantly teacher-dominated. The teachers explained the topic through observation by the learners instead of eliciting information from the learners, asking them to explain and share ideas with their classmates. During the observations, there was no pair or group work or class discussion. Learners did not sit in groups, but sat alone in rows. The researcher therefore concluded that the learners had a limited amount of opportunities to communicate with one another.

The teachers did not support learners by, for example, asking them to work in pairs or in a group, although some learners confirm they learn more easily through group or pair discussion. If learners are not afforded the opportunity to learn from groups, pair or class discussions, they may not understand the topic and may underperform in the subject.

In the selected schools, there are many teachers of social studies who are single social science/arts specialists. In most cases, they have academic qualifications in subjects such as history, economics, geography, political science, integrated development studies among others. Therefore, their approaches to the teaching of social studies still follow the way they teach the content of history, geography, and economics. Meanwhile, social studies require an integrated approach whereby all the single social sciences/arts subjects making up social studies lose their distinct orientation or identity. This affects the performance of students. It is important to add that, the problem of non-specialist's teachers teaching social studies is not peculiar to Ghana. According to Adeniyi (1982), 81.3% of social studies teachers randomly selected in secondary schools in the Ilorin Local Government Area of Kwara State in Nigeria, were professionally unqualified to teach social studies at the time of the study. In the same way, Adinoyi (1986), in a similar study, also found in randomly selected secondary schools that 76% of social studies teachers in Okene/Okehi Local Government Area of Kwara State now Kogi State also in Nigeria had no teaching qualifications in social studies.

#### **4.1.4 Classroom-related factors that determine students' performance in Social Studies**

The school and the classroom are the laboratories from where the teacher operates. Therefore, the skills and knowledge a social studies teacher carries to the classroom would make further impact if the school and classroom(s) from where he/she teaches were conducive for teaching and learning. According to Lai, Sadoulet and Janvry (2009), common sense suggests that school quality should affect students' performance; however, there is limited rigorous supporting evidence. Untrained teachers are not the only challenge pertaining to students' performance in Social Studies; classroom-related factors are among the challenges impacting learner performance.

The teachers in this study also experience problems regarding the shortage of teaching and learning material. Comments from three teachers at schools V, W, X, Y and Z indicated that there was a general shortage of teaching and learning material such as textbooks and maps. It was also affirmed by the researcher during the class observations that students were not using textbooks. For instance, School Y had textbooks, although not enough, because students were sharing. The shortage of textbooks also results in students not revising what was taught in class. Students perform poorly in Social Studies due to the lack of teaching and learning materials. The issue of the shortage of teaching resources is perceived not easy to resolve, but teachers should not use this obstacle as an excuse for not teaching effectively. This study also found that most classrooms in the participating schools were overcrowded with 51 to 52 students in one classroom, which prevented teachers from reaching and paying attention to individual students. All the teachers acknowledged that they

encounter challenges in applying the learner-centered approach to teaching due to the large number of learners in their classrooms. They complained that overcrowded classrooms result in a lack of space and force them to utilize the traditional way of teaching, namely the teacher-centered approach.

During the lesson observations, it was noticed by the researcher that the teachers were unable to move around the classrooms. Students sat very close to each other due to the lack of space in the classroom. Most classrooms are arranged so that each learner sits alone, which does not allow them to share their ideas in groups or pairs, although they sit close to each other. This arrangement may cause poor communication during the lesson, which may lead to learners' not performing well. A further classroom-related issue is the inadequate classroom infrastructure at School Y and the school hall being used as a classroom. Learners at School Y are taught in inadequate nonpermanent classrooms. At the same school, the school hall was found to be an uncondusive teaching place during the lesson observation. Teacher S confirmed that they were operating in this untidiness due to the school cleaners who are not committed to doing their job. This study concluded that the untidiness and lack of cleanliness contribute to learners' underperformance because they cannot concentrate in an environment not conducive to effective teaching and learning.

The study furthermore found that the use of English as teaching medium was one of the causes of learners' underperformance in Social Studies and therefore part of the challenges faced in the teaching and learning of Social Studies. The participants indicated that learners experience difficulty with English as medium of instruction and that it takes time to make them understand the concepts being taught. Teachers acknowledged that sometimes they have to use the children's home language during

Social Studies lessons although they are not really allowed to do so because the medium of instruction at the school is English. The researcher believes that translating or explaining the lesson in the students' home language may help learners to understand the content of the subject. However, students may still struggle during the writing of tests and examinations because there will be no assistance in translating the question papers into their home language. The use of English as medium of instruction affect students' academic performance negatively because they may not understand the subject matter during the lesson presentation, and if students experience problems with expressing themselves in English, it may also affect their examination results because they may not understand the questions.

The findings show that inappropriate teaching methods, ineffective classroom arrangement, lack of teaching material such as textbooks and extra resources, untrained teachers, lack of workshops, lack of parental involvement, promotional and non-promotional policies, leadership, English as a medium of instruction, and inadequate classrooms such as non-permanent structures and usage of the school hall as classroom are among the factors affecting learners' performance in Social Studies in selected schools. Apart from the above school-related factors, there are factors related to the community that may also affect learners' performance in Social Studies.

#### **4.1.5 Leadership**

How do leadership and management of staff impact on learner success? In the analysis of the leadership dimension, the results indicated that, out of five participants teaching Social Studies in the five schools, only one specialized in the subject. Head teachers' appointments are not always based on the appropriate qualifications of teachers. The Social Studies policy guide (MEC, 2008:1) stipulates that teachers who

are trained in a particular subject should teach that subject. The National Curriculum for Basic Education (MEC, 2010, p.5) also makes it clear that for the successful implementation and provision of quality education, teachers should be appropriately and fully qualified to teach a particular phase, in subjects with which they are entrusted. This study showed that inappropriately qualified and unqualified teachers were employed to teach Social Studies in most of the schools that participated in this study.

This may create certain challenges for untrained teachers because they may encounter difficulty in implementing the Social Studies curriculum. Learners may not perform well in the subject due to teachers who are not adequately trained and who lack the basic subject knowledge and skills to teach and implement the Social Studies curriculum. It was not clear whether principals had succeeded in motivating teachers to improve themselves after teaching the subject for more than five years without the proper teaching qualification. The motivation of teachers to further their studies and to attend workshops to enhance their skills and knowledge could improve teaching and might influence learners' academic performance positively. Monitoring of the teaching and learning process was also investigated. Two of the head teachers who participated in this study confirmed that they did not monitor teaching and learning activities anymore. They claimed that they did not do so anymore because they had been instructed by the educational office not to do so, but rather to allow the heads of department to monitor the teaching and learning process at the schools. This raises questions as to how school heads will identify the challenges facing the teaching and learning process at schools.



It is also difficult for head teachers to monitor students' progress because teachers only hand in the final marks to the head teacher's office by the end of the term and the year. Lack of monitoring of the teaching and learning process has also contributed to learners' underperformance in social studies in the sense that teachers may not deliver quality teaching because they know that their work is not supervised or monitored by the heads. The researcher argues that monitoring should go hand in hand with school management, so that the challenges impacting learners' performance could be identified and attended to in order to improve their academic performance.

#### **4.1.6 Educational policy**

It is clear that the promotional policy stipulates that learners should be promoted to the next grade when they have achieved the pass requirement of the promotional subjects or the pass requirement of the grade. However, the schools selected for the study do not put this policy into practice due to the non-promotional transfer policy, which is quite the opposite of what is required in the promotional policy. The idea of the promotional policy is that learners should be promoted when they meet the pass requirements, whereas the non-promotional policy stipulates that learners should be promoted to the next grade even if they have failed twice and therefore have not met the pass requirement. In this regard, the nonpromotional policy advocates the idea of learners not repeating the phase or grade more than twice. This led to a high rate of failure in Social Studies, because if learners cannot cope with the subject in a particular grade, the chances are very good that they will not be able to cope with the subject in the next grade. It is clear that the application of both the promotional policy and the non-promotional transfer policy affects students negatively, as these policies are contradictory. This definitely does nothing to enhance learner success.

## **4.2 Teacher-Related Factors that Determine Senior High School Students'**

### **Performance in Social Studies in Wa Municipality**

#### **4.2.1 Applicability of teacher's subject specialization at community secondary schools**

In secondary school, all teachers should have a special subject(s) to teach. The field data indicates how the principle was considered. Statistics indicates that 56% of respondents said that, subject specialization in senior high schools was not applicable as most of the teachers were hired based on arts subjects and they later found themselves teaching science subjects due to shortage of science teachers. Respondents show that 44% argue that the major cause of poor performance was shortage of teachers in senior high schools. Presence of unqualified teachers in senior secondary schools was another factor which influences the teacher to leave out subject specialization during teaching process.

#### **4.2.2 Commitment of teachers in senior secondary schools**

In order to determine the exact factors leading poor performance in senior secondary schools in the Upper West Region, commitment of teachers was also observed. The researcher used documents - such as teacher's scheme of works, lesson plans and subject log books which usually used to show topics already taught and number of test or exercise provided by the teacher to the learner. Findings show that in the high schools, social studies performance is poor compared to secondary schools which are mostly found in urban areas. This illustrates the actual picture on how teachers perform their duties such as in preparing scheme of works, lesson plan, teaching aids, text and reference books and how they use them in teaching process.

In social studies subject, only 30% of schemes of work were prepared. This implied that 70% of the teachers did not plan their work. Therefore, majority of teachers in high schools were not committed to preparing teaching materials which lead to ineffective learning process. This might be one of the reasons why students fail in their West African Senior School Certificate Examination. Furthermore, teachers who do not prepare lessons plans or schemes of work and who do not mark their pupils' books consistently or determine - satisfactorily the goals for teaching, end up causing the students to fail in social studies. The survey showed that for the whole year in these schools, available average lesson plans was below 40% for all teaching subjects. In teaching, a lesson plan is a very important tool which directs teachers and learners. In general, the lesson plan directs - stage by stage, what is to be taught systematically within a single or double periods subjects.

These statistics imply that teachers were not committed to their work. In a formal education system, syllabus guides teachers what to teach in the particular year so as to fulfil the national goals. The problem is where teachers fail to assess themselves on how to teach, what to teach especially when it comes to test the capability and the understanding of the student they teach through exercises, weekly tests, monthly tests and annual examination. Through the study, the study revealed that teachers did not teach all topics as prepared in the syllabus. The documents showed that the average topics taught were below 60% out of all topics in the syllabus for the social studies subject. The studies revealed that in participating secondary schools, teachers were not committed to teach effectively and as a result caused students to perform poor during examination period.

#### 4.2.4 Untrained teachers who teach Social Studies

Untrained teachers may influence learners' performance negatively. The participants were asked whether they experienced other challenges in teaching Social Studies. During the interviews some teachers, such as *E, S and J*, said they did not receive training to teach Social Studies. It was established that the National Policy Guide for Social Studies (MoE, 2018, p.1) claims that the launch of a Social Studies policy is aimed at making provision for a well-organized and practically orientated programme in the teaching and management of Social Studies in schools. This does apply in this study, because the researcher found that most Social Studies teachers who participated in this study were not trained to teach Social Studies. Untrained teachers may be considered as one of the factors that may be contributing to learners' underperformance in Social Studies in some Ghanaian schools, as they do not have the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to teach the subject.

Nitko (1995) argues that the training of teachers could add value to the quality of teaching and learning outcomes in a school setting. In this regard, the researcher argues that if teachers did not receive training, then they may experience difficulty in implementing the curriculum for Social Studies and as a result learners' performance may be affected. This argument is supported in the literature by a study by Jotia and Matlale (2011, p.116), who report that teachers who did not receive special training in Social Studies indicated that they were not aware of any special ways of teaching Social Studies. In this research, four out ten teachers in the five participating schools' Social Studies teachers confirmed that they were untrained.

Teacher C noted as follows in response to a question:

*“There is a lot of challenges, as I did not specialize in Social Studies in university, I need to work hard. It is very hard to understand the topic before I present it to the learners.... I did not attend any training in Social Studies, still waiting for programme from the Regional Office”.*

This means that almost half of Social Studies teachers who participated in this study neither specialized in Social Studies nor received any formal training despite teaching the subject for more than three years. This shows that some teachers at high schools teach Social Studies without having specialized in the subject. The researcher argues that teaching a subject without the appropriate skills and subject knowledge may affect learners’ performance negatively, as untrained teachers cannot effectively implement the syllabus as required. Teachers who did not receive any training do not understand the content of the subject. They are also not aware of the specific methods used in Social Studies to help students understand the subject and the value of the subject in their lives. Teachers can only contribute to successful and effective curriculum implementation if they possess the appropriate knowledge and skills.

Teacher J responded as follows to the question on training:

*“To be truthful, I only attend once and it was last year. The form three A and B classes were combined, that was the only one I attended”.*  
*Teacher S stated: “So far, I didn’t attend any training, I only got training for Development Studies seminar”.*

These responses indicate that teachers face challenges in implementing the Social Studies curriculum due to lack of training. Teacher S did not want to be seen as an untrained teacher; she felt that she had received training for Development Studies. However, this training has nothing to do with teaching Social Studies. As can be seen

from the above responses, most of the participants were not trained to implement the curriculum of Social Studies.

Consequently, the lack of formal training may influence learners' academic performance negatively, as confirmed by the literature. This shows that Social Studies teachers need to be trained so that they may acquire the skill for teaching the subject.

Teacher *E* clearly expressed this view, as in her responses she pointed out that:

*“Social Studies teachers require [training] that would [help them to] expand their knowledge and gain skills to implement [the] Social Studies curriculum effectively”*

. The findings show that out of five participants who were teaching Social Studies, only one was trained to implement the curriculum of Social Studies. The researcher's view here is that teachers cannot effectively and efficiently implement the curriculum without attending any training. In order to implement the curriculum, teachers need to have a clear idea of how to teach the subject well. O'Sullivan (2002:222) argues that the successful implementation of education depends on the extent to which teachers are prepared to implement change. If the educator lacks capability, knowledge of the subject and skills to implement the curriculum subject, this may negatively influence students' performance.

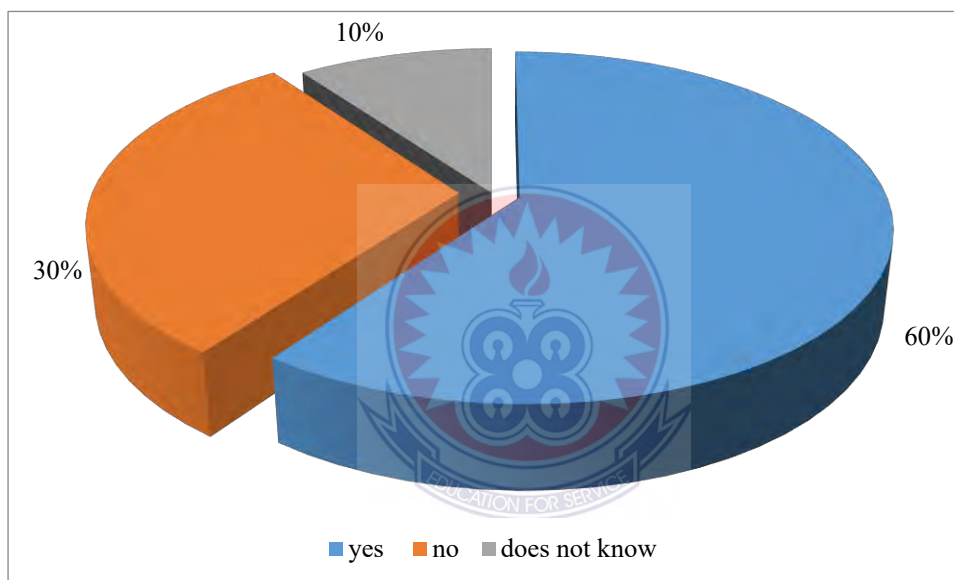
#### **4.3 Government-Related Factors That Determine High School Students'**

##### **Performance in Social Studies in Wa Municipality**

##### **4.3.1 Actions plans (Interventions) aimed at improving academic performance**

In this section, the focus of the project is on interventions that could facilitate the improvement of academic performance in social studies. The ensuing discussions also

identify the different interventions aimed at addressing the existing challenges relative to academic performance of students. Concerning the possibility of coming out with interventions aimed at improving on academic performance at the WASSCE, 60% of the respondents thought this is possible. However, 30% of the respondents expressed their doubts about it. Some of the respondents did not see the need to provide response to the issue being discussed, since 10% of the respondents decided not to respond to the question on the possibility of addressing the challenges through the implementation of interventions.



**Figure 1: Government action plans improved your academic performance?**

**Source:** Field data, 2021

As the results disclose, 25% of respondents held the view that; adequate motivation of teachers for extra-tutorials, particularly for final year students could be beneficial for the candidates. The second action plan according to (30%) of head teachers of the target schools is the need to supervise teachers' work such as marking and correcting lesson notes. This could be one of the best among the other strategies that could go a long way to improve on the effective preparation of not only final year students'

performance in social studies. Thirdly, 20% of the sample selected refer to encouraging students to join study groups. Students often choose tasks that can be handled with ease, this particular findings relates to (Burger et al. 2007) who asserted that, each member of the group which is usually tasked ahead of the group's meeting to choose a particular topic with which they were most familiar would then share their knowledge with other students of the study group when they met.

Adequate motivation of teachers for extra-tutorials, supervision of teachers' work such as actions aimed at correcting lesson notes, encouraging students to join study groups regularly supervise class tests is a key strategy that respondents believe can tackle the situation. Eventually, 25% of respondents mentioned that regular supervision of class tests should be made largely known to all students in order to prevent malpractices in the main final examinations. The above interventions are said to be in line with Dufour (2010) who held the view that, the class tests are based on the subject content the teacher had previously taught. This means that, teachers had the freedom to either inform the students about the impending supervised class test in advance or not

#### **4.3.2 Perception of teachers on government related factors that determine of students' performance in Social Studies**

The results of data analysis presented revealed that the respondents accepted that all items are determinant of students' performance in Social studies. The grand mean of all items is 3.10 which is greater than 2.50. This indicate that provision of conducive learning environment, teachers' motivation, instructional materials, school libraries, and regular payment of teachers' salaries and commitment to instructional supervision are the government related factors that determine students' performance in Social



studies. This findings in line with the view of Adekola (2008), who observed that teachers are not adequately motivated. According him, it is disheartening to note that poor motivation of teachers in Nigeria is one of the major factors that contribute to students' poor performance in schools whereas government spent almost 75% percent of Nigerian annual budget on political sector and only 5% percent on education which sometimes result to all seasons sticking by school teachers. Teachers in the Nigerian schools were not taking care of by the government which result to poor commitment to work and professional growth which is supposed to facilitate productivity in the Nigerian educational system, and same can be said about Ghana.

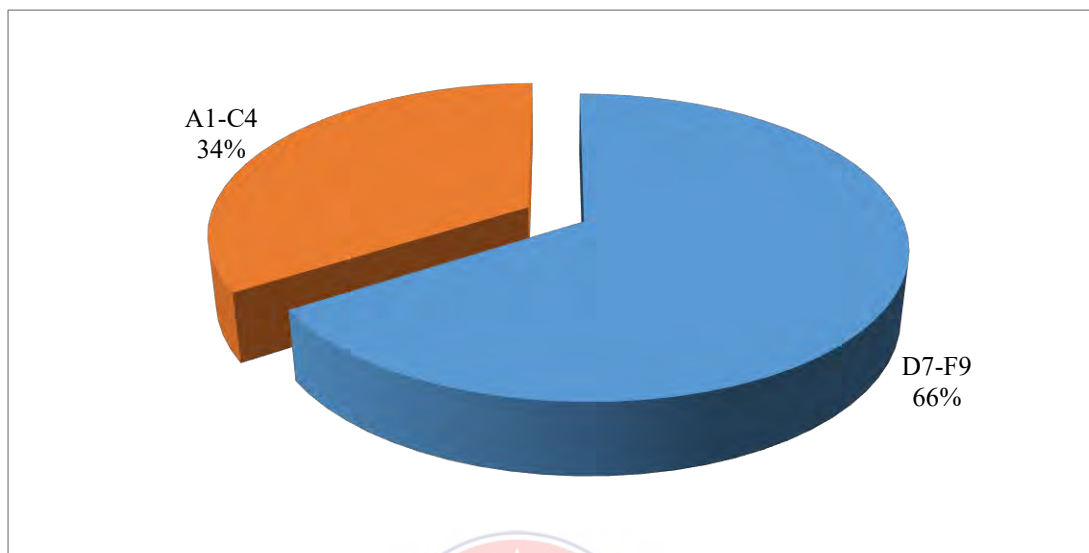
Also, results of the data analysis presented in the work revealed that the respondents accepted that all the items are the teachers' related factors that determine students' performance in Social studies. The grand mean of all items is 3.08, which is greater than 2.50. Therefore, teacher' competence, qualifications, disposition, and effective utilization of instructional methods and materials in classroom instruction are teachers' related factors that determine students' performance in Social studies. The findings of the study are supported by Ikwumelu and Oyibe (2011) who observed that poor teachers' qualification, poor selection and inappropriate utilization of instructional methods, materials affect teaching and learning of Social studies. Adekola (2008) also supported the idea that teachers work commitment, competence and exposure are also responsible for ineffective teaching and learning of Social studies in secondary school not minding the importance of the subject in nation building.

### **4.3.3 Assessment of students performance in Social Studies**

Testing students' learning outcome is the climax of the teaching-learning process. One of the principles of assessment is the use of a variety of procedures to obtain comprehensive information on the students' achievement and progress (Amendahe and Gyimah, 2008). In this study students' performance in both summative (WASSCE and Mock), and formative evaluations (class assignments and tests), as well as external (WASSCE) and internal (Mock) and researcher administered tests were used to measure student's achievement level in social studies. These were further complemented with class assignments and test, observations and interviews. These have provided a holistic picture of students' performance in social studies.

The general trend of students' performance at WASSCE in the study schools over the five-year period was examined. In respect to this, the assistant headmasters of the study schools were asked to qualitatively rate students' performance based on the schools' analysis of the WASSCE results over the past five years. The results as captured show a little above average and somehow stagnating performance of students at the WASSCE. However, Xavier Minor Seminary shows better performance than the other schools. This has a link to the relatively better school facilities (including the availability of science resources center) in Xavier Minor Seminary. The relatively weak and stagnating results affirm The Chief Examiners' Reports (2016-2020) on the WASSCE for the entire country that the performance of candidates remained almost the same as previous years and the majority of students performed poorly in social studies. Also, to get a fair idea of students' performance in social studies vis-à-vis their performances in the other Arts elective subjects, the 2019 WASSCE results of Wa SHTS, Arts Department was analyzed and compared. The

results as depicted in the survey show that students' performances in Dagaare (Ghanaian Language), History, Economics and Government were better than that of Social Studies.



**Figure 2: Students' average performance in Social Studies**

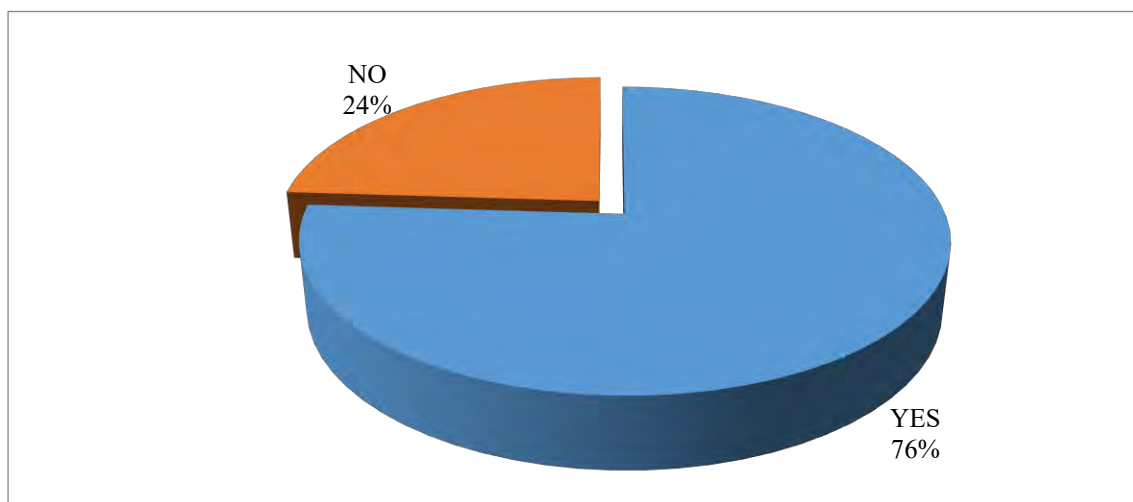
**Source:** Field data, 2021

Students' performance in social studies in internal mock examinations which is the final internal examinations use to assess the preparedness of students for the WASSCE was also analyzed. This is to track if there is a gap in students' performance in internal and WASSCE (external) examinations. The 2020 mock examinations results of the final year students from the schools were analyzed. The results as provided further affirmed the rather weak average performance of students in social studies. Majority of the students (66%) attained between D7-F9 (Weak Pass-Fail). And the rest (34%) scored between A1-C4 (pass). The overall performance of students can, therefore, be described as below average. This suggests that students' poor performance at the WASSCE cannot be attributed to students' anxieties associated with important examinations, but rather the insufficient preparedness of

students. Some of these factors are teacher initiated (conditions external to students), others are internal to the learners, and more still others are both external to the teachers and the learners (conditions in the schools).

#### 4.3.4 Enhancing Teacher – students’ relationship and students performance in Social Studies

In the field it was found that 37.5% of students attending social studies subject in all sampled schools have similar favorable perceptions on their relationships with the teachers as they confirm that the relationship was good, whereas 62.5% of the students stated otherwise. They said that it is an individual teacher or student that has an effect on student’s perceptions of those relationships for which sometimes create negative look on the teacher by other students when they become aware. Also, they said that the relationship becomes bad when a teacher makes high use of corporal punishment while teaching in classrooms. Quantitative analysis revealed a greater number of significant correlations between student performance and student perceptions of the student-teacher relationship in researched schools.

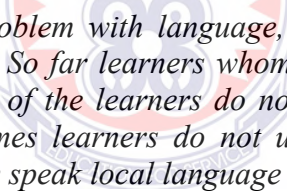


**Figure 3: The impact of teacher-student relationship on your performance in Social Studies**

**Source:** Field data, 2021

#### 4.3.5 English as medium of instruction as a barrier in learning Social Studies

In Unit 2 it was indicated that the language policy in Ghana stipulates that every school-going child in Namibia should acquire adequate proficiency in English at primary school level so that learners can learn the curriculum content with ease (MEC, 2013:63). With regard to this policy, this study found that some learners struggle with the content of Social Studies due to their poor proficiency in English. This is similar to the argument of Dhurumraj (2013), who reports that the medium of instruction at schools affects learners' performance in a subject because learners are unable to interpret questions in examinations. They may not understand questions due to the language problem. During the interviews, two participants responded to a question by arguing that learners have difficulty in reading and learning in Social Studies.



*Learners have a problem with language, the majority do not really understand English. So far learners whom I am teaching they cannot write English, some of the learners do not understand the content of the subject. Sometimes learners do not understand English because most of the time they speak local language at home and at school when they are playing outside with others....[teacher E].*

The above extracts demonstrate that English as the medium of instruction is a challenge to many learners and that many lack proficiency in using the language. Learners may have difficulty in understanding the content of the subject as well as the teacher's explanation due to the language barrier. This may result in learners not following and not expressing themselves when it comes to tests or examinations. The participants' views are similar to Harris's argument. According to Harris (2011:19), learning subject content in English is one of the contributing factors to the high failure rates in Ghanaian schools. It is clear that a lack of a suitable level of proficiency in English might indeed be one of the barriers that impact on learners' performance in

Social Studies. This issue of language requires further critical analysis by government, especially in terms of the language policy, which states that English should be the medium of instruction in Ghana. Ghanaian policy makers need to approach this issue from a multicultural point of view, as English is not the home language of most of the learners.

#### **4.3.6 The influence of cultural backgrounds on students' performance in Social Studies**

According to Smith (2014), it is identified that students' cultural backgrounds differ and can affect students' influences to study social studies. Students from different cultural backgrounds are influenced differently based upon parental experiences, interests in social studies and cultural views and attitudes of social studies education. One of the most stable and consistently observed incidents in the field was the impact of students' home background on their performance in social studies subject. Students whose parents have a higher level of education, a more prestigious occupation, or greater income tend to have higher performance than students whose parents have a lower standing on such socio-economic status indicators. The researcher wanted to find out how does teaching methods in social studies influenced students' performance in social studies subject. To understand some of the things that had the influence on teaching and learning methods in social studies on students' performance the researcher distributed questionnaires. In each school in the sampled schools' questionnaire were provided to the head of schools. Moreover, in each of the sampled school, 25 students had a focus group discussion and two teachers were interviewed on the matter at stake.

From the findings made, it was revealed that social studies teachers used a number of teaching methods. Teachers have identified to the researcher that they apply participatory teaching method and others applied students-centered teaching method. The methods which some teachers perceive to be helpless to make students do best in social studies. When they were asked why so, they replied complaining that their schools are not provided with enough teaching and learning materials. One teacher confessed that to him teacher centered was good as his students' do not have good background in social studies. When teachers were asked on which teaching methods help students understand social studies easily, they said it is through group discussions, consultations and self-practice by the students. Although some teachers claimed to apply participatory and students' centered methods but when researcher made an observation, it was proved that teachers were applying teacher centered method.

In focus group, when students were asked to say something on the way teachers teach them, they said that their teachers teach them well but not all of them. They added that a teacher teaches everything first and lastly gives them some questions as an exercise. Concerning performance, they said, it is low because they were not provided with enough exercises and do not have books of their own for self-practice. They said that some teachers attend classes very late and the lost sessions are not compensated. School libraries according to students are not furnished with the relevant reference books that students need in learning social studies. They get supplement materials from bookshops for those who are able to buy. From heads of school a lot of information had been found. Such information was as follows:

- (i) Concerning the availability of teaching staff and the number of teachers teaching social studies at the schools; they said that the number of available teaching staff does not match with the demand of teaching staff. They said that teachers are overloaded as they are to teach all classes and help individual student. Some teachers have teaching periods up to per week.
- (ii) The social studies units offered. This refers to topic to be covered in each class starting from form one to form three. They said that students fail social studies as some of the topics taught are above level for the student to understand. This has been so as teachers are not competent enough to teach some of difficult topics which requires social and cultural deliberation.
- (iii) Views on the strengths of the social studies and teaching skills of the social studies teachers at the school; they said that some of the teachers lack competence to deliver the content to students as required.
- (iv) The way teachers are recruited and retained especially qualified social studies teachers. Head of schools said teachers posted to their school are not interviewed by the ministry concerned with employment of teachers, this led to incompetent teachers to be employed in their school. Social studies teaching primarily takes place within a professional framework. However, teaching social studies is a complex and very demanding. Even though being professional is a condition for success in teaching social studies but it is not sufficient for students to perform better in social studies. It depends on teaching and learning of the students.



#### **4.4 The Extent to Which Poor Teaching and Learning Strategies Influence the Academic Performance of Students in Social Studies Wa Municipality**

##### **4.4.1 Teaching of Social Studies**

Lessons in Social Studies were observed in all the five selected schools. It was realized that Social Studies demands extensive reading on the history and government policies, national issues and cultural practices. The classroom observation by the researcher revealed that the students in the Science, General Arts, Business Studies and Visual Arts departments were not giving much study time to Social Studies, which was said to cover a wide range of topics. The students had much text to read and learn for each class session. They also have to research the topics the teachers deal with in class to ensure they are not left behind. With respect to class participation as exhibited through the asking and answering of questions, the observation revealed that in all the schools, the Science students were not doing any better than the Visual Arts students as the teachers' perceived was the case. Official school records on the students' entry and past students' WASSCE grades that were made available for verification also did not show any significant variations in performance in five years.

Nonetheless, there was harmony among the Social Studies teachers that the Visual Arts students show more interest in their Elective subjects than Social Studies. The Form 2 teacher in School Wa SHS believed that because Visual Arts involves much practical work, the students are not able to answer theory questions but instead of spending time reading their Social Studies 'notes', many of them fail to put in much effort to improve their performance. A teacher (at Wa SHTS) indicated that the Visual Arts students in his school see Social Studies as a difficult subject and because it involves much reading, the students show less interest in it. A teacher at Wa Islamic

SHS indicated that the Visual Arts students are neither “serious nor dull” but he believed that the students could perform better than they were currently doing; however, this depends on the particular teachers who teach them Social Studies. This means that in the social studies subject, teachers believe the students can improve their performance if they are given the right urge.

#### **4.4.2 Performance trends by school from national form four examinations results**

A summary of academic performance trends of students by school from the WASSCE examinations results in five years from 2016 to 2020. It classifies the four secondary schools into five scoring ranks namely division one to four and division zero. The students’ scores of Wa Senior High School show that; out of 669 candidates who sat for WASSCE for five year only division one was only one candidate 0.15%, division two 3 candidates 0.45%, division three (21) 3.14%, division four (214) 31.99% and division zero was (430) 64.27%. Wa Senior High Technical Schools students score reveals that from 562 candidates who sat for the WASSCE over the period; division one was zero, division two it was (7) 1.25%, division three (33) 5.87%), division four (272) 48.34% and division zero was (250) 44.48%. Wa Islamic Senior High School students score reveals that from 403 candidates; division one observed to be one 0.26%, division two was (14)3.47%, division three (30)7.44%), division four (178) 44.17% and division zero was (180) 44.67%. St. Francis Xavier high school students score indicates that from 593 candidates; division one it was observed to be zero, division two it was (7) 1.18%, division three (34) 5.73%), division four (274) 46.2% and division zero was (278) 46.20%. there were however no consistent results for Wa Technical Institute over the period since the school use not to writing the WASSCE. While the overall results in the four senior high schools

for five years from the total of 2227 candidates; it observed that two 0.1% candidates scored division one, (31) 1.4% scored division two, (118) 5.3% scored division three, (938) 42.1% scored division four and (1138) 51.1% failed their examinations by scoring division zero. This implies that more than a half of all candidates who sat for five-year examination totally failed their national examinations.

Moreover, the results show that Wa Islamic High School had the highest number of 669 candidates to all these four selected secondary schools but, their academic performance revealed to be the lowest of all selected secondary schools throughout five years. On the other hand, St. Francis Xavier high school had the lowest number of 403 candidates who sat for WASSCE, but had the highest number of students whose academic performance was best to all selected secondary schools in the study area. Furthermore, Wa Sech and Wa Sec Tech schools scores; division one was observed to be 0 whereas St. Francis Xavier and Wa Islamic High Schools division one observed to be 1 for each in five years between 2016-2020.

#### **4.4.3 Teaching strategies used in Social Studies**

The participants were asked to identify the teaching strategies used in teaching Social Studies. The following question was posed to them: What teaching and learning strategies do you use in Social Studies? In response to this question, Teacher J answered as follows:

*Mine is practical, because I do not know about Social Studies. Letting the students do the practical that is how I do to fill them in the way I [...] help my learners is just to motivate them to study very hard, encouraging them that we are all learning the subject [teacher X].*

This means that this particular teacher has a challenge with strategies or methods to be used in teaching Social Studies. In Chapter 2 different strategies or methods were identified that may be applicable for use in Social Studies, namely assignments, discussions, simulation, inquiries, observation, questioning, problem solving, projects, reviews, sources, storytelling, supervision, textbooks and socialized classroom recitations. Teacher F stated:

*“My method is a project which is a beneficiary to the learners. The other thing if we do map work, I use a map to show pictures to make them understand the topic”.*

Participant S commented:

*“Most cases I do not use textbooks, what I do, I read a chapter at home and understand it, when I am teaching it is just telling them a story. This is my method”.*

Teacher E responded:

*“I let learners read from the textbooks the topic for the lesson and ask them questions about the reading”.*

Teacher F has the same view as the above participants, as she stated that she uses questioning and answering.

The researcher probed to get more information about teaching strategies. It was important to follow up questions, because teaching strategies may have a positive or negative impact on learners' performance. The follow-up question was as follows: “Are you aware that there is another method you may use in Social Studies?” One participant, participant E responded that she was not aware of other teaching strategies which she may use to teach Social Studies due to being untrained. Two

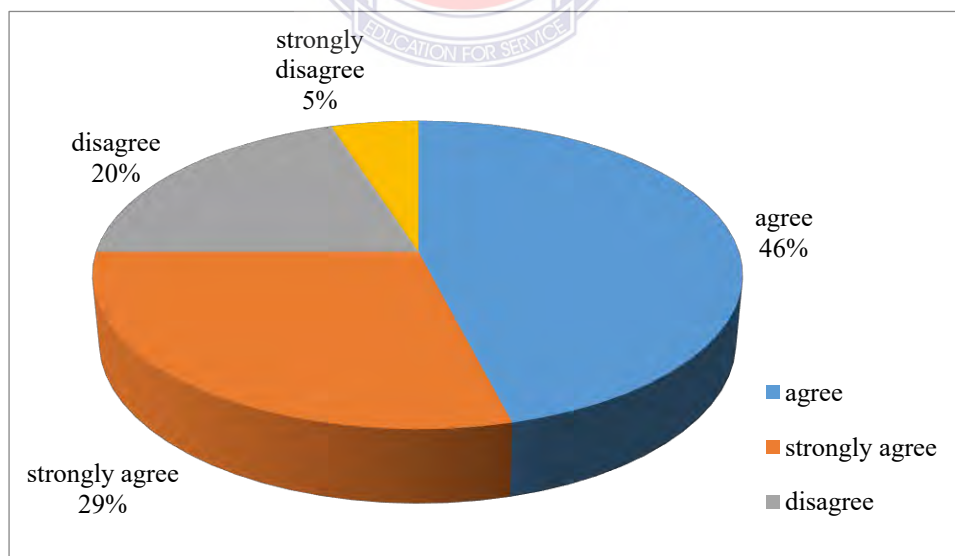
teachers, teacher E and F indicated that they use the strategy of questions and answers. As can be seen from the above responses, the participants only used one strategy to teach. Although there are many strategies that could be used by the teachers to teach Social Studies, most of the participants did not apply them when they were teaching during the time of this study and observation. This is in line with the literature of Jotia and Matlale (2011). Jotia and Matlale (2011, p.119) state that teachers who did not receive special training in Social Studies indicated that they were not aware of any special ways of teaching methods for Social Studies. This shows that some of the Social Studies teachers do not know whether there are recommended teaching methods for Social Studies. This helped the researcher to understand why they do not implement other recommended methods.

In general, in some cases using only one method may not help all learners understand, because it may not be suitable for all of them. The researcher also observed that none of the participants used a well-known teaching approach in Ghanaian schools, namely the learner-centered approach. As was indicated in previous sub sections, in the learner-centered approach teachers and learners play an equally active role in the learning process. In general, the learner centered-approach leads learners to think independently and share their ideas as well as the topic or tasks with others. Learners are also empowered to be more active and independent to take responsibility for their own learning. Learners' learning is measured through both formal and informal forms of assessment, including group projects and classroom participation. In the teacher-centered approach (lecture style teaching and learning approach), teachers talk more while students listen. In this approach, learners are viewed as empty vessels that receive information through teaching and direct instruction. Sometimes teachers write

on the chalkboard and learners are requested to take notes. If teachers cannot use methods that may help learners to learn easier, it might affect their performance.

#### 4.4.4 School administration factors that contribute to poor performance of students in WASSCE?

The results show that over one-quarter of the respondents (29%) strongly agreed that teachers' absence from classes is a school related factor that contributes to students' poor performance in social studies at the WASSCE, nearly half of the respondents (46%) agreed, one-quarter of the respondents (20%) disagreed while 5% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The result means that teachers' absence from classes is a school related factor that contributes to students' poor performance. The result is in line with the assertion by Adesemowo (2005) that the attitude of some teachers to their job is reflected in their poor attendance to lessons, lateness to school, unsavory comments about student's performance that could damage their ego, poor method of teaching and the likes, which affect students' academic performance.



**Figure 4: School administration factors that contribute to poor performance of students in WASSCE**

**Source:** Field data, 2021

Again, nearly one-fifth of the respondents (23%) strongly agreed that students' abuse/humiliation is another school related factor that contributes to students' poor performance in the WASSCE, almost two-fifth of the respondents (39%) agreed, nearly one-third of the respondents (30%) disagreed while 8% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The result shows that students' abuse/humiliation is a major home factor that contributes to students' poor performance. The result agrees with Adesemowo (2005) that unsavoury comments about student's performance that could damage their ego, poor method of teaching affect students' academic performance.

Furthermore, nearly one-third of the respondents (31%) strongly agreed that lack of proper supervision is also school related factors that contributes to students' poor performance in the WASSCE, slightly above one-third of the respondents (34%) agreed, nearly one-third of the respondents (29.5%) disagreed while 5.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The result means that lack of proper supervision is also school related factor that contributes to students' poor performance. According to Mankoe (2002), supervision focuses on six areas of education namely administration, curriculum, instruction, human relations, management and leadership. It is therefore a major function of the school's operation. Thus, effective supervision improves the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. The attitude of some public-school teachers and authorities does not promote an effective learning process for students. Some teachers even leave the classroom at will because there is insufficient supervision by school management supervisors.

Moreover, slightly above one-quarter of the respondents (26%) strongly agreed that inadequate material resources is also school related factor that contributes to students' poor performance in the WASSCE, slightly above one-third of the respondents (36%)

agreed, nearly one-third of the respondents (31.5%) disagreed while 6.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed. The result means that inadequate material resources is another school related factor that contributes to students' poor performance. According to the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2012), material resources such as books, stationery, furniture, equipment and recreational facilities are vital to effective education. Students perform better when they have such resources at their disposal since they are aids that foster learning. The success of teaching and learning is likely to be strongly influenced by resources made available to support the process and the direct ways in which these resources are managed.

Also, slightly above one-third of the respondents (34%) strongly agreed that insufficient professional teaching staff is also another school related factor that contributes to students' poor performance in the WASSCE, almost one-third of the respondents (32.5%) agreed while slightly above one-third of the respondents (34%) disagreed. The result means that insufficient professional teaching staff is also among school related factors that contribute to students' poor performance. Lack of professional standard, lack of support and control by education authorities, and cultural demands on teacher are major issues in the school context (Oduro & MacBeath, 2003).

Finally, slightly above one-third of the respondents (35.5%) strongly agreed that non conducive learning environment is another factor that contributes to students' poor performance in the WASSCE, almost half of the respondents (48%) agreed, while 16.5% of the respondents disagreed. The result indicates that non conducive learning environment is a school related factor that contributes to students' poor performance.



Barry (2005) holds the view that, student's educational outcome and academic success is greatly influenced by the type of school they attend. The school one attends is the institutional environment that sets the parameter of a student's learning experience. Depending on the environment a student can either close or open the doors that lead to academic achievement.

#### **4.4.5 Influence of English language competency and academic performance**

Findings present responses on English language competence of students and the way they influence poor academic performance. About two-fifth (40%) of respondents said that they were competent in English language while 60% of them reported that they were not. About 77.8% of teacher respondents showed that incompetence of students to use English language reduces their efficiency in the academic works. Although the results in this study show that the relationship between English language competence and poor academic performance is not statistically significant, it indicates that the academic performance is negatively affected by incompetency of English language. The language of instruction in the secondary schools in Ghanaian curriculum is English. During the interview of this study one student had asked; what was the language that is commonly used during their private study; he responded that:

*“It is very obvious that Dagaare is spoken at large by most students mixing with Waale and English is spoken mainly during class sessions”.*

Another respondent from Wa Islamic Secondary School lamented that:

*“Incompetence of English language contributed to students' poor academic performance because the chances of competency spirit that could be instigated by students from other regions was limited due to ward wise selection criteria of students that restrict them to be enrolled in secondary within their region.”*

It was evident that incompetence of English language as a problem in their examinations results. For example, in the 2019 WASSCE results of students revealed that, about 54.1% of Wa Technical Institute, 46.1% of Wa SHS, 44.5% of Wa Sec Tech and 40.45% of Xavier Minor Seminary were failed by scoring grade F. whereas, about 55.84% was the average failure rate of candidates who scored F grade in the study area. This study is in line with that of Komba and Wilson (2012) who argued that one of the factors frequently mentioned as a cause of poor academic performance in examinations is the language of instruction (LOI) that students who are not proficient in English. This made the students facing difficulties in learning which lead them to poor academic performance. Incompetence of speaking, writing, and reading in secondary schools has rooted from the level of primary school education, because the curriculums of Government secondary schools use English as the medium of instruction. Most of the students in the study area use English as their third language. More than 95% of students in the study area originated from the local area and so they use the local language as their first language (dagaare/waale). English as a language of instruction leaves students out and divert them from concentration in the subject matter. Good competence in English language enhances effective communication skills of students and eventually influences their academic performance and vice versa.

#### **4.4.6 Teaching/learning materials in the secondary schools and academic performance**

The findings in this study show that most of the schools observed had inadequate teaching and learning materials. About 64% of students and 83.3% of teachers' respondents indicated that their schools have inadequate teaching and learning

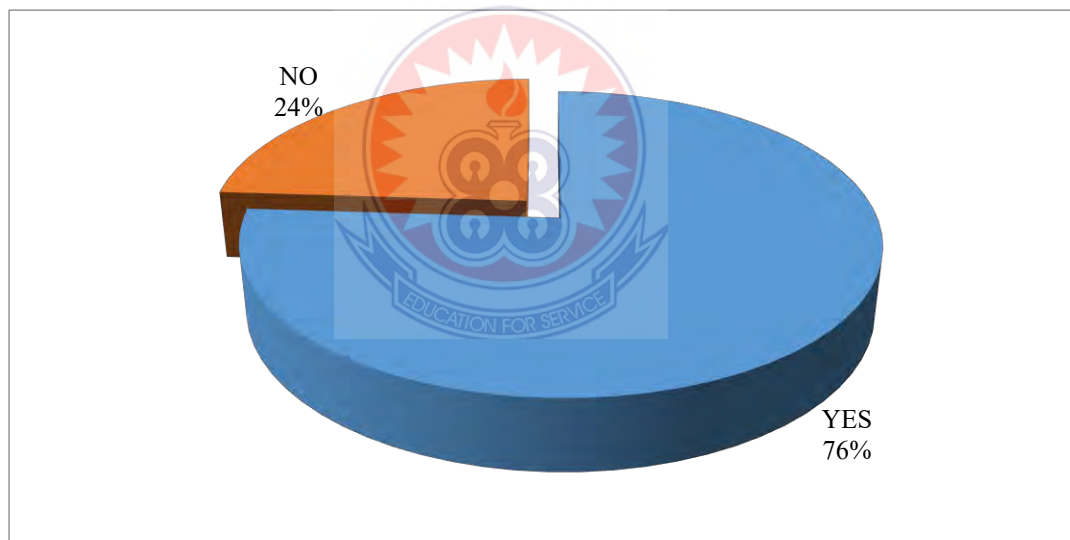
materials that links to poor performance. The results in this study show that the relationship between availability of teaching/ materials and poor academic performance is not statistically significant. But the model indicates that the academic performance is negatively affected by inadequate teaching/learning materials in schools. Availability of teaching and learning materials for secondary schools such as text books are important for teaching and learning process. Availability of such resources enhances the effectiveness of schools as these are basic things that can bring about good academic performance in the students. The scarcity of these facilities in the study area made difficulties in teaching process in which it took a long time to deliver a simple concept that could be taught in a short time on a subject matter to students by teachers.

On the other hand, students are forced to use rote learning instead of making them understand and recall easily what they see than what they just hear or were told. Inadequacy of teaching materials such as text books in these schools making learning difficulties and thus making them fail to cope up with their lessons with the end result being failing in their internal and national examinations. The secondary education officer of Wa Municipal Council reported that; the average students' book ratio for secondary schools in Wa was 11: 1 in 2018. Thus, one book is shared with eleven students. On the other hand; Heads of secondary schools from the selected secondary schools reported that the students' books ratio as follows: Wa SHS 8:1, Wa SHTS 5:1, Wa Islamic 7:1 and Wa Technical 6:1. The official government recommended students' books ratio should be at least 3:1 (URT, 2010). This is a factor contributing poor academic performance of students in Wa secondary schools. All secondary schools do not meet the officially recommended students' book ratio as indicated at

district and from selected secondary schools' levels in the study area. Therefore, inadequate teaching and learning materials should be associated to poor academic performance of students in Wa Municipal Secondary Schools.

#### 4.4.7 Availability of qualified teachers in secondary schools on academic performance

Teachers and students were asked to respond on the availability of enough and qualified teachers. The findings revealed that the majority 75% of teachers and 76.7% of students reported that there were no enough and qualified teachers in their school while 25% of teacher's respondents and 23.3% of students reported that there were enough and qualified teachers in their schools.



**Figure 5: Impact of teachers experience in the performance in Social Studies**

**Source:** Field data, 2021

However, starting with Wa SHS there were 4 social studies teachers, in which 3 were male teachers whose qualifications were; three-degree holders in arts, and one diploma holder in arts. The deficit of about 40% teachers at this school was reported

by the head of school. In order to fill this gap, the head of school took initiatives to hire two untrained teachers at least to reduce the burden.

The findings further noted that; the teacher students' ratio (TSR) at Wa SHS was 1:38. At Wa SHTS, the teacher students' ratio was 1:25. It was reported that there was the deficit of about 31% of teachers at this school. Wa Islamic secondary school, the teacher students' ratio was noted to be 1:45 at this school. It was reported that; the deficit of teachers prevailing at this school was about 55%. The findings from this study revealed that 16 (45.7%) teachers were available at Wa Secondary Technical school, 1 teacher was diploma holder in sciences and other 3 teachers were diploma holders in arts respectively.

While at the Xavier Minor Seminary, untrained teachers observed to be zero at this school, but teacher's deficit was noted to be 54.3%. It was also found out that the teacher students' ratio to be 1: 44. The municipal education directorate reported that among all secondary schools in the municipality, the social studies only numbered up to about 23. The deficit of teachers in the district was about (45%) of qualified teachers. It was also reported that untrained teachers were hired to supplement teachers' deficit prevailing in the municipality as a result of the deficit. The teacher student's ratio in the municipality was 1:46. Furthermore, the district had trained male teachers and female teachers. This constitutes a total of 26-degree holders in sciences and 12 were degree holders in arts and 8 were diploma holders in sciences and arts respectively.

However, URT (2010) SEDP II projections show that students to teacher ratio of 20 :1 is a target benchmark for secondary school by 2025 and teachers with degrees by

50 % to all degree and diploma holders. It should be noted that a teacher should be effectively involved in learning process in order to transfer knowledge and facts to learners for good performances in any examinations. Also, teachers have their basic needs and favorable working environments.

On discussion with one graduate teacher at Wa Islamic secondary school who had house accommodation complained on useless of his laptop due to lack of electricity.

He said that:

*“Look at these houses which do not have access of electrical energy made my computer being useless in this era of globalization for high development of sciences and technology. He continued to express his feelings by saying that the monthly salary that I get is not adequate to purchase monthly basic needs and have a surplus to purchase a generator, which is also very costly to run by filing fuel which is at high price in rural areas. The lack of electricity service gives a hard time for lesson preparation and in marking students ‘exercises or tests in the night.’”*

These factors contribute to reduced levels of effort, and lower effectiveness in the classroom, low morale, reduced job satisfaction and hence poor performance of students at secondary school in social studies. Several consequences could be observed including; higher absenteeism, poor cooperation among teachers themselves and low acceptance of responsibility might eventually influence students’ poor academic performance. Furthermore, low wages and poor working conditions for teachers affect their abilities and motivation to deliver quality education. It complements with Corcoran *et al.* (1988) study who found out that, where working conditions are good, they result in enthusiasm, high morale, cooperation, and acceptance of responsibility.

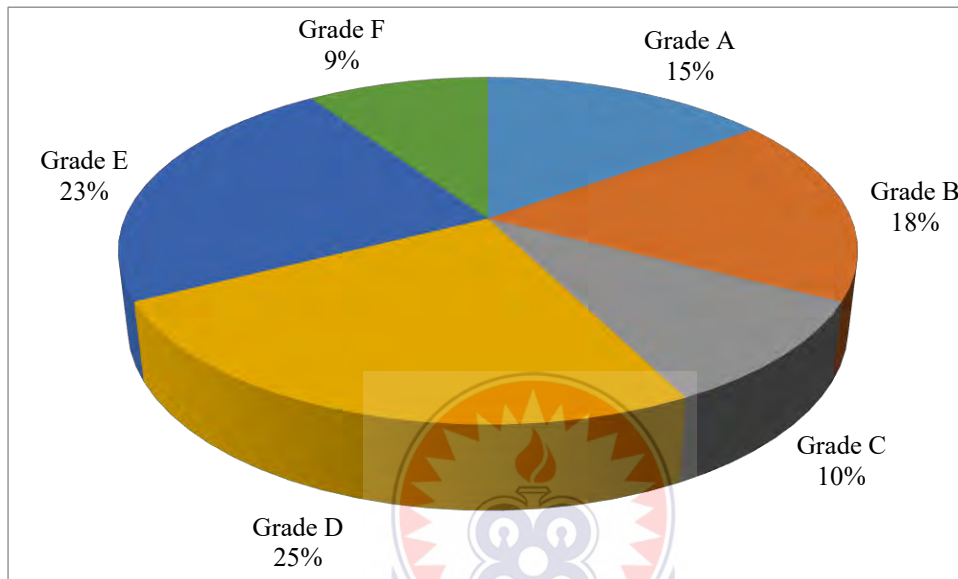
Improving teachers' working environment and increase job satisfaction could have been shown to have positive influence on students' academic achievement. They play a crucial role for translating policy into action and principles based on practice during interaction with the students.

#### **4.4.8 Academic performance in social studies for students in selected secondary schools**

During this survey the secondary data based on academic performance of high school students were collected from four secondary schools. Information on grade points sampled students scored in terminal examination of the year 2018. From form III results obtained from continuous assessment books of student available in all schools. The pass grade coded 1 if a student scores average grade ("A", "B" and "C") and the fail grades coded 0 if a student scores grade ("D" and F). Further `Grade A= 81-100, B=61 – 80, C = 41 – 60, D= 21 – 40 and F= 0 – 20. According to this study, the figure below indicates that about 15% of form three students scored grade A, 18% scored B and 10% scored C. Also, about 25% students scored grade D, 23% scored D and 9% scored F. Therefore, about 57% of form three students failed the subject whereas about 43% passed their internal examinations. The form III students' average score showed that only 17.9% passed and 82.1% failed their internal examinations. The pass rate of form three students was not better than that of the national average.

On the other hand, students from all schools performed poorly because the rate of poor academic performance in social studies was below 30% of which is the national target for poor academic performance. Also, the average results indicated that no any student who scored an average of grade A or B from all selected secondary schools in the study area is consistent even in other subjects. Furthermore, the results showed

that about 23.3% of male respondents scored grade A, 28.3% scored B and 4.2% scored grade C. Also, about 3.3% of female respondents scored grade A, 32.5% scored grade B and 8.3% grade C. Therefore, about 23.3% of male respondents passed and 32.5% failed their internal examinations. However, about 3.34% of female respondents passed and 40.8% failed their internal examinations.



**Figure 6: Grades of students score in social studies**

**Source:** Field data, 2021

The internal examinations results indicated that, male students' academic performance in the subject was better than that of female students. It predicts that, male students have higher chances to perform better than females in their National WASSCE examinations.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This section of the project presents a replication on the research process, a summary of the findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations and a conclusion to the study.

#### 5.1 Reflection on the Research Process

This study aimed to investigate the factors that contribute to students' underperformance in Social Studies in five Senior High Schools in the Wa Municipality, Ghana. The study was motivated by the researcher's experience as a teacher of Social Studies as well as by an analysis of students' performance in Social Studies for the past five years. The researcher attempted to determine the challenges in the teaching and learning of Social Studies, the strategies used by teachers of Social Studies in teaching the subject and their perceptions of various topics that they presented in their lessons. The study attempted to answer the following research questions: 1. What are the factors that contribute to the low level of students' academic achievement in social studies in SHSs? 2. *what are the government related factors that determine secondary school students' performance in Social studies in Wa Municipality?* 3. What are the teacher-related factors that determine secondary school students' performance in Social studies in Wa Municipality? 4. *To what extent to which poor teaching and learning strategies influence the academic performance of students in social studies Wa Municipality?*

In the literature review in Chapter 2, different viewpoints with regard to these factors, such as those of Mutorwa (2004), Makuwa (2004), Sichombe et al. (2011) and Nyambe (2015), were discussed. Some of the factors that may contribute to learners' underperformance identified in this study are similar to the ones mentioned in the studies by the above authors.

## **5.2 Summary of the Research Findings**

### **5.2.1 Class size**

The study found that most of the classrooms were overcrowded. There were more than 40 students per classroom, which could prevent teachers from paying attention to individual learners. The classroom observations confirmed that teachers and students could not move freely because learners' chairs and tables were arranged too closely together. It was also discovered by the researcher that teachers teach according to the traditional teacher-centered approach, which could be a result of the lack of space. Learners also did not have the opportunity to engage in group or pair activities and share ideas due to the inappropriate seating arrangement (learners sit in rows behind each other). Large class sizes were one of the causes of ineffective class management, poor supervision of assignments and ineffective teaching, leading to students' poor performance in Social Studies. Classes with smaller numbers of students may allow for individual attention and may improve students' academic outcomes.

### **5.2.2 Teaching strategies used in Social Studies**

Based on the findings expressed in Chapter 4, none of the participating teachers have demonstrated the learner-centered teaching approach as required in the Social Studies syllabus. There was no opportunity for students to engage in group or pair work. Teachers showed a lack of understanding of the use of the learner-centered method.

As teachers struggle with the implementation of a learner-centered approach, it affected students in terms of learning the subject easier and, as a result, students perform poorly in the subject. It was noted that some teachers only used chalkboards as teaching material. Most of the participants did not make a use of the suggested Social Studies teaching strategies, as mentioned in Chapter 2. However, some teachers used one of the suggested approaches, namely storytelling. It was also noted that some teachers used Social Studies textbooks while others used a lesson notes as teaching materials.

The researcher suggests that teachers of Social Studies should use different types of teaching and learning material and strategies because different teaching strategies may assist students to appreciate the content of the subject better and make the lessons more practical and relevant to the learners' environment. The use of appropriate teaching approaches may address the variety of learners' needs that may have a connection with the subject. Teachers are recommended to use a variety of teaching approaches and demonstrate deep understanding of the subject content.

### **5.2.3 Educational policies**

The participants indicated that the non-promotional policy affected learners' academic performance because learners are being transferred or promoted to the next grade without meeting the pass requirements of the current grade. This happens because the non-promotional policy stipulates that learners should not repeat a phase or a grade more than twice. The practice of automatically transferring students may result in a lack of motivation to study because they know that they will be transferred without reaching the pass requirement. Students should therefore be motivated to study and to master the basic concepts of the subject. In addition, this study analyzed documents

relating to the promotional and non-promotional policies. It was found that these policies contradict each other because the promotional policy stipulates that learners should be promoted to the next class after they have met the pass requirement of the current grade, whereas the non-promotional policy stipulates that learners should not repeat any phase more than twice. Educational policy makers should revisit the non-promotional policy and modify it. Students should only be promoted to the next class when they have met the pass requirement of the current class. Those who do not meet these requirements, may be given the opportunity to repeat the class or the stage.

#### **5.2.4 Untrained teachers**

The findings showed that four of the five participating Social Studies teachers had not received training in the subject or participated in any workshops in preparation for the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum. The study also discovered that among the five participating teachers in this study, some teachers were not even trained as teachers and were teaching with only a diploma qualification. Unqualified teachers cause concern because their lack of subject knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and teaching skills contribute to students' underperformance. The researcher suggests that teachers who have no teacher training be properly trained through in-service training, while those who have been trained receive further training or attend workshops, because the Ghanaian curriculum is revised every five years. Through proper training, teachers may gain the skills required for effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum.

#### **5.2.5 English as a barrier to learning**

The participants indicated that students had difficulties with the use of English as medium of instruction. One of the participants stated that the majority of students do

not better understand English, and another participant commented that the students whom he was teaching could not write in English. These two participants did not explain the cause of these language difficulties. However, another participant assured the researcher that students' problems with English were due to the majority having local language assimilation as home language. The participants believe that students only use English in class and therefore find it difficult to understand the content of the subject. This cause students to underachieve. Based on the Language Policy for Schools in Ghana, English has the following roles to play in Ghanaian classrooms: (i) As a compulsory subject in the basic education process. This means that it is a compulsory subject to be taught throughout the basic education level. (ii) As the primary language in which teaching and learning take place. This means that it is the main language (medium of instruction) that should be used in teaching and learning in the basic and second cycle schools and in tertiary or higher education.

Even though English was approved by the Ghanaian government as a compulsory subject and the medium of instruction in teaching and learning in basic and secondary schools, students may have difficulty in understanding the content of the subject due to their lack of proficiency in English. This issue was affirmed Namupala (2013:88), as she confessed about the ongoing high failure rates at Omusati region caused by students' lack of proficiency in the language of teaching. This is also confirmed by Harris (2012, p.19), who states that learning subject content through English is one of the contributing factors to the high failure rates in Namibian schools. This means that learners are underperforming not because they do not understand the subject, but simply because they experience problems with English. Therefore, teachers should be trained to use a wide variety of activities that would allow effective learning to take

place. Teachers should also simplify the language and lexis through which they present Social Studies. This means that they should identify a core lexis of key ideas that they can use accurately and that can be learnt easily by students.

### **5.2.6 Assessment record sheets**

It was detailed in Chapter 4 that a minimum of six formal activities per term has to be selected, graded and recorded. However, this did not apply in this study. Although the MoE designed the assessment forms for Social Studies, teachers use assessment forms designed by themselves. It was evident that the participants are not using the same criteria to assess students. It was also noted that most of the participants evaluate fewer activities than required by the assessment policy. This is as a result of the lack of teaching skills. The researcher recommends that Social Studies teachers be motivated and empowered to develop and enhance their assessment skills. Head teachers are responsible for the effectiveness of the schools, including students' performance, and should therefore empower teachers by affording them the opportunity to enhance their assessment skills. Head teachers should also provide staff-development programmes to ensure that teachers are assisted to understand curriculum implementation, including assessment.

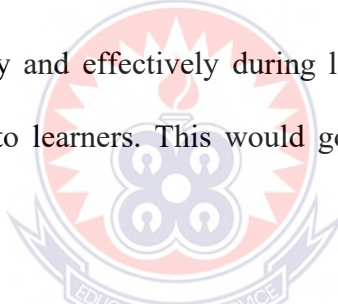
## **5.3 Recommendations**

The following recommendations regarding changes that need to take place are made based on the research findings of this study:

### **5.3.1 Recommendations regarding the role of the Ghana Education Service**

It is recommended that appropriately trained teachers are appointed to teach Social Studies by the Ghana Education Service. This study revealed that four of the five

participating teachers of Social Studies had not been trained to teach the subject. The education officers therefore appointed untrained teachers and also appointed teachers to teach a subject in which they did not specialize. The researcher recommends that the education officers appoint properly trained teachers and that teachers be appointed in their area of specialization. It was also acknowledged by the participants that they had not attended any workshops. The researcher suggests that the education officers provide training and workshops for Social Studies teachers to enable them to implement the Social Studies curriculum effectively. A further obstacle to implementing the curriculum effectively is the large number of learners in some classrooms. The researcher recommends that the Ghana Education Service review the number of students per class to be no more than 40. This would enable teachers to handle learners efficiently and effectively during lesson presentations as well as to pay individual attention to learners. This would go a long way towards improving learners' performance.



### **5.3.2 Recommendations regarding teaching approaches and teacher qualifications**

The researcher recommends that teachers use multiple teaching strategies in the teaching of Social Studies. Enhancing the training of Social Studies teacher with regard to developing a strong content knowledge, may also lead to the improvement of success rates. Making use of multi-teaching strategies might provide opportunities for learners to learn the subject easier. It is also recommended that in-service training be provided to ensure not only professional development of teachers, but also continuous upgrading of the skills of teachers with regard to their subjects. Students will, for example, not be able to acquire the historical understanding by merely

discussing or by doing group work. They need a teacher who has good content knowledge and is familiar with the skills required to analyze the content. They need a teacher who is able to direct class discussions and group work. It is also important for the learners to have a teacher who is empowered to ensure that learners' interpretations of historical events are accurate and well-founded on evidence derived from historical sources.

Besides, if teachers do not have adequate training as a Social Sciences teacher, one cannot expect students to acquire a high standard of content knowledge or skills with no guidance from the teachers. It is recommended that unqualified teachers further their studies to ensure that they are competent to teach the subject. Teachers could also request training by voicing their training needs to the Education Municipal Office. Teachers should therefore be provided with professional development programmes offered by educational support institutions. Through professional development programmes, teachers may attend workshops, receive inductions, be encouraged to further their studies and become empowered to implement the curriculum of the subject they are teaching. Professional development activities could assist teachers to implement the curriculum effectively.

### **5.3.3 Recommendations regarding leadership**

It is suggested that school leaders critically analyze their school results on a regular basis to determine possible causes of learners' failure. When a school is faced with poor student performance, the school leaders (head teachers) need to take a serious look at the reasons for this underperformance. Once the possible causes have been identified, remedial steps can be taken. It was evident from the comments by the principals who participated in this study that they for instance do not conduct class



visits to monitor the teaching and learning process at their schools. Supervision was done only by the heads of department. The researcher encourages principals to ensure that the educational officers appoint properly trained teachers according to their area of specialization. It is also recommended that the school principals and heads of department monitor and carry out effective supervision of the teaching and learning process at their schools to ensure that teachers implement the curriculum as stipulated in policy. This supervision forms part of quality assurance and can impact positively on the pass rate of learners. It is during the process of class visits where they may identify the different challenges teachers encounter in teaching Social Studies. The researcher also recommends that the school leaders should ensure that all students have all the appropriate curriculum materials, because if students do not have the materials it will have a negative impact on their success.

#### **5.3.4 Recommendations regarding educational policy makers**

It is recommended that educational policy makers revisit the language policy with regard to using English as the medium of instruction. From the study it is clear that learners are struggling with the content of Social Studies because of a lack of proficiency in English. The researcher therefore recommends that the linguistic policy in education reconsidered, which will facilitate the learning process. It is also recommended that educational policy makers review the promotional and no promotional policy, as these policies are contradicting and clearly have a negative impact on student success.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

The researcher recommends that further research be undertaken in the following areas:

- Language as standard of instruction in Ghana and its impact on effective learning
- The role of Ghanaian head teachers and other school leaders as curriculum leaders
- The professional development of subject teachers in Ghana
- Possible contributing factors to the lack of parental involvement in children's education
- Teaching strategies that may assist improvement in academic performance in Social Studies.

#### **5.5 Conclusion**

This study focused on possible factors that contribute to students' underperformance in Social Studies in selected schools in the Wa Municipality. This study has accomplished its aim of identifying possible causes of students' underperformance in Social Studies and answered the following research question: What are the possible causes of underperformance of students in Social Studies in senior high schools in Wa Municipality? This study has the potential to benefit Social Studies teachers in that they may gain different standpoints that may assist them to determine the hindrances to the teaching and learning of Social Studies. It may also bring to the forefront new perspectives on the challenges that may obstruct the teaching and learning of Social Studies of which the Ghana Education Service was not aware. Further research and

the subsequent recommendations could assist in progressively improving learner performance in senior high schools in Wa Municipality, Ghana.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### Questionnaires

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Thank you for your interest in participating in this survey.

The purpose of this study is to collect data on “**Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Social Studies Students in Selected Senior High Schools in the Wa Municipality**”. The study is part of the researcher’s Master of Education (M.ED) in Social Studies Degree at University of Education, Winneba (UEW) and should help career guidance and counselling services provision in schools. You do not need to write your name as no respondent will be traced or identified from this study whatsoever as confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. There are no right or wrong answers. The researcher is only interested in your own opinion. All data and information generated from this study will be treated as strictly private and confidential. You are therefore kindly requested to complete the questionnaire as honestly as possible. Thank you for participating in this study.

***INSTRUCTION: Please indicate the correct option as honestly and as correctly as possible by putting a tick (✓) on one of the options***

## SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF RESPONDENTS

1. Age a) 16 – 20 [ ] b) 20 – 25 [ ] c) >26 [ ]
2. Sex a) Male [ ] b) Female [ ]
3. Programme of Study a) General Arts [ ] b) General Science [ ] C) Agricultural Science [ ] d) Visual Arts [ ] e) Business [ ]

## Section B: What are the factors that contribute to the low level of students' academic achievement in social studies in SHSs?

4. Are you happy with the school's method of preparing you for the final WASSCE Examination? a) Happy [ ] b) Not Happy [ ] c) Indifferent [ ]
5. Are you able to complete your respective subject syllabuses within the stipulated time? a) Yes [ ] b) No [ ] c) Uncertain [ ]
6. How often does teachers come to school? a) All the time [ ] b) sometimes [ ] c) don't come at all in most situations [ ]
7. How is teachers' duty in encouraging you as final year student to final Exams? a) Provide extra tuition [ ] b) Refer Students to other students for help [ ] c) Teachers do not help at all
8. Do you have enough teaching and learning materials? Yes [ ] No [ ]
9. Do you attend in-service workshop as a social studies teacher? a) Yes [ ] b) No [ ]
10. Are you a qualified trained teacher? a) Yes [ ] b) No [ ]
11. Do you think you have an overcrowded? a) Yes [ ] b) No [ ]

**Section C: What government related factors determine senior high school students' performance in Social studies in Wa Municipality?**

12. Applicability of Teacher's Subject Specialization at the Secondary Schools? a) No specialty b)  Shortage of teachers
13. Are teachers' commitment in teaching in senior Secondary Schools? a) Yes  b) No
14. Are there untrained teachers who teach Social Studies? a) Yes  b) No

**Section D: What teacher's related factors determine senior high school students' performance in Social studies in Wa Municipality?**

15. Are there actions plans (interventions) aimed at improving academic performance? a) Yes  b) No  c) Neutral
16. Does the government action plan improve your performance? a) Yes  b) No  c) Don't Know
17. What is the average performance of students in Social Studies? a) A1-C6  b) D7-F9
18. What is the nature of teacher-students relationship? a) Good  b) Very Good  c) Bad
19. Does Enhanced Teacher-student Relationship Have Impact on Your Performance in Social Studies? Yes  No

**Section E: The Extent to Which Poor Teaching and Learning Strategies Influence the Academic Performance of Students in Social Studies Wa Municipality**

20. Do You Agree That School Administration Factors That Contribute To Poor Performance Of Students? a) Agree [ ] b) Strongly Agree [ ] c) Disagree [ ] d) Strongly Disagree [ ]
21. Is the availability of teaching/learning materials have an influence in academic performance? Yes [ ] No [ ]
22. What is your score in social studies? a) Grade A [ ] b) Grade B [ ] c) Grade C [ ] d) Grade D [ ] e) Grade E [ ] f) Grade F [ ]





## APPENDIX B

### Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Social Studies Teachers

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES

The research is mainly for academic purpose. Therefore, answers given will be treated as confidential. Thank you.

Date of Interview: .....

1. What is your language as medium of instruction? a) English language [ ] b) Home language (Local Dialect)
2. How do leadership and management of staff impact on learner success?
3. What comparisons can you make in terms of students in social studies?
4. What are the teaching and learning strategies used in the teaching and learning methods?

