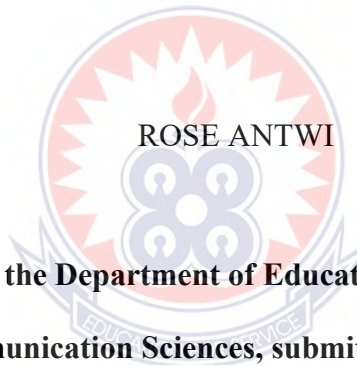


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

PERCEIVED CAUSES OF LOW ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: A CASE OF NKAWIE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL



**A Project Report in the Department of Educational Leadership, Faculty of
Education and Communication Sciences, submitted to the School of Graduate
Studies, University of Education, Winneba, in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for award of the Master of Arts (Educational Leadership) degree**

OCTOBER, 2016

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

SIGNATURE

DATE

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. HINNEH KUSI

SIGNATURE

DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DEDICATION

To my Mother, Madam Mercy Mensah.



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ABSTRACT

Quality education has always been the seal of most educational policies made in Ghana. In spite of quality education, the main aim of many educational reforms and policies, the desired quality has not yet been achieved. The purpose of this study was to assess the causes of low academic performance among Senior High School students. Descriptive research design was employed for this study. Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents. A total of one hundred and sixty (160) participants made of 100 students, 40 teachers and 20 parents participated in the study. Questionnaire and interview were the data collection instrument used to solicit for data. The collected data was analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 21. The results were presented using percentages and mean values in a Table. The study find out that, inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials to students, teacher absenteeism and inadequate assessment of students were some of the teacher related causes of students low academic performance. Student's shyness to seek for clarification from teachers, insufficient time for students to learn their books and increased indiscipline among students were revealed to be student related factors that contributes to their low academic performance. The study concludes that improvement of students' academic performance was a shared responsibility of all educational stakeholders. The study recommend that the head of school in collaboration of the district educational directorate should conduct regular and prompt in 0 service training for teachers. Students should be counselled to be bold enough to seek for further clarification from tutors. The district educational directorate should ensure that there is prompt and regular supply of teaching and learning materials to enhance teaching and learning.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

In this era of globalization and technological revolution, education is considered as a first step for every human activity (Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq & Berhanu, 2011). It plays a vital role in the development of human capital and is linked with an individual's well-being and opportunities for better living. Education ensures the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to increase their productivity and improve their quality of life (Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq & Berhanu, 2011). This increase in productivity also leads towards new sources of earning which enhances the economic growth of a country (Saxton, 2000). The quality of students' performance remains at top priority for educators. It is meant for making a difference locally, regionally, nationally and globally (Farooq et. al., 2011). Educators, trainers, and researchers have long been interested in exploring variables contributing effectively for quality of performance of learners (Farooq et. al, 2011). These variables fall within and outside the school that affect students' quality of academic achievement. These factors may be termed as *student factors, family factors, school factors and peer factors* (Crosnoe, Johnson & Elder, 2004). The formal investigation about the role of these demographic factors rooted back in 17th century (Mann, 1985). In general, these factors include age, gender, geographical belongingness, ethnicity, marital status, socioeconomic status (SES), parents' education level, parental profession, language, income and religious affiliations. These are usually discussed under the umbrella of demography. In a wider context, demography is referred to as a way to explore the nature and effects of demographic variables in the biological

and social context. Unfortunately, defining and measuring the quality of education is not a simple issue and the complexity of this process increases due to the changing values of quality attributes associated with the different stakeholders' view point (Blevins, 2009).

With respect to the quality of education and student achievement, the performance of students in Ghana especially in WASSCE in recent times has been relatively poor. Statistics from the WASSCE 2015 results pointed to the fact that students performed abysmally especially in the three core subjects that is mathematics, English and science. These subjects serve as the basis that many tertiary institutions consider for admission. Students' performing woefully in these subjects is a clear indication that few students will be able to progress to the next stage of their academic ladder without having to rewrite. The statistics as released by WAEC indicates that 25.29 % of candidates passed in mathematics. That is students getting A1 to C6. Since many schools today do not accept D7 for admission. 23.63% passed in integrated science (A1-C6) and 50.29% passed in English A1-C6) (WAEC, 2015).

This buttresses the issue that poor performance in Ghanaian schools is a problem which needs to be tackled. Students' performance is considered a vital indicator of good schooling, so the poor performance of students at the Senior High level of education has not only led to public outcry, but also educationists have been increasingly occupied in their attempt to identify factors that influence students' performance especially in the West Africa Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations. For example, Anamuah-Mensah (2010), an educationist attributed the phenomenon to lack of effective supervision and monitoring at school, lack of motivation for teachers and inadequate

number of qualified teachers to fill empty classrooms. In the same vein, Diaz (2003) found factors such as intellectual ability, poor study habit, achievement motivation, lack of vocational goals, low self-concept, low socio-economic status of the family, poor family structure and anxiety as contributing to educational performance.

It is therefore no exaggeration that poor academic achievement in school may be the result of interplay of several factors. It therefore beckons on researchers not only to carry out an empirical study on the causes of low academic performance of students, but also to look for opportunities and propose measures to assist on-going efforts at improving students' academic achievement in general.

1.2 Problem Statement

Education has always been an important asset and is regarded as a key human development index (Farooq et. al., 2011). Various states and governments globally spend a large share of their budget on education sector as part of their strategy to achieve the millennium development goal of education for all (World Bank, 2006). The government made provisions for enhancing the education sector most importantly the Second Cycle Institutions in the 2015 Budget Reading.

The Budget statement stipulated that under the Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP), Government secured donor funding to construct 23 new schools and upgrade facilities in 50 existing schools. In addition, 125 existing schools will be supported to improve their quality in terms of infrastructure and human resource. Under the project, 10,400 brilliant but needy students will be provided with scholarships.

A budgetary allocation of GHC6,740,437,383.00 was made to support this program (GOG, 2015)

However, despite these massive efforts, there has been a massive decline in the performances of Second Cycle Schools in the country. It is heart breaking when one sits down to analyze the performance of Senior High School candidates in the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) of late. This makes it difficult deciphering whether the educational system is progressing or retrogressing. In Ghana WASSCE serves as the link for Senior High School graduates to enter or get admission into tertiary institutions. Without taking the WAEC certification examinations one will not be able to progress into any tertiary institution. Statistics from WASSCE 2015 results pointed to the fact that students performed abysmally especially in the three core subjects that is mathematics, English and science. On hindsight, results were poor in the other elective subjects as well indicating that few students were likely to be able to progress to the next stage of their academic ladder without having to rewrite. The statistics as released by WAEC indicated that 25.29 % of candidates passed in mathematics. That is students getting A1 to C6. Since many schools today do not accept D7 for admission. 23.63% passed in integrated science (A1-C6) and 50.29 % passed in English (A1-C6).

Similarly in 2014, a WAEC seminar organized in honor of excellent WAEC students showed that students did not do well in all the core subjects as their 2013 counterparts, the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), observed. Social Studies topped the list as the core subject with the best performance by candidates at credit level, consisting of Grades A1 to C6 with a pass rate of 57.4 per cent, but this fared short of the

2013 figure of 81.4 per cent. The breakdowns of WASSCE results in 2014 were as follows: English Language recorded a pass rate of 45.2 per cent, Mathematics: 32.4 per cent, while Integrated Science recorded a pass rate of 28.7 per cent. The failure rates for those who obtained Grade F9 included 16.2 per cent in Social Studies; 20.9 per cent in English Language; 31.6 percent in Mathematics; and 35.6 per cent in Integrated Science. Second Cycle Schools in the Ashanti Region especially those in the Atwima Nwabiagya District are no exception when it comes to students' poor academic performance in WASSCE. The table below shows the performance of students in Nkawie Senior High School over the past four years.



Table 1: Academic Performance of Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) over the past four years

YEAR		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
PASSES	8 PASSES	294	330	285	165	218
	7 PASSES	150	164	159	87	91
	6 PASSES	47	84	46	72	79
	5 PASSES	10	15	11	56	44
	4 PASSES	0	3	3	50	48
	3 PASSES	0	0	0	40	54
	2 PASSES	0	0	0	63	29
	1 PASS	0	0	0	32	20
	FAILURES	0	0	0	19	11
	ABSENT	1	52	3	0	0
	CANCELLED	0	0	0	0	0
	RESULT HELD	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL		502	596	599	587	594
AVERAGE	576					

(Academic Department, Nkawie Senior High School (Technical))

From table 1, it could be deduced that on the average, 576 have gone through the WASSCE examination process in Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) over the last five years. Student's performance could be measured as "low". Hence the course of this study. From table 1, the number of passes in eight subjects that were recorded in the years

2011 (294 students) and 2012 (330 students) took a massive nosedive in the years 2014 (165 students) and 2015 (218 students). However, the number of failures rose from none and previous to 19 and 11 respectively in recent times. This in the researchers view calls for action.

It has been a headache to stakeholders in the educational sector tracing the causes of these poor performances. It even becomes more difficult to attempt putting the blame on either teachers or the students. But when subjected to critical analysis it becomes obvious that the blame should be shared. Are the teachers found in our various schools up to the standards to teach these subjects? Are the institutions that train these teachers producing the right caliber of teachers that are capable of handling these subjects very well? These are big questions that need to be answered.

Aside most teachers not been up to the task, students are also to be blame for their poor performance. In today's Ghana, students have developed so much trust in 'apoo' that they hardly take the pain to sit down to study. They rather prefer to pay heavy sums of monies for 'apoo' which most at times turns to fail them. Many of these ill prepared students turn to cheat in the examination hall. It is therefore not surprising that 453 students had their entire results cancelled with eight (8) of them been barred from taking any exams organized by WAEC for the next two years. Whilst 119 schools have their results withheld and are been investigated for malpractices of various forms. Education is the key to the development of every nation. This is the very reason why our educational foundations need to be well set. This will go a long way to help train the human resources needed to work in the various sectors of the economy to aid development. A country that

has its educational priorities misplaced is heading towards doom. In a seminar conducted for educational stakeholders in 2015, the Minister of Education branded heads of schools to be accountable to the poor academic performance of students; stating that *“the Ministry of Education cannot accept the practice of heads who superintend over consistent poor performance... we wonder why a head from a public or private institution, that superintends over a failure rate of 90 per cent is allowed to continue operations without accounting to the Ghana Education Service and the public”*. It is therefore expedient to conduct an inquiry into what factors contribute to students’ low academic achievement and also find ways of improving the performance of students.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to explore the causes of the low academic performance among students at Nkawie Senior High School (Technical).

1.4 Objectives of the Study

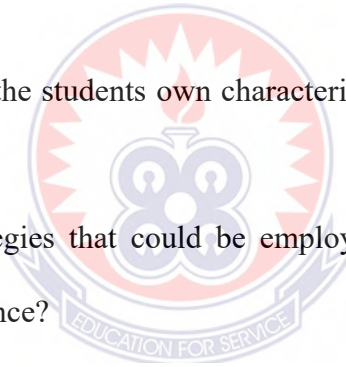
1. To examine the environmental factors that cause poor academic performance of the student.
2. Uncover the home/household conditions that causes poor academic performance among the students.
3. Identify teacher-related factors that contribute to low academic achievement of the students.
4. Examine the students’ characteristics that are responsible for their poor academic performance.

5. Identify the strategies that could be used to improve the students' performance.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What are the school environmental factors responsible for the poor academic performance of the students?
2. What are the home conditions responsible for the poor academic performance of the students?
3. What teacher related factors contribute to the low academic performance of the students?
4. To what extent do the students own characteristics influence their poor academic performance?
5. What are the strategies that could be employed to improve the students' poor academic performance?



1.6 Significance of the Study

This study sheds more light into the causal relationships among school environment, home, teacher, education administration and pupil related variables under investigation and achievement of students. The outcome of the study is therefore expected to assist all stakeholders in the district, particularly at the basic education level, to fashion out appropriate strategies that would enhance the academic performance of students. In this regard, the study would be useful to Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) in the analysis of the causes of poor performance in WASSCE. At the micro

level, the school children at Kemp Methodist School would benefit by performing better academically, progressing successfully through the stages of education. They would therefore have more life opportunities and also improve their family lives and socio-economic conditions. At the mezzo or community level, Nkawie would benefit from improved quality of education and successful students and citizens. The community would also get more contributions from its members. And at the macro level, identifying the variables that influence the achievement of young individuals at school is of great importance, because it would serve as an essential tool for Ghana Education Service and other policy makers in the design of education policies. This would eventually lead to a rise in the number of students who pass nationally. The study would also add to the body of knowledge in the study area.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study was conducted at Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) in the Atwima Nwabiagya District of the Ashanti Region. The teaching staff, students and parents were the participants of the study. The study focused on the low academic performance of second cycle schools. The study also thrives on the factors that contribute to the poor academic performance of students and the possible strategies that could be implemented to improve the academic standard of students in the Nkawie Senior High School (Technical).

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study had been organized into five (5) chapters. Chapter one which is General Introduction presents the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, and research questions, scope of study, relevance and limitations of the study. Chapter Two is a presentation of the relevant literature on the subject that was reviewed. It looks at concepts and theories as they relate to the research topic and research questions. Chapter Three discusses the research methodology that was adopted. It outlines the research design, data collection techniques, sources of secondary data, the research instruments used and sampling technique. The target population, analytical and presentation tools that were used are also explained. Chapter Four is a detailed account of the findings and results of the study. It discusses the researcher's analysis of the responses to the issues that were investigated. Chapter Five, the final chapter is a presentation of the conclusions that were drawn from the findings and recommendations to enhance students' performance at Nkawie Senior High School.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section reviews literature on factors affecting academic performance. Poor academic achievement in school may be the result of interplay of many factors. In the first part of this chapter, the concept of academic performance and achievement is defined and its scope delineated. This was followed by factors influencing academic achievement in terms of home-related factors, school-related factors, student characteristics and teacher-side factors. The issue of supervision and student achievement is also taken care of.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. He developed the ecological systems theory in an attempt to define and understand human development within the context of the system of relationships that form the person's environment. According to Bronfenbrenner's initial theory (1989), the environment, is comprised of four layers of systems which interact in complex ways and can both affect and be affected by the person's development. These are Microsystems, Mesosystem, Ecosystems and Macrosystem. He later added a fifth dimension that comprises an element of time (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) which he called Chronosystem.

This theory can be extended to model the development of an organization as well, and is particularly appropriate for describing the complex systems of a schools. Each of the four system layers is described below:

Microsystem

The Microsystem is defined as the outline of activities, roles, and interpersonal relationships experienced by a developing person in a particular setting with particular physical and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). The Microsystem forms a set of structures with which a person has direct contact, and the influences between the developing person and these structures are bidirectional. The person influences and is influenced by the Microsystem. An extension of this theory from human development to organizational development sees the school as the unit of interest, with the microsystem of the school being students, parents, family members, school administration, teachers and the surrounding community (Johnson, 2008).

Mesosystem

The mesosystem, simply stated, comprises the linkages between Microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Just as the direction of influence between the school and each structure within the Microsystems is bi-directional, the mesosystem involves bi-directional influences between these various structures. An example of the mesosystem of a school can be seen in the interactions and dynamics between two of its microsystems, students and parents. Parental expectations regarding the academic and extra-curricular

success of their children can often create a dynamic that directly and indirectly impacts the atmosphere and climate of the school (Johnson, 2008). Unreasonably high expectations and low tolerance for failure can create a dynamic between parent and child that is characterized by tension and fear. This dynamic impacts the school in various direct and indirect ways, including, for example, student behavior in the classroom resulting from such expectations, pressures to ensure their child's success placed on school personnel by the parent, or an attempt by school personnel to shield students from such parental pressures by restricting the amount of information that is communicated regarding student achievement (Johnson, 2008).

Exosystem

The exosystem characterizes the larger social system, and encompasses events, contingencies, decisions, and policies over which the developing person has no influence. The exosystem thus exerts a **unidirectional** influence that directly or indirectly impacts the developing person. The exosystem of an individual school might be comprised of such structures as, for example, state regulations, local economics, district mandates, and local disasters (Johnson, 2008).

Macrosystem

The macro system can be thought of as the “social blueprint” of a given culture, subculture, or broad social context and consists of the overarching pattern of values, belief systems, lifestyles, opportunities, customs, and resources embedded therein (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). This system is generally considered to exert a unidirectional

influence upon not only the person but the micro-, meso-, and exo-systems as well. The macrosystem of an individual school is embodied not only in the cultural, political, social, and economic climate of the local community, but that of the nation as a whole (Johnson, 2008).

Chronosystem

Although not one of the four system layers per se, the Chrono system represents a time based dimension that influences the operation of all levels of the ecological systems. The Chrono system can refer to both short- and long-term time dimensions of the individual over the course of a lifespan, as well as the socio-historical time dimension of the macrosystem in which the individual lives (Johnson, 2008). The chronosystem of a school, therefore, may be represented by both the day-to-day and year-to-year developmental changes that occur in its student body, teaching staff, curricular choices, etc., as well as the overall number of years in operation (i.e., a newer school faces challenges and opportunities that differ from those of a school that has been in operation for a length of time). In an attempt to understand the causes of the poor academic performance in Nkawie Senior High School (Technical), one has to take into account the individual students as well as the context within which it occurs.

The relevance of this theory to the study is that it impinges on the researcher to view the poor academic performance in the school as a phenomenon that is influenced by wider social systems. The theory opined that students are directly present within some of these social systems, such as their household, school and immediate neighborhood, and there are others in which they are not directly represented, but which impinge on their

development including their siblings“, social networks and their parents“ or careers’ friendship, leisure and the workplace relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Moreover, the theory draws recognition to the influences of wider social systems including the cultures, political systems, social institutions, and values that exist in the society and argues that they should be taken into account in students’ educational upbringing.

By inference, the influences and experiences that result from the interactions between different social systems play a key role in determining the extent to which students perform in school. From the constructs of the ecological theory, the poor performance of the students is inextricably linked with the characteristics of social systems in Nkawie and its environs. The ecological theory is, therefore, the most appropriate theory for studying the causes of poor academic performance in the school and for locating target(s) of intervention. It is appropriate in that it directs attention to the whole and not to any one part, system, or aspect of the students’ situation. Consequently, it is within this framework that the present study seeks to investigate the causes of poor academic performance in Nkawie Senior High School (Technical). It must however be said that learning outcomes depend on the way it is presented to the learner by his or her teacher, the way the learner interacts with the learning experiences presented to him and the environment within which the learning takes place.

It is therefore expected that these entities would be affected by factors associated with the school environment, home and community conditions, teacher, education administration and the students themselves.

2.3 The Concept of Academic Performance and Achievement

In educational institutions, success is measured by academic performance, or how well a student meets standards set out by local government and the institution itself (Osei-Mensah, 2012). Academic performance according to the Cambridge Dictionary of English (1995) refers to how well a school, college, university, an individual or a group is able to perform when given a learning task, activity or one's achievement in standardized tests in academic pursuit. Thus academic performance refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teacher. Academic performance is related to content and intellect, meaning that academic performance depends on the learner's competence.

Cary, Roseth, David and Roger (2008) define academic achievement as: Performance on task with measures including comprehension, quality and accuracy of answers of tests, quality and accuracy of problem solving, frequency and quantity of desired outcome, time or rate to solution, time on task, level reasoning and critical thinking, creativity, recall and retention, and transfer of tasks.

The researcher believes academic achievement refers to a successful accomplishment or performance in a particular subject area and is indicated by grades, marks and scores of descriptive commentaries. Dimbisso, (2009) argued that academic performance refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers in a fixed time or academic year.

Ferla, Martin and Yonghong (2009) use the notion of academic self-concept referring to individuals' knowledge and perceptions about themselves in academic achievements, and convictions that they can successfully perform a given academic tasks at designated levels. They further stated that academic self-concept represents a more past-oriented, aggregated and relatively stable judgment about one's self-perceived ability in a particular academic domain; while academic self-efficacy represents a context specific and relatively future oriented judgment about one's confidence for successfully performing an upcoming subject-specific academic task.

Dimbisso (2009) stated that achievement encompasses actual accomplishment of the students" of potential ability. Kobaland Musek (2001) stated that: there are two broad groups of definitions of academic achievement. The first one could be considered more objective, because it refers to numerical scores of a pupil's knowledge, which measure the degree of a pupil's adaptation to school work and to the educational system. The second group is a more subjective one, as its determination of academic success is reliant upon the student's attitudes towards his academic achievement and himself, as well as by the attitudes of significant others towards his/her success and him/herself.

The concept of low academic performance varies in its definition. Tapia (2002) considers low academic performance or academic failure as the situation in which the subject does not attain the expected achievement according to his or her abilities, resulting in an altered personality which affects all other aspects of life. Similarly, Tapia (2002) notes that while the current educational system perceives that the student fails if

he or she does not pass, more appropriate for determining academic failure is whether the student performs below his or her potential.

Aremu (2000) defines poor academic performance as performance that is adjudged by the examinee/testee and some other significant as falling below an expected standard. The understanding of this expected or desired standard is better appreciated from the perpetual cognitive ability of the evaluator of the performance. The evaluator can therefore give different interpretations depending on some factors.

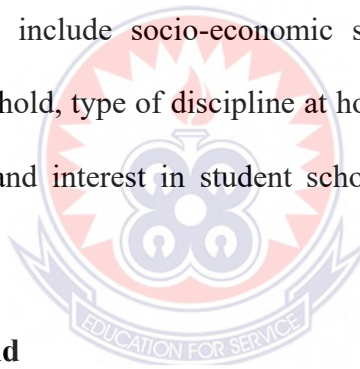
Bakare (1994) described poor academic performance as any performance that falls below a desired standard. The criteria of excellence can be from 40 to 100 depending on the subjective yardstick of the evaluator or assessor. For example, a 70 per cent performance of senior secondary three students in junior secondary English language examination is by all standards a very good performance. However, a cursory look at the performance and the individual examined and the standard of the examination he or she took could reveal that the performance is a very poor one. On the other hand, a junior secondary two student's performance of 37 percent in senior secondary three mathematics can be said to be a poor performance when in actual fact the performance is by all standards a very good one. This shows that the concept of poor academic performance is very relative and this depends on so many intervening variables (Osei-Mensah, 2012).

2.4 Factors influencing Academic Achievement

Various factors have been given for poor performance of students. Rothstein (2000) argues that learning is not only a product of formal schooling but also of communities, families and peers. Socio-economic and socio-cultural forces can affect learning and thus school achievement. The next part focuses on the relative effects of home-related, school-related, student characteristics, and teacher-side factors that affect students' academic performance.

2.4.1 Home-Related Factors

Whether a student performs well in school can be influenced by a range of household factors. These include socio-economic status (education, occupation and income), size of the household, type of discipline at home, family structure, and the level of parental involvement and interest in student schooling are all factors which affect performance in school.



2.4.1.1 Family Background

Majoribanks (1996) holds the view that family is the key to a student's life outside of school; it is the most important influence on students' learning and includes factors such as socioeconomic status and family structure. The environment at home is a primary socialization agent and influences a child's interest in school and aspirations for the future. Osuafor (2013) noted that family background including family structure, parental occupation and parental education level had a significant influence on students' achievement in biology. Further McIntosh (2008) in his study concluded that in Canada, children who came from low income households, having divorced or separated parents,

would actually perform better than average scores if they came from homes that had positive attitudes and that strongly supported their children. This was supported by another study on Children and Youth in Canada that was carried out by Rothstein (2000) who reported that there was a significant effect of family background variables, parental support, and teacher support on a child's educational achievement. The relationship between parental resources on the academic performance of children has received a great deal of attention in the economic literature in African Countries. For instance, Guo and Harris (2000) observed that in Ghana and South Africa states, students' performance in school was strongly associated with their parents' educational attainments.

The Socialization Theory

Socialization is the process by which human infants begin to acquire the skills necessary to perform as a functioning member of their society, and is the most influential learning process one can experience. Although cultural variability manifests in the actions, customs, and behaviors of whole social groups the most fundamental expression of culture is found at the individual level. This expression can only occur after an individual has been socialized by his or her parents, family, extended family, and extended social networks. This reflexive process of both learning and teaching is how cultural and social characteristics attain continuity.

Socialization theory was developed by Charles Cooley in 1929 and it refers to the parenting practices that influence children's development. Socialization is a lifelong process that involves inheriting and disseminating norms, customs and ideologies hence providing an individual with the skills and habits that are necessary for participating

within one's own society. Socialization therefore is the means through which individuals acquire skills that are necessary to perform as functional members of their societies and is the most influential learning process. Although cultural variability manifests in the actions, customs and behaviors of the whole social groups, the most fundamental expression of culture is usually found at the individual levels, and this expression is usually socialized by one's parents, extended family and extended social networks. Chao (2000) highlighted that usually it is assumed that cultural models define desirable endpoints for development that inform socialization goals which define the ideas about parenting in terms of parenting ethno theories. He however added that the cultural model is represented mainly by familism which encompasses loyalty, reciprocity and solidarity with the members of the family and therefore the family is an extension of self. Therefore this study added to the knowledge of socialization theory by relating the influence that family background has on only one aspect of a child's life, which is academic achievement.

2.4.1.2 Socio-economic Status (SES)

Majoribanks (1996) defines Socio-economic Status (SES) as a person's overall social position to which attainments in both the social and economic domain contribute. When used in studies of students' school achievement, it refers to the Socio-economic status of the parents' or family educational level, occupational level and income level of the parents or family. Several comprehensive reviews of the relationship between Socio-economic status and educational outcomes exist. These studies make it clear that those children from low socio-economic families are more likely to exhibit the following patterns in terms of educational outcomes as compared to children from high SES

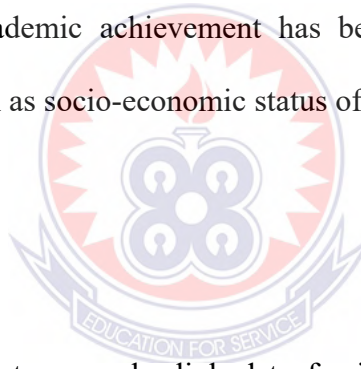
families: have lower levels of literacy, numeracy, comprehension and lower retention rates, earn lower test scores and are likely to drop out of school • exhibit higher levels of problematic school behaviour, for instance; truancy and are more likely to have difficulties with their studies and display negative attitudes towards school.

Similarly, studies of students' educational achievements over time have also demonstrated that social background remains one of the major sources of educational inequality. In other words, educational success depends very strongly on the socio-economic status of one's parents. The effect of parental Socio-economic status on students' educational outcomes according to Barry (2005), may be neutralised, strengthened or mediated by a range of other contextual, family and individual characteristics. Parents may have a low income and a low-status occupation, for example, but nevertheless transmit high educational aspirations to their children (Osei-Mensah, 2012). What family members have (material resources, for instance) can often be mediated by what family members do (for example parental support, family cohesion). The social and the economic components of socio-economic status, in other words, may have distinct and separate influences on educational outcomes. While both components are important, social factors (for instance, parents' educational attainments) have been found to be more significant than economic factors, such as a family's capacity to purchase goods and services, in explaining different educational outcomes (Osei-Mensah, 2012).

It is argued that families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically, foster a higher level of achievement in their children. They also may

provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school (Barry, 2005).

Acheampong (1992) for instance, found that the educational status of parents was a major factor determining a student's academic achievements. This finding corroborates that of Johnson and Kyle's (2001) study that parental education, particularly the mother's education has a big influence on student's school achievement. Fertig and Schmidt (2002) also found that mother's education has a greater effect on student's learning overall, but that father's education becomes more important when they have attained tertiary levels. Engin-Demir (2009) also argued that sizable research has consistently shown that students' academic achievement has been influenced by background of family characteristics such as socio-economic status of parents.



2.4.1.3 Family Structure

Socio-economic status may be linked to family structure. There is evidence to show that children from single-parent household do not perform well in school as students from two-parent households (Majoribanks, 1996). Barry (2005) supports this view by explaining that students from single-parent families are likely to have lower educational performance because sole parent families on average have lower levels of income, are headed by parents with lower educational attainment and are less likely to be in the labour force. According to Barry (2005), other factors that are likely to adversely affect educational outcomes of such students compared to those from two-parent families are said to include:

The custodial parent having less time to spend with students in terms of supervision of school-work and maintaining appropriate levels of discipline, increased responsibilities on students such as childcare roles, domestic duties which impede the time available for school work; and the nature of parent-child relationships in sole parent families may cause emotional and behavioural problems for the child.

Divorce has been found to negatively affect academic performance (Jeynes, 2002) as students whose parents are divorced are among those who scored lowest on a standardized test. A possible explanation for this relationship, according to Majoribanks (1996) is that divorce can cause a family's socio-economic status to decrease and parental connection harmed. This implies that the quality of parents and home background of a student goes a long way to predict the quality and regularity of the satisfaction and provision of a child's functional survival and academic needs. Poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child, usually yield poor academic performance of the child.

On the other hand, where a student suffers parental and material deprivation and care due to divorce or death, or absconding of one of the parents, the student's schooling may be affected as the mother alone may not be financially buoyant to pay school fee, purchase books and uniforms, such a student may play truant, thus his performances in school may be adversely affected.

Similarly, good parenting supported by strong economic home background could enhance strong academic performance of the child. This further predicts academic performance where the student is properly counselled in the choice of his/her courses and vocation that matches his mental ability, interest and capability.

Parental interest in schooling has been found to contribute significantly to the academic achievement of students. For instance, Odinko and Adeyemo (1999) found that parental interest in schooling together with socio-psychological factors were good predictors of students' learning outcomes in English language. Moreover, Schiller, Khmelkov and Wang (2002) argued that parents who have more education appear better able to provide their children with the academic and social support important for educational success when compared to parents with less education.

Schiller, Khmelkov and Wang (2002) indicated that students with parents who are involved in their education tend to have better academic performance than students whose parents are not involved in their school. Butressing this finding, Reynolds and Gill (1994) revealed that a significant relationship existed between parental involvement and academic achievement. Conway and Houtenwille (2008) also found that parental involvement has a strong positive effect on student achievement. Further research shows parental involvement in children's learning not only leads to higher academic achievement, but greater cognitive competence, greater problem solving skills, greater school enjoyment, better school attendance and fewer behavioural problems at school. Additionally, Ross and Berthelot (2001) found a significant association between students with parents involved at school and their academic performance.

Ghanney (2007) also examined the effects home environment has on the student's achievement in primary schools in Winneba Township. He found that positive parental attitude towards education; great parental support and interest combine to enhance student's progress in education rather than the level of parent's educational attainment.

It must however be said that the number of siblings that a pupil has is assumed to have an influence on his/her academic achievement. The larger the family size the less the attention and devotion from parent child parents and the more the difficulties encountered by the parents in meeting the needs of the children both physically and emotionally particularly in this austerity period when the prices of food and commodities are skyrocketed (Asikhia, 2010). An increase in the number of children in the family lead to less favourable child performance outcome. Children from larger families have been found to have less favourable home environments and lower levels of verbal facility as well as highest rates of behavioral problems and lower levels of education achievement.

2.4.2 School-Related Factors

Several school environmental factors have generally been identified as influencing academic performance. These include availability of instructional materials, school location and quality of the physical facilities, class size and pupil-teacher ratios, teacher qualification and experience, and supervision.

2.4.2.1 Learning Environment

Barry (2005) holds the view that, a student's educational outcome and academic success is greatly influenced by the type of school they attend. In his view, 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.

A learning environment that is free of barriers, or obstacles or distractions such as noise, gas/smoke pollutions and so on can constitute health hazards, which in turn affect

or reduce the student's concentration or conceptual focus to learning. According to Barry (2005), markets and garages located near schools have always posed a threat to students. Noise and pollution from these sources have always endangered students' life and concentration. Therefore for an effective learning and high academic performance, schools in both rural and sub-urban and urban areas should be located off zones characterized with smoke/gas pollutions, market centres or garages, as conducive learning environments stimulate learning, understanding and high perception (Osei-Mensah, 2012).

Crosnoe, Johnson, and Elder (2004) have suggested that school sector (public or private) and class size are two important structural components of schools. Private schools tend to have better funding and smaller class size than Public schools especially in Ghana. The additional funding of Private schools leads to better academic performance and more access to resources such as computers, which have been shown to enhance academic achievement (Eamon, 2005). Smaller class size creates more intimate setting and therefore can increase teacher-students bonding which has also been shown to have a positive effect on students' success.

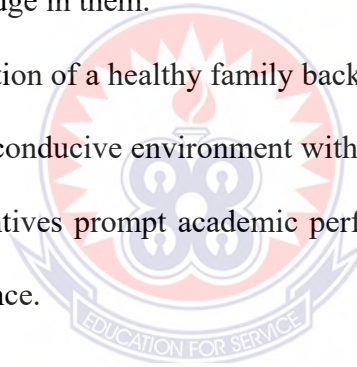
The researcher in her observation found out in her observation that the student to teacher ratio at Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) stood at 35:1 with class sizes of 42 students on the average.

According to Danesy (2004), other factors that compliment environmental and socio-economic factors to produce high academic achievements and performance include good teaching, counselling, good administration, good seating arrangement and good building. Dilapidated buildings, lacking mentally stimulating facilities that are

characterized with low or no seating arrangements are also destructive to students' academic achievement.

Danesy (2004) indicated that innovative environment do stimulate head start learning and mental perception. It has also been proved that students who come from simulative environments with laboratory equipment or those that are taught with rich instructional aids and pictures perform better than those trained without them (Osei-Mensah, 2012). This implies that teaching and learning should be done under organized, planned, and fortified environment with learning instructional aids to stimulate students' sense of conception, perception and concentration to facilitate systematic understanding and acquisition of knowledge in them.

In sum, a combination of a healthy family background, good environment plus the child being educated in a conducive environment with a fortified learning or instructional aids or motivational incentives prompt academic performance while a lack of this will retard academic performance.



2.4.2.2 Instructional Materials

Instructional materials provide information, organise the scope and sequence of the information presented, and provide opportunities for students to use what they have. Students usually perform better when they have books or study aids to foster their learning. These study aids or material resources could be textbooks, teachers' guides, wall pictures, maps, atlases and other learning aids. The availability and use of teaching and learning materials affect the effectiveness of a teacher's lessons during instructional delivery.

Moreover, the school location and quality of the physical building influence the performance and achievement levels of students. Harbison and Hanushek (1992) stated that the quality of the physical facilities is positively related to student performance. This assertion buttresses that of Danesy (2004) who stressed that good sitting arrangement and good buildings produce high academic achievements and performance, while dilapidated buildings that lack mental stimulating facilities coupled with low or no sitting arrangements is destructive.

According to Asikhia (2010) where the school is located determines to a very large extent the patronage such a school will enjoy. Equally, the entire unattractive physical structure of the school building could de-motivate learners to achieve academically. This is what Isangedighi (1998) refers to as learner's environment mismatch.

According to him, this promotes poor academic performance. Engin-Demir (2009) argue that attending a school with a better physical environment is associated with increased maths scores. Adepoju (2001) found that students in urban schools manifest more brilliant performance than their rural counterparts. Also, Ogunleye (2002) revealed a significant difference in the achievement of students in urban peri-urban areas.

Class sizes have also been identified as determinants of academic performance. Studies have indicated that schools with smaller class sizes perform better academically than schools with larger class sizes. Fabunmi, Brai-Abu and Adeniji (2007), for instance, indicated that three class factors (class size, student classroom space and class utilization rate), when taken together, determined significantly students' academic performance in Oyo state, Nigeria. Similarly, Salfi and Saeed (2007) found a significant correlation

between school size and students' achievement in Pakistan. They revealed that small schools performed better than medium and large schools. In 2001, Tremblay, Ross and Berthelot found class size to be inversely related to achievement, especially for children in early grades. Kraft (1994) in his study of the ideal class size and its effects on teaching and learning in Ghana concluded that class sizes above 40 have negative effects on students' achievement. Adeyela (2000) found that large class size is un conducive for serious academic work.

Furthermore, schools with effective supervision of teaching and learning activities have high performance rates. Etsey, Amedahe and Edjah (2004) in a study of 60 schools from peri-urban (29 schools) and rural (31 schools) areas in Ghana found that academic performance was better in private schools than public schools because of more effective supervision of work. According to Etsey (2005) if circuit supervisors are more regular in schools, this would put the teachers on the alert to be more regular and early in school. This would forestall teacher absenteeism and improve teaching in the schools. If teachers are present always following regular visits of circuit supervisors, students would be challenged to change their attitudes toward school.

2.4.2.3 Learning Facilities and Academic Achievement

School facilities have been observed as a potent factor to quantitative education. The importance to teaching and learning of the provision of adequate instructional facilities for education cannot be over-emphasized. The dictum that "teaching is inseparable from learning but learning is not separable from teaching" is that teachers do the teaching to make the students learn, but students can learn without the teachers.

According to Akande (1985), learning can occur through one's interaction with one's environment. Environment here refers to facilities that are available to facilitate students learning outcome. It includes books, audio-visual, software and hardware of educational technology; so also, size of classroom, sitting position and arrangement, availability of tables, chairs, chalkboards, shelves on which instruments for practical lessons are arranged.

According to Oni (1992), facilities constitute a strategic factor in organizational functioning. This is so because they determine to a very large extent the smooth functioning of any social organization or system including education. He further stated that their availability, adequacy and relevance influence efficiency and high productivity. In their words, Ajayi and Ogunyemi (1990) opined that the wealth of a nation or society could determine the quality of education in that land; emphasizing that a society that is wealthy will establish good schools with quality teachers, learning infrastructures that with such, students may learn with ease thus bringing about good academic achievement. Writing on the role of facilities in teaching, Balogun (1982) submitted that no effective science education programme can exist without equipment for teaching. This is because facilities enable the learner to develop problem-solving skills and scientific attitudes. In their contribution, Ajayi and Ogunyemi(1990) reiterated that when facilities are provided to meet relative needs of a school system, students will not only have access to the reference materials mentioned by the teacher, but individual students will also learn at their own paces. The net effect of this is increased overall academic performance of the entire students. Adesina (1981) identified poor and inadequate physical facilities, obsolete teaching techniques... overcrowded classrooms among others, as factors.

Throwing more light on school facilities and moral guiding provision, Fabunmi (1997) asserted that school facilities when provided will aid teaching learning programme and consequently improve academic achievement of students while the models guiding their provision to schools could take any form as rational bureaucratic and or political model. Whichever model is adopted, according to him, there is always a common feature of differing allocation of facilities to schools. Ojoawo (1990), however, noted that certain schools are favored in the allocation of facilities at the expense of others. Writing on poor performance of students in public examinations, London (1993) stated that in many developing nations including Ghana, certain physical facilities are none existent, and that those instances where amenities are available many are of sub-standard quality. What is even more alarming is the connection, which these observers claim to exist between quality of facilities and academic performance. Lamenting on the glowing inadequacies of school facilities in our educational industry, Akinkugbe (1994) opined that everywhere you look, primary, secondary, special, technical, tertiary, there is abundant evidence of crippling inertia, criminal neglect and a pervasive decay in values and standard.

Other scholars have variously identified the significance of facilities in teaching learning spheres. The researcher can thus say that absence or poor (and or deteriorating) quality of educational facilities can affect academic performance.

2.4.3 Teacher-Side Factors

The researcher believes several teacher factors influence academic performance of students. These include teacher attendance in school, teachers' interest and motivation, teaching effectiveness, methods of teaching, teaching experience etc.

Teacher regularity in school is important in terms of both children's access to education and the nature of that access (Osei-Mensah, 2012). A widespread problem of teacher absenteeism is likely to contribute to poor student performance. The prevailing evidence is that teacher absenteeism in Ghana appears to have worsened in the last fifteen years (World Bank, 2004). The World Bank impact evaluation education in Ghana found that, "in 2003, nearly 13 per cent of teachers had been absent in the past month, compared to just over 4 per cent in 1988" (World Bank, 2004). It also uncovered that "in 1988, 85 per cent of schools did not suffer at all; whereas this figure fell to 61 per cent, with 13 per cent of schools with over one-third of the teachers being absent for reasons other than sickness in the past month" (World Bank, 2004).

The study also found nonattendance to be significantly worse in rural schools than in urban schools, and worse in public schools compared to private schools. Also the CARE International (2003) report which looks at deprived rural areas in northern Ghana talked of "chronic teacher absenteeism" which "adversely affects the learning environment" and Dunne and Leach (2005) talked about the low levels of professionalism in schools (especially low performing ones), with teachers having high rates of lateness, absenteeism and sometimes refusing to teach during classes.

The World Bank (2004) report put forward a number of reasons for the increasing teacher absenteeism in Ghanaian schools. These included teachers living long distances from schools and experiencing transportation difficulties; teachers having to travel to town once a month to collect their pay, which may or may not have arrived; and, rural teachers engaging in farming activities.

Although factors were context-specific, multivariate analysis on teacher survey data in Ghana also indicated that teacher absenteeism was more likely to occur if the following factors were prevalent: poor working conditions, low morale, and high pupil-teacher ratio, living with spouse, being in their home district, and having good social relations (World Bank, 2004). These last three factors were explained as possible causes of distraction from work.

Barnes (2003) indicated how teachers are being encouraged in Ghana to facilitate local level development, which although could have positive impact on schooling, can also lead to teacher absenteeism and lateness.

In another study, Fobih, Akyeampong and Koomson (1999) arrived unannounced in some 60 Ghanaian schools and found that about 85 per cent of teachers go to school late. Lateness ranged from five minutes up to one and a half hours. This meant teaching time was lost, teachers taught fewer school subjects (i.e. taught mainly English and Mathematics out of 8 subjects), and the shortening of the school day for students. Lateness and absenteeism affect completion of syllabi. When the syllabus is not completed, students find it difficult to understand content that is to be taught in the next class which foundation in most cases is based on the previous class. This assertion buttresses Pryor and Ampiah's (2003) view that most students do not follow school work because they do not possess the understanding from previous work that is prerequisite for the syllabus of the Senior High Schools. Both absenteeism and lateness according to Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) pointed out are symptomatic of education systems that are unable to manage teachers effectively, have weak teacher management structures, and

are unable to provide incentives to motivate teachers to improve their attitudes to work in schools.

Teacher Quality

Quality of teachers and commitment are key inputs in educational production to perform better achievement (Osei-Mensah, 2012). A teacher's knowledge of the subject matter coupled with textbooks, instructional time and other learning materials have great influence on learning at the basic school level. Agyemang (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".

According to Hedges (2002) many trained teachers are unwilling to accept postings to deprived communities in Ghana. As a result there is a tendency for less qualified teachers to be employed in these communities, which affects their academic performances negatively.

Darling-Hammond (2000) found that teacher quality characteristics such as certification status and degrees in subject to be taught are very significant and positively correlated with subject outcomes in science and mathematics. Ingersoll (1999) found out that 63 per cent of chemistry, physics, and earth and space science instructors do not have certification in the subjects and this result in the poor performance of students in American Secondary schools. Also, Greenwald, Hedges (2002) found academic achievement to be positively correlated with teacher qualification. Additionally, Abuseji (2007) found teachers' qualification to be the second most potent causal effect on

student's achievement in chemistry. Its direct and indirect effect accounted for 4.37 per cent, and 5.00 per cent of the total effect on students' achievement in chemistry in Lagos state, Nigeria.

Okoruwa (1999) found that teachers' teaching experience had significant effect on students' achievement in science. Also, Fetter (1999) investigated the relationship between measures of teachers' experience and student achievement in science and mathematics. He found that teaching experience as measured by years of service correlated positively with student test results.

Effective teaching embraces a variety of different aspects of teaching such as subject mastery, effective communication, lesson preparation and presentation, pacing the class to the students' level and taking into account individual differences, allowing students to practise and applying what they have learned, letting students know what is expected of them, and monitoring and evaluating performance so that students learn from their mistakes. Jacob and Lefgren (2006) found a positive correlation between effective teaching and academic achievement. Similarly, Adediwura and Tayo (2007) suggest that effective teaching is a significant predictor of students' academic achievement and concludes that effective teaching produce students of higher academic quality.

2.4.4 Student Characteristics

Several students' characteristics have generally been identified as influences to their academic performance. These include time with books and homework, attendance in school, students' attitude towards schooling, students' self-concept and motivation, health and nutritional status of students.

According to Engin-Demir (2009) regardless of intelligence, students who spend more time on assignments and homework are very important activities to improve their grades. The amount of time students invests in homework and other related activities have also been found to be strongly related to motivation. Butler (1987) found homework to be a correlate of academic performance. He stated that “homework bore a positive relationship with learning outcomes when it is relevant to learning objectives, assigned regularly in reasonable amounts, well explained, motivational and collected and reviewed during class time and used as an occasion for feedback to students”. Homework and assignments are in reality an interaction between school and the home, and an essential ingredient of the educational process when measuring academic achievement.

Moreover, Stricker and Rock (1995) conducted an analysis by assessing the impact of the students’ initial characteristics (gender, ethnicity, parental education, geographic region and age) and the academic performance. They established that the students’ initial characteristics have a modest impact on their academic performance with parental education being the most significant. In addition, school attendance has a high correlation with individual academic achievement (Osei-Mensah, 2012).

The success of a student in school is predicated on regular school attendance. According to Welsh et al. (2000) poor attendance such as truancy or unexcused absence from school, cutting classes, tardiness, and leaving school without permission is seen as important in determining students’ academic performance. Heady (2003) argued that there is a negative relationship between student academic achievement and work during school hours. As Akabayashi and Psacharopoulos (1999) found that additional working hours decrease a child’s reading and computational ability, whereas with additional hours

of school attendance and study the reading and computational ability increased. This implies that much as students require maximum time to study in the classroom, the issue of extra classes should be looked at to ensure quality and not quantity of academic exercise.

From their findings, Ray and Lancaster (2003) concluded that time spent at work had negative impact on education variables with marginal impact weakening at higher levels of study hours. The researcher of this study believes unbalanced demand of work and education places a physical and mental strain on students and often leads to poor academic performance.

Several researchers have investigated the significant role of student attitudes toward learning with regard to their academic achievement. Students' attitudes such as absenteeism, truancy, indiscipline, etc. can affect their performance. For instance, McLean (1997) found, by distinguishing between the attitudes of high and low achievers, that five attitudinal factors were significantly related to academic performance. Students' attitudes may not only directly affect academic achievement, but also may indirectly influence the effect of other factors as well.

In another study, Abu-Hilal (2000) found the effect of attitudes on student level of aspiration. Despite the difference between the findings of these two studies, the authors achieved consensus as regards to the significance of attitudes in predicting achievement. Hassan (2002) further complemented the results of earlier studies, with the former proving that the students' initial attitude towards school was significantly related to academic performance, while the latter found that attitudes predicted the students' basic approach to learning.

Self-Concept

Self-concept “is the set of perceptions or reference points that a person has about himself, the set of characteristics, attributes, qualities and deficiencies, capacities and limits, values and relationships that he knows to be descriptive of himself and which he perceives as data concerning his identity” (Hamachek, 1981). It is the set of knowledge and attitudes that we have about ourselves; the perceptions that the individual assigns to himself and characteristics or attributes that we use to describe ourselves.

Self-concept however, concerns the group of thoughts and beliefs that a student has about his/her academic ability. Self-concept results from the student’s internalization of his social image (Osei-Mensah, 2012).

It is developed from different interactions with the social environments and agents. Great importance is assigned to the students’ self-image and the acceptance or rejection by others. This factor has also been investigated by several authors, as regards the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement. Marsh (1990) investigated the reciprocal relationship between self-concept and academic achievement and found that an individual’s present achievement is affected by prior academic self-concept, and that grades had no effect on subsequent academic self-concept. Similarly, Marsh and Yeung’s (1997) revealed that prior academic achievement did affect subsequent academic self-concept, and likewise, prior academic self-concept also affected subsequent achievement, with prior achievement being the control. Contrary to these results, Helmke and Van Aken (1995) found that elementary school achievement did not affect prior self-concept. Edwards (2002) found that self-concept better predict performance than variables such as age or student gender.

Another variable most studied in relation to self-concept is motivation. Motivation is considered to be the element that initiates the student's own involvement in learning. When a student is strongly motivated, all his effort and attention are directed toward the achievement of a specific goal, thus bringing to bear all his or her resources. In relation, students' academic achievement motivation is influenced by the students' perception of parental support and involvement. If students' perception is positive on their parents support and involvement, they will achieve well. Gottfried (1994) revealed that parental motivational practices have significant direct effects on academic intrinsic motivation, and indirect effects on subsequent motivation and achievement. According to Engin-Demir (2009): students perception that their parents are involved and interested in their schooling and encourage them to do well are positively related to academic achievement. Through their involvement, parents convey the message that school is important and provide their children with positive emotional experiences in relation to school. Fuchs and Woessmann (2004) observed that students performed significantly worse in reading, maths and science in schools whose principals reported that learning was strongly hindered by the lack of parental support. However, some researchers have shown most aspects of the relationship between educational support of parents and scholastic achievement of children to be negative.

Studies have also looked at students' nutritional and health status on school indicators such as classroom concentration, general intelligence and performance on selected cognitive tasks including achievement test scores. Research by the Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC, 2000) found that in total, a little over 16 per cent of school-aged children surveyed, suffered from recurring health problems such as

headache, malaria/fever, stomach disorder and other ailments. Research by Fentiman, Hall and Bundy (2001) in the Eastern Region, revealed that 70 per cent of all primary school-age children were anemic. Sarris and Shams (1991) studied malnutrition among school age children in Ghana and found that about 36 per cent of children surveyed were malnourished. Most weighed below the 80 percent Harvard weight-for-age standard. This means, much as teachers may try as much as they can to deliver lessons appropriately, several aspects of the student's well-being should be taken care of by parents to ensure a sound mind for students to learn or study.

The GNCC survey (2000) also reported that only about a third (29%) of children ate meals with protein. The research indicates that in general malnutrition is higher in northern Ghana (Sarris & Shams, 1991) where socio-economic indicators are low. In these regions enrolment, attendance, completion rates and achievement tend to be lower too.

Health has the potential to affect access to schooling. Research indicates a student's health can influence when and whether they go to school, their functioning in school and how long they are expected to stay in school. Research in Ghana indicates a correlation between malnutrition, stunted growth and delayed enrolment in school (Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy, 1999).

The researcher believes a student's health status affects how they function at school. Children who suffer from malnutrition, hunger, or who lack certain micronutrients do not have the same potential for learning as healthy and well-nourished children.

Harbison and Hanushek (1992) found a statistically significant relationship between health and nutritional indicators and academic achievement. They concluded that the influence of poor health and nutritional status on achievement begins early in a student's life and have cumulative impact on students' achievement.

Vegas and Petrow (2008) assert that although the mechanisms by which malnutrition affects academic performance are not known, deficiencies in proteins, calories and micronutrients are believed to impair cognitive development. Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) indicate three aspects of nutritional status that affect academic achievement adversely: temporary hunger, micronutrient deprivation and protein-energy malnutrition. A local study on early primary school children in Malaysia showed a weak but significant association between poor nutritional intake and academic achievement (Ong, Chandran, Chen & Poh, 2010).

Pollitt (1990) reported a significant relationship between protein-energy nutritional status and school performance in Kenya. He further indicated that children who are temporary hungry as a result of not eating breakfast are more easily distracted from their school work than those who have eaten. The researcher is therefore of the view that schools, most particularly second cycle institutions should concentrate on providing balanced diet to their students.

2.5 Improving Students Performance

2.5.1 Guidance and Counselling

Sink (2003) recommends for the introduction of intensive guidance and counseling techniques for students, teachers, the community and parents as a whole. In

keeping with such view, Lapan's (2001), Green and Keys (2001) and others (e.g., Adelman & Taylor, 2002; Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Johnson & Whitfield, 1991; Myrick, 2003a;

Schmidt, 2000) emphasized that school counseling programs (a) align their student targets with the goals of school reform, (b) use evidence-based best practices, and (c) report outcome-based data as way of ensuring accountability of their work with students and their caregivers. In particular, several prominent scholars in the school counseling field have recommended that school guidance and counseling programs should include results-based assessments, where school counseling program outcome data ought to be directly aimed at improving student learning (e.g., Gysbers, 2001; Lapan, 2001; Lapan, Kardash, & Turner, 2002; Paisley & Hayes, 2003).

For instance, House and Martin (1998) and House and Hayes (2002), resonating with the positions of Green and Keys (2001) and Gysbers, called for school counselors to provide evidence that they positively **impact** student achievement and other relevant outcomes (see also Paisley & Hayes, 2003). Bemak (2000) pressed the issue a bit farther. He suggested that by revising school counselors' position descriptions to include the advancement of student academic achievement, the highly publicized performance gap among low income, disadvantaged pupils and other student groups would diminish. Lapan et al., (2002). Believes "By performing a more proactive leadership role in empowering students to become self-regulated learners, professional school counselors will both motivate young people to more fully realize their academic potential'

Although Glossoff and Koprowicz (1990) offered preliminary research findings in the area of elementary school counseling and its relationship to enhancing academic

achievement, student retention rates, and children's socio-emotional behaviors, attitudes, and skills, studies attesting to the potential efficacy of counseling programs for improving, in particular, academic achievement, are scarce (House & Hayes, 2002).

Program evaluation research conducted by Gysbers, 2001; House & Hayes, 2002; Lapan, 2001 and to a lesser extent in Utah (Nelson & Gardner, 1998) indicates that school counseling programs can have a positive influence on various noncognitive and cognitive student outcomes, including achievement or performance.

2.5.2 Teacher Motivation

Teacher motivation naturally has to do with teachers' attitude to work. It has to do with teachers' desire to participate in the pedagogical processes within the school environment. It has to do with teachers' interest in student discipline and control particularly in the classroom. Therefore it could underlie their involvement or non-involvement in academic and non-academic activities, which operate in schools. Teacher motivation could therefore be referred to as those factors that operate within the school system which if not made available to the teacher could hamper performance, cause stress, discontentment and frustration all of which would subsequently reduce classroom effectiveness and student quality output. This implies that teacher motivation includes factors that cause, channel, sustain and influence teachers' behaviour towards high management and academic achievement standards in schools (Ofoegbu, 2004).

According to Dörnyei, the following factors among others affect teacher motivation: the school's general climate and the existing school norms; the class sizes, the school resources and facilities; general expectations regarding student potential; the

school's leadership and decision-making structure. Also, without discovering and acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities, many teachers teach the same subject so they can "lose spark". The prescribed requirements and fixed, imposed course content do not let teachers have leeway to create "variations" and "intellectual detours". Restricted autonomy is believed to be one of the negative influences on teacher motivation (Dörnyei, 2001).

Pelletier et al, (2002:193), also maintained that there are three types of pressure that affect teachers' self-determined motivation and these include the following:

- a) Being responsible for students' behavior and students performing up to standards.
- b) Being forced to follow colleagues' teaching methods or involvement in school activities.
- c) Having limited freedom in determining the course's curriculum or following a certain curriculum decided by the school's administration.

The findings of EFA report of 2005 revealed that teachers in developing countries such as Ghana often receive earnings that are insufficient at providing them with a reasonable standard of living. Bennel (2004) also remarked that teachers' pay and other material benefits were too low for individual and household survival needs to be met in developing countries such as Ghana. Indeed, careful analyses of the literature seem to suggest that salary is crucial in teacher satisfaction among the developing countries. This is so because a study conducted by Tansim (2006) also found Bangladeshi teachers to be dissatisfied with their salary levels. Also, Zembylas and Papanastasiou (2004) in their study of Cyprus teachers found that salary was one of the issues which dissatisfied

teachers. These findings point to the fact that the issues of teachers' salary must not be joked with since it is the only source of income to majority of them.

The key finding of a study by Kazeem (1999, cited in Adelabu, 2002) is that teachers and other school workers tend to remain contented and reasonably motivated as long as salaries are paid on time and they are promoted regularly. Earlier, Eton (1984) also identified the payment of salaries, allowances and promotion as the key factors that shape teacher attitudes towards their work. Not surprisingly, Akinwunmi (2000) and Ejiogu (1983) cited in Adelabu, 2005, found that what the typical low-income earning teacher yearns is a sizeable salary increase, and they conclude that the payment of a living wage would significantly enhance their commitment and performance.

Next to pay, the social status of teachers has been identified as an important factor impacting teacher morale and motivation (Baikie 2002, Obanya 1999 and Francis 1998). Where teachers feel society is dismissive of the profession, their commitment is undermined. Promoting teachers 'enmasse', without basing it on an evaluative mechanism linked to job performance, has also been found to de-motivate many teachers in Nigeria (Sanusi 1998, Obilade 1989 and Yisa 1975).

School leadership and management style are also important factors, which can either motivate or lower teacher morale and commitment. Nwankwo (1984, cited in Adelabu, 2005) found that teachers feel highly motivated when they are consulted about decisions regarding their work. Unfortunately, many people in the leadership positions in the education services including some heads of schools at all levels are highhanded and autocratic in their dealings with teachers (Ayeni, 2005). The attitude of inspectors

towards teachers in supervising their work is another important work related motivational factor.

The work environment is also an important determining factor in teacher motivation. The teacher's working environment in Nigeria has been described as the most impoverished of all sectors of the labour force (NPEC, Nigeria 1998) Facilities in most schools are dilapidated and inadequate, (Adelabu 2003, Sanusi 1998). Kazeem (1999) has recommended that greater attention should be given to improving work-related conditions of teachers to improve the quality of education. In particular, there should be improvements in the supply of teaching and learning materials and general classroom environment to improve student learning.

Kazeem (1999) and Akinwumi (2000) found that private school teachers appear more motivated than teachers in public schools. Regular payment of salaries and much lower pupil-teacher ratios are key reasons for this. Muheeb (2004) found that the conditions for teaching are more conducive in private secondary schools because the maximum class size is only 30 in private schools compared to well over 80 public schools.

2.5.3 Educational facilities

A good school facility supports the teaching and learning process of any school. Research has shown that clean air, good light, and a small, quiet, comfortable, and safe learning environment are important for academic achievement (Cash 1993, Earthman and Lemasters 1996, Lemasters 1997, Lackney 1999, Cotton 2001, Schneider 2002). While factors such as student socioeconomic status and parental involvement are among the

most important predictors of student academic performance, the condition, adequacy and management of a school building are directly under the control of the school district and state—hence improving school facilities offers a feasible opportunity for improving academic performance.

Edwards (2006) believes schools who maintain the environment of urban educational facilities have a significant impact upon teaching and learning. Arguably, an essential component of effective schools is that they “are as eager to avoid things that don’t work as they are committed to implementing things that do” (Edmonds, 1979).

In effect, because studies (Earthman, 1996; Edwards, 1991; and Hines, 1996) have shown certain aspects of school climate (for purposes of this study—orderly, safe, and appropriate educational facilities which are conducive to teaching and learning) to be determinant of academic achievement, it is incumbent upon school administrators to make improvements in the physical climate of schools so as to establish gains in academic achievement. Substandard student performance in deteriorating schools is often connected to policies and/or decisions which negatively affect the physical learning environment. Studies (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1988; Edwards, 1991; Poplin and Weeres, 1992) suggests that the depressed physical environment of many urban schools is believed to reflect society’s lack of policy and priority for urban students and their education; deferred maintenance, building age and dramatically reduced operating budgets have each contributed to the substandard physical nature of urban schools. The researcher believes it is expedient on Educational authorities to improve upon the standard of educational facilities to ensure improvement in student

performance. Improvement of facility provision could include the provision of laboratories (science and computer), classroom ventilation etc.

2.5.4 Motivation and student performance

Motivation is important to the development of life-long learners, but is often hard to see in many classrooms. Many teachers, in both general and special education have come to rely on rewards and incentive programs in order to manage behavior and learning (Barnek, 1996). For example, a teacher may give a boy a treat for entering the room quietly with the hope that the reward will increase the chance that the boy will enter the room quietly the next time. The teacher may think that she is promoting a productive classroom environment, but the boy only learns what behaviors earn a treat. He does not learn about the value of a productive classroom environment. The field of behaviorism has contributed to the common use of rewards in the classroom. The field of behaviorism produced a theory in the 1950's that heavily influenced the use of rewards in schools. The theory of operant conditioning, developed by B.F. Skinner, works on the premise that if a reinforcer is delivered after a certain behavior is performed, then the strength of the behavior is increased (Cosgrove, 1982). A reinforcer is any stimulus given after a behavior that increases the chance of the behavior recurring. Past and present teachers are using the principles of operant conditioning when they give out stickers, treats, and praise. The powerful idea of operant conditioning is subject to cautionary statements. MacMillan (1973) states that many reinforcement techniques are targeted for use in populations with mild handicaps, and that care should be used when choosing

reinforcement with a particular group. Even with the cautions, the principles of operant conditioning have seen a widespread implementation in education.

The field of study on motivation was also going through some changes beginning in the 1950's. Motivation researchers and dissonance theorists began to reject Freud's idea that man is motivated only by drives and instincts (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959; White, 1959). White went on to explain that motivation is man's attempt to change his environment, and then feel satisfied when the desired change occurs.

These ideas, along with Deci's identification of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation led to the completion of many research studies on the effects of motivation on behavior.

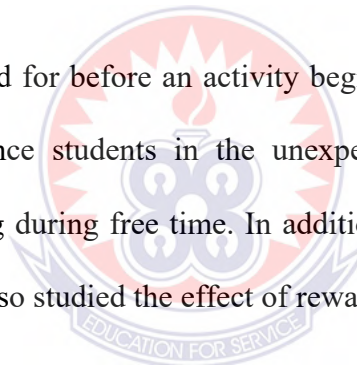
As a result, the idea began to emerge that extrinsic motivators may have a negative effect on a person's internal motivation. Since many of the rewards given in school are extrinsic motivators, school became the setting for a large body of research. During the last 50 years' researchers have thoroughly investigated the effects of rewards on all aspects of school. Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) found that the payment of money to college students to lie about enjoying a dull learning task did little to change the student's opinion of the task. Similarly, Deci (1971; 1972) discovered that money as a reward has detrimental effects on motivation.

Intrinsically motivated college students became less motivated when paid money as a reward. On the other hand, when intrinsically motivated students were given praise as a reward, their motivation was enhanced. In addition, in 1972 Deci found that when a person perceives a reward to be more than what is warranted for a given situation, the person puts forth more effort in an activity. The type and amount of a reward have an effect on motivation and performance.

The timing of a reward also affects motivation. In a study done at a nursery school, Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett (1973) assigned 51 children with a high interest in drawing to one of three experimental conditions. One group of students agreed to complete a drawing activity for a reward of a certificate and star, one group completed the drawing activity and then received a surprise reward, and the third group completed the activity but received no reward. The authors then studied the amount of time subjects spent with the drawing supplies during free choice time.

Lepper et al. (1973) found that the subjects who received no award or an unexpected reward spent significantly more time drawing than subjects in the expected award condition.

Rewards contracted for before an activity begins appear to undermine interest in that activity later on, since students in the unexpected reward condition still spent considerable time drawing during free time. In addition to the type, amount, and timing of a reward, researchers also studied the effect of rewards on the process of learning.



2.6 Conceptual Framework of the Study

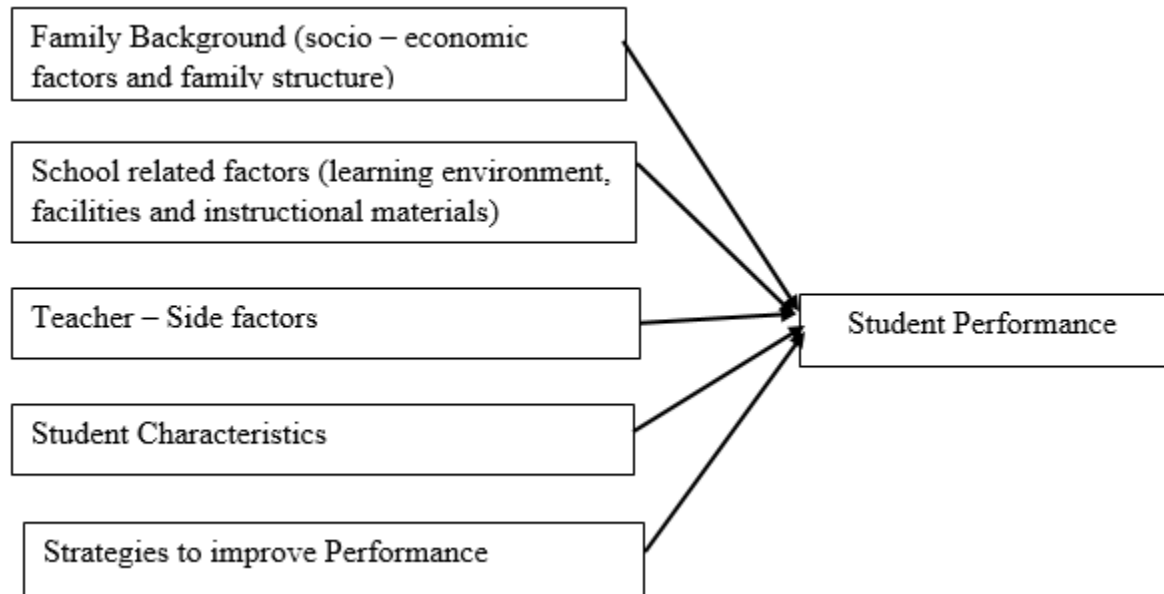


Figure 1 paradigm illustrating the conceptual framework.

The conceptual frame work of the study identifies the variables required in the research investigation. It serve as the research “map” in pursuing the research investigation.

This study claims that family background of the individual student, the learning environment, and teacher side factors as well as students characteristics correlates significantly to improve student academic performance. Figure 2.1 shows the graphical representation of the relationship between perceived causes low academic performance and student performance.

2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, literature has been reviewed on issues related to the study. These included school environment, home related, student characteristics and teacher factors responsible for poor academic performance. However, the literature reviewed does not address the questions raised by this research in the study. Knowledge on factors causing low academic performance in the study is limited. Information on variables causing the low academic performance in the basic level education in Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) is pertinent to help stakeholders to develop strategies for improving academic performance of students.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methods used in the study including the research design, sampling techniques and procedures, population definition, instrumentation. It also describes the data sources including the methods of data collection, ethical concerns and data handling procedures.

3.1 Research Design

The design adopted for this research was a descriptive survey. According to Burns and Grove (2003:201), descriptive research “is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens”. It may be used to justify current practice and make judgment and also to develop theories. The researcher’s choice of the descriptive stems from the fact that he wants to explain and interpret concepts covered in the study. However, the use of the descriptive research design will make the study easy to describe and report and also help the researcher in generalizing qualitative generated from the study. Again, descriptive survey research in education involves collection of information from members of a group of students, teachers and other persons associated with educational issues. Barry (2005) argues that a descriptive survey permits the researcher to gather information from large sample of people relatively quickly and expensively. The researcher thought it appropriate to use descriptive survey because, it was dominant form of collecting data in education and social sciences (Barry 2005). The descriptive survey

was further considered the most appropriate design for conduction this study since it is the one that deals with things as they currently are.

3.2 The Study Area

There have been a nationwide concerns about West Africa Senior Secondary Schools Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in various Senior High Schools. This study however focused on the WASSCE results of Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) for two reasons. Firstly, the gap understudied is a distinctive one, denoting that it could be conducted in any school in the country. I have been a tutor at the school for the Past eight (8) years and therefore familiar with the trend of affairs at the school. Secondly, I hail from the Nkawie community and it was manageable for me in terms of data collection and the conduct of the interview. More so, concerns have been expressed in both electronic and print media about the poor WASSCE results in the Atwima Nwabiagya District of which Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) is situated. A notelet was dispatch to authorities of the District Education Directorate to seek for approval to conduct this study in that setting. Letters were also sent the Headmaster and the teachers to seek their informed consent to participate in the study. The data gathered were kept confidential and obscurity of the participants was shielded.

3.3 Population

Target Population refers to the empirical units such as persons, objects, occurrences, etc used for the study. The target population is the group of interest to the researcher. It is the group from which the researcher would like to generalize the results of the study. The target population consisted of all final year students, teachers and

parents whose wards were in the final year of Nkawie Senior High School. These people were used because they contain the group that took part in the West Africa Senior Secondary Schools Certificate Examination (WASSCE), which was the overall measure of academic performance at the senior high level.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Francis et al, (2010), defines sample as the number of observations that constitute and represents the population entirely. Mostly denoted by the letter ‘n’ the sample size is an important feature of any empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample. In practice, the sample size used in a study is determined based on the expense of data collection, and the need to have sufficient statistical power.

The researcher employed the use of the simple random sampling technique to select the students and the teachers for the study. Purposive sampling technique was then used to select the parents for interview. Simple random sampling technique was adopted because it afforded all members of the sample an equal chance of being selected to avoid the researcher been bias.

The final year students were put together in the school’s assembly hall. A total of five hundred and twenty (520) cards made up of four (4) different colours blue, green, yellow and red were placed in a sack. The students were called one after the other to pick a card from the sack without looking into the sack.

The students were then placed into groups based on the colour picked. The researcher finally picked a card from the sack. The student group who had the same card

to what the researcher had were chosen for the study. The same procedure was used to select the teachers. The students who were chosen for the study were given notice to serve one of their parents for a meeting. Seventy – six (76) parents responded to the notice. However, twenty of them opted to take part in the study. In all one hundred and twenty students (120), forty teachers (40) and twenty (20) parents were selected for the study.

3.5 Validity and reliability

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire and the interview guides, drafted copies were given to three lecturers and two teaching assistants at the Department of Educational Leadership, of College of Technology Education of University of Education, who read through and made the necessary corrections to ensure face validity. The revised questionnaires and interview guide were further review by the researcher's supervisor. For reliability, a pilot testing was conducted in Two Senior High/Technical School in the Atwima Mponua District which is near the context of the study on April 20th 2016. These schools were chosen because they exhibit the same characteristics as the school of interest to the researcher.

The researcher supplied ten teachers and twelve students with the draft copies of the questionnaires. Time was made by the researcher and the respondents to discuss my ambiguity, doubt and incoherencies that the respondents may face with any aspect of the draft. The respondents were given time to complete and return the questionnaire to the researcher.

Again, 3 parents were interviewed as part of the pilot study. Their views were collated and studied closely by the researcher. The pilot study helped to remove ambiguous statements and all necessary corrections made before the data collection.

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

Instrumentation refers to the development of tools or instruments for gathering data from the field. Some of these include questionnaires, interview schedule, etc. Although a number of instruments for data collection could have been used, the researcher employed questionnaire and a structured interview as most appropriate for the study. Questionnaires are easy to administer, friendly to complete and fast to score and therefore take relatively less time from researchers and respondents (Knowles, 1980). Two questionnaires were utilized in this study. The questionnaires were designed respectively for school teachers and students on factors which might be affecting academic performance in the school. The questionnaires, as shown in the Appendices, elicited demographic data, and data on aspects relating to school environment factors, home and community conditions, teacher factors and students' related variables. The items in the questionnaire were structured in such a way that they enabled the respondents to pick alternative answers against their choice of responses. The questionnaires included both close and open ended questions.

However, the researcher resorted to the use of a structured interview to elicit divergent views of parents on the factors that contributed to students' low academic performance at Nkawie Senior High School. This offered the interviewees the opportunity to express their views on issues in detail. It also allowed the researcher to

seek for clarification on issues during the interview process in detail. Thus, semi – structured interview helps to generate a massive amount of relevant data even though it can be time consuming and difficult. The use of multiple data collection instrument ensure validity and reliability of data generated through triangulation.

3.7 Procedures for Data Collection

The study made use of secondary data and primary data. Secondary data were obtained from school class registers, records, number of students, scores, etc. Primary data were obtained through face-to-face interview, and self-administered questionnaire.

Questionnaire

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from teachers. The researcher gave a week advanced notice before the administration of the questionnaire. The researcher sought permission from the Headmaster and the teaching staff on benefits of this study to the school. After a lengthen discussion, the questionnaires were distributed and explanation was given to respondent as to how to complete the questionnaire themselves. This method was used because it would allow the teachers to complete the questionnaires at their convenience and to check records if necessary, in relation to the students' performance. Questionnaire items were developed for students and teachers. The questionnaire was in a form of likert scale to collect data based on the research questions proposed. It was made up of 15 closed – ended items for the teachers and students. However the most concerned issues were what was discussed in the analysis. The likert scale form was adopted because it was quick to compile and straight

forward to code and do not discriminate unduly on the basis of how articulate the respondents are. The five likert – type scale ranged from “Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) to Strongly Disagree (SD). All the items on the questionnaire were based on the research questions formulated. After the stipulated time has elapsed, the researcher personally visited the respondents for the data. On the part of the students all the one hundred (100) final year students were gathered at form 3A classroom. The researcher explained the questionnaire items to them as to how to answer them themselves. The researcher made time for any ambiguity that the students did not understand. After all was set the researcher distributed the questionnaires to the students with the help of a research assistant. The students consciously returned the completed questionnaire to the researcher.

Interview

Face-to-face interviews were used to collect data from the parents. In this method, the researcher acted as the interviewer reads the questions to the respondent and records the responses. This method enabled the researcher to translate questions into the local language for some parents and also provided clarification on some questionnaire items to the parents. The parents who opted to take part in the study were gathered in the school library on an agreed date for the interview. The researcher himself administered the interview. All parents took part in the discussion which provided diversity in perspective. The interview lasted for 45 minutes. Noting the fact that questionnaires do not provide in – depth investigation of a specific trend, the responses were hand written alongside audio recordings for easy analysis.

3.8 Data Analysis procedures

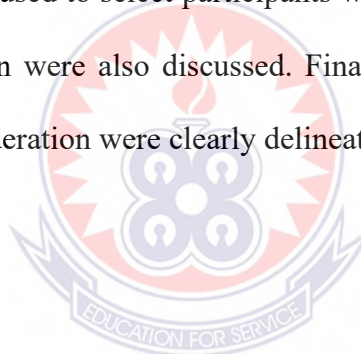
The field data were collated, sifted through and edited in order to address questions that have been answered partially or not answered. After editing, the open-ended questions were coded (i.e., the assignment of numbers or codes to responses to make them computer readable). After editing and coding, the data were entered into the computer using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Before performing the desired data transformation, the data were cleaned by running consistency checks on every variable. Corrections were made after verification from the questionnaires and the database was generated. The data were analyzed using basically descriptive statistics involving mainly frequency distributions. The descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to use numerical values to represent scores in the sample. It also provides the researcher with data that allow for inferences on the population and direction for answering the research the questions. The returned answered questionnaires were scored and coded for analysis of the analysis and answering of the research questions. The percentage, mean and the standard deviation of the responses for each research question was given. Tables and charts were used for the presentation. The two outside categories were combined in the analysis. For instance, the researcher combined “strongly disagree” and “disagree” and also “agree” and strongly “agree”, to project a unique response. A summary of the conclusion and findings were presented, based on the findings and supported literature.

The interview data was analyzed using content analysis which compares the words used in the responses of the respondents. The researcher studied the field notes, reduced the tapes into texts and judiciously read through them. Similar themes identified

were coded which enabled the researcher to organize large amount of text and to discover patterns that would be difficult to detect by just listening to the tape or reading a transcript. In all conclusion, a qualitative approach was used in the analysis and interpretation of interview data.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter described the research methodology that the researcher used to generate data for this study. The chapter started with a detailed description of the study design. The target population and the study population were identified, sampling technique and procedures used to select participants were explained. Instrumentation and methods of data collection were also discussed. Finally, data handling and methods of analysis and ethical consideration were clearly delineated.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study.

4.2 Demographic Features of Respondents

In assessing the perceived cause of low academic performance among senior high school students, the demographic characteristics of the respondents were assessed (Table 4.1)

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency scoring of respondents			
	Teachers		Students	
	n	%	n	%
Gender				
Male	23	57.5	54	54.0
Female	17	42.5	46	46.0
Class				
SHS3	-	-	100	100
Age group				
14-16 years	-	-	67	67.0
17 -20 years	-	-	33	33.0
21 – 30 years	4	10.0	-	-
31 – 40 years	21	52.5	-	-
41 and above years	15	37.5		
Years taught				
2 – 5 years	4	10.3	-	-
6 – 10 years	8	20.5	-	-
11 years and above	27	69.2	-	-
Educational background				
Graduate	34	87.2	-	-
Post graduate	5	12.8	-	-

Presented in Table 4.1 is the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The results in Table 4.1 shows that there were two category of respondents. For the gender distribution about 57.5% were male teacher respondents whiles 54% were male students. The female teacher participants amounted to 42.5% where as their student counterpart constituted 46%. This can be deduced that respondents as far as gender was concerned were evenly distributed, even though the males were bit higher represented than females. Furthermore, all (100%) of the students sampled were final year students. These were sampled for the fact that they were about to write their final external exams which was used to accessed their performance and for that matter they could provide the rightful information as far as this study was concerned. Again, Table 4.1 revealed that, majority of students (67%) were aged between 14 and 16 years whereas 33% were aged between 17 and 20 years. However, more than half (52.5%) of the teachers reported to be 40 years or younger whiles 37% were teachers who were 41 years or older. This aged group suggests the real aged of students in the final year and therefore represents a true reflection of the participants selected for the students. Moreover, about one-third (30%) of teachers reported to have work as a teacher for 10 years or less. However, 70% were teachers with 11 years or more working experience in services. On issues about higher educational background of teachers Table 4.1 shown that, majority (80%) of the Senior High School Teacher were graduates whereas 13% holds post graduate qualifications. This shows that the sample is a true reflection of the population. Again the long service would help them provide the necessary information for the study since they have encounter a lot of issues of low academic performance of student and the way forward.

4.3 Teacher Related Causes of Student's Poor Academic Performance

The aim of the study among others was to find out teacher related factors that contribute to Senior High School student's poor academic performance. This is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Teacher Related Causes of Student's Poor Academic Performance.

Teacher related causes of students' low academic performance.	Percentage scoring of respondents			Mean	SD
	Strongly agree or agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree or disagree		
Inadequate provision of learning materials for students	90.7	1.4	7.9	1.64	.954
Teacher absenteeism	88.6	3.6	7.8	1.66	.950
Inadequate assessment of students	88.5	7.1	4.2	1.81	.827
Teachers over dependence on text books	82.0	3.0	15.0	1.89	.788
Failure to use motivational techniques during less delivery	45.8	10.2	44.0	2.04	1.052
Less qualified teachers in various schools	71.4	2.9	25.7	2.28	1.363

1=strongly agree, 2 agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree. Source (Researcher's field data, 2016)

Illustrated in table 4.2 is teacher related factors that contribute to SHS students poor academic performance. The results revealed that majority of the respondents (90%) either strongly agree or agree that inadequate provision of learning materials for students (M=1.64, SD=.954) was the top most factor which contributes to SHS students low academic performance. However about 8% disagree to their notion. This was an indication that, inadequate provision of learning materials has influence on the students' academic performance. Teachers sometimes teach raw facts without giving any concrete

source for further reading. They only give out notes of which some students were not able to catch up due to the dictating nature of the notes. The teachers rely on their prepare study notes without researching to add up. Students were therefore left to the limited learning material given by their prospective teachers. This was in line with Agyemang (1993) who posits that, students low academic performance could be attributed to insufficient learning material to students. Osei Mensah (2012) also in his research also found among his major causes of Senior High School low academic performance that lack of adequate learning materials, absenteeism among others were causes of low academic performance. Furthermore, there was a high level of agreement from the parents interviewed who claimed that the recent low level of their children's performance could be attributed to inadequate learning materials. They went ahead to testify that most at times their wards come home with one or no homework. Again the only learning materials they saw with their wards were the text books, students were not given any other learning material to support their learning. Therefore their academic performance was most likely to come down due to the fact that some students may even not have the text book or might have misplaced them. Teacher absenteeism was considered as a major teacher related causes of student poor academic performance. In real situation teachers were not able to complete the teaching syllabus. Preponderance (88.6%) strongly agree that teacher absenteeism ($M = 1.66$, $SD = .950$) whereas about 7% of the respondents disagree that teacher absenteeism was a cause of students poor academic performance. Most a time's teachers hardly attend classes' especially part-time teachers. They only instruct class secretaries to either write notes or do some assignments. This is a major contributor of student's poor performance because in the absence of the teacher, students

tend to misbehave without any serious learning. Again the teacher would have explained to the understanding of students the concepts which they might find imperfect. Again learning takes place from known to unknown (Paaku, 2008), teacher absenteeism would have negative effect because students lose valuable school contact hours and the outcome would be failure or loss of competence for success in school. This confirms World Bank report (2004) which hypothesizes that teacher absenteeism causes low students' academic performance. The report however, raised teachers' long distance from their school, teacher transportation difficulties and rural teachers engaging in farming activities as reasons for their absenteeism in school.

Osei Mensah (2012) however, argues that teacher absenteeism could not be a major cause of students' poor performance rather student's absenteeism. He argues that, the teacher could always make up time to give out what he couldn't do during his absence, however, the student could hardly make up what was lost during his/her absence. According to Dunne and Leach (2005) teacher absenteeism reduced the amount of instructional time and this eventually results to the syllabi not being completed. Students therefore lose a lot of contact hours which affect their performance in the final examination which was the benchmark for their academic performance. This therefore supports the finding that teacher absenteeism was a major cause of student's low academic performance. The parent respondents also attested that one major contributing factor of students' low level of academic performance on the part of their teacher was teacher's regular absenteeism. They reported that sometimes teachers who travel to the cities do not report to school on Monday and the few ones who could report, come late to

school. They gave poor supervision and monitoring and lack of commitment as the reasons for teacher absenteeism.

According to Osei Mensah (2012), students' low academic performance was due to teachers over dependence on text book. This confirms the majority of the respondents (82%) who attested that teachers over dependence on textbook ($M=1.89$, $SD=.788$) was a teacher related cause of students low academic performance. Senior high school teachers due to laziness and lack of adequate knowledge on research and fear of technology tend to rely solely on the text books written on their respective subjects. They read verbatim what is written in the textbook to their students without making any impact. Mistakes if any in the text books were transfer from teacher to students. Students reproduce whatever has seen transfer to them in their final exams resulting to their poor academic performance. Moreover, once their teachers read from the textbook, learning becomes in competitive to them because they would also read at their leisure time. They therefore tend to perform poorly when procrastination sets in. This conclusion is in line with Fetther (1999) which indicated that it was students responsibility to make up missed contacts hours even as a result of a teacher being absent. This confirms the importance of teachers' regularity in school. The evidence of teachers' absenteeism a contributing factor to students' poor academic performance.

Teachers failure to use motivational techniques ($M=2.04$) and less qualified teachers in various schools ($M=2.28$) were also reported among the major contributing factors of students low academic performance. A little more than 2 out of 5 (45%) strongly agree, where as 44% disagree that failure to use motivational techniques in instructional delivery contributes to students low academic factors. However almost 3 out

4 (71.4%) reported that the use of unqualified teachers in our secondary schools results to poor academic performance. The percentage of respondents who agree and disagree to failure to use motivational techniques during lesson delivery was almost equal due to the fact that, the teachers believe that there were different approaches to different lesson delivery. Therefore it would be inappropriate to always use motivational techniques in lesson delivery. This however opposes Akyeampong (2007) who argues that when motivational techniques when used in lesson delivery be intrinsic or extrinsic, it boosts students' comportment and calmness which help them to understand the concept being taught especially when new concepts are being introduced.

On issues of less qualified teachers, the study concludes that our senior high schools could boast of most graduate and even postgraduate teachers however, most of them do not have the requisite training to teach. Most of them have attained their first degree and second degrees in reputable universities but without education. They found themselves in the educational sector when there were no jobs for them in their respective fields. Education and for that matter teaching was a secondary job field for them. They therefore teach for money and not for passion which results in their students' low academic performance. This conclusion conforms Agyemang (1999) who reports that a teacher who does not have both the academic and professional teacher qualification would undoubtedly have a negative influence on the teaching and learning of his/her subject. Darling Hammond (2000) also confirms this finding, as he found out that, teacher quality characteristics such as certification status and degree in subject to be taught were very significant and positively correlate with the subject outcomes especially in mathematics and science. Ingersoll (1999) found out that 63% of chemistry, physics, and earth and

science teachers do not have certificate in the subject and this resulted in the poor performance of student in American Secondary Schools. Less qualified teachers in our secondary schools therefore causes the low academic performance.

Analogously, the students related causes of low academic performance was assessed and presented (Table 4.3)

Table 4.3 Student Related Causes of Low Academic Performance

	Percentage scoring of respondents			Mean	SD
	Strongly agree or agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree or disagree		
Students shyness to seek clarification from teachers and friends	82.1	5.7	12.2	1.15	.554
Insufficient time to read notebooks and handouts	57.1	2.9	40.0	1.42	.548
Increased indiscipline among students	75.0	7.1	17.9	1.52	.716
Lack of academic competition in class	59.0	5.0	36.0	1.78	1.113
Wrong choice of course	55.0	25.0	20.0	2.00	.765
Students negative attitude towards their studies	54.7	20.4	24.9	2.05	1.314
Peer group influence	52.1	15.4	32.5	2.15	.988
Inadequate time to do assignments	67.5	3.6	27.9	2.41	1.314

1=strongly agree, 2 agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree. Source (Researcher's field data, 2016)

Table 4.3 present student related causes of low academic performance. Respondents underscored about eight issues as students related causes of their low academic performance. Among the outlined causes were students shyness to seek clarification from teachers and friends (M=1.15, SD =.554). Respondents (82.1%) were

much concerned about student shyness because it has a negative effect on their academic performance. Anytime they were taught a concept, the teacher can progress if students understand the concept therefore a teacher always moves on in his/her instruction delivery if students say they understand. Even though assignments and exercise would determine the true understanding of the concept by students, the teacher always introduces the next concept provided students admit that they understand. It was the duty of the student to draw the attention of the teacher to clarify concept he/she do not understand. Again students were supposed to consult their friends for anything they couldn't catch up in class for further explanation. Because one even understand very well when a peer explains matters to you. Sticker and Rock (1995) argue that, student inability to seek for further clarification from teacher has negative effect on their performance. They outlined three reasons why student were unable to seek further clarification from their teachers or their friends. One was that, prospective student thought their peers and teachers would see them as failure or empty headed students. Secondly, their teachers were not approachable and thirdly their peers would tease them anytime there was a misunderstanding.

Furthermore, there insufficient time to read handout ($M = 1.42$) was yet another major contributor of low academic performance. More than half (57%) attested that student insufficient time to read or learn their handout is a major contributing factor to the low academic performance. Most at times students especially the day students are seen watching Telenovelas on television. They devote all their times on the television that, they don't even remember what was taught the very day in school. Even though the television is a source of information for academic work, students always ignore the

informative part the television gives but rather focus on the entertainment aspect. Students could recite as many as possible adverts on television and radio but cannot remember just one thing taught at school. This was because they don't have time for books resulting on their low academic performance. An interview with parents brought to light that students were addicted to watching television and also been very busy with their phones than learning their books. A parent said 'my child can chat on phone as late as 12:00a.m. Another parent also commented that 'my ward is always either watching "veera", "simple Maria", "KukumBaggya" all telenovelas on television or chatting with friends on social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp among others'. (A verbatim expression of a parent). As a result my child is not performing as she should have. This notion supports Barry (2005) who was with the same opinion that student's addiction in the unnecessary stuff from both electronic and print media amounts to their failure in the final examination which was used as a measurement of their academic performance. Increased indiscipline among students ($M=1.52$ $SD=716$) was yet another major student contributing factor raised by respondents. Exactly three-fourth (75%) reported to either agree or strongly agree to indiscipline among students as a major cause of their low academic performance. There have been increased indiscipline on our various senior high schools. Students steal, fight and also indulge themselves in social vices such as, drinking, smoking and occultism. As a result they were more serious in these activities than to their books. They prefer drinking and smoking within their friends than to take their books to read. The end result is their low academic performance. This conclusion buttress Hanssan (2002) who also find out, student who indulge in social vice were most

likely to perform abysmally in the final external exams. This suggests that students' indiscipline is a major cause of their low academic performance.

Furthermore, students wrong choice of course to be pursue in the senior high school (M=2.00) also contributes to their low academic performance. More than half (55%) strongly agreed to this notion. However, one-fourth (25%) were not sure if students wrong choice of course contributes to their low performances about one out of 5 (20%) however, disagree to that assertion. Most at times students chooses courses which were not their field. Based on peer influence and ignorance they tend to choose courses which they were not assign to them by computer school selection and placement system (CSSPS). As a result they found themselves wanting in their course of allocation resulting in failure in some of the subjects if not all.

Moreover, due to lower educational background of parents and lack of adequate education in the prospect of the individual courses in the Senior High School, parents always choose courses for their wards without any consultation. Most at times they choose the sciences and the General Arts Courses for their words with intension of them becoming doctors, pharmacists, lawyers, judges etc. As a result some students even changed the courses that were originally allotted to them. A vast percentage of such students perform badly in class and subsequently in their final exams (Hassan 2002). According to Ray and Lancaster (2003). The senior high school courses were design to suit the capabilities and talents of individual students and were assign courses based on merits. Therefore if courses were changed or chose without taking into consideration the students capabilities, it results to their low academic performance. This confirms the

conclusion that wrong choice of course to be done in the senior high school causes students low academic performance.

Furthermore, majority (52.1%) reported to strongly agreed that peer group influence (M=2.45) also causes students low academic performance. The attitude of friends affects other students which reflects in their academic work. Most students instead of learning tend to follow their peers in other activities contrary to academic work. This result to their low academic performance Osei Mensah (2012) argues peer influence could be positive or negative and therefore it was only the negative peer influence that affects students' low academic performance.

The parents who were interview also testify that indeed peer influence also causes poor academic performance 'A parent said the performance of my ward has always come down ever since my ward joined those group of person' (verbatim expression of a parent). Another parent also commented that 'thanks to my wards teacher, his performance has improved due to the new seating arranged with that brilliant student' this confirms Osei Mensah (2012) assertion that it is negative peer influence which causes student low academic performance. The study however highlights students negative attitude towards their studies (M=2.05) and inadequate time to do assignments (M=2.41) as yet other student related causes of student low academic performance. Relatively, school environment related causes of low academic performance was also assessed (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 School Environment Related Cause of Low Academic Performance

School environment related causes of students' low academic performance.	Percentage scoring of respondents			Mean	SD
	Strongly agree or agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Strongly disagree or disagree (%)		
Lack of educational facilities	88.6	3.6	7.8	1.79	.985
Inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials	87.2	0.8	12.0	1.90	1.027
Inadequate facilities in the school	83.5	1.5	15.0	1.96	1.178
Class size causes poor instructional delivery	70.7	6.4	22.9	2.29	1.237
Poor student to teacher ratio	69.3	5.0	25.7	2.31	1.373
Unconducive atmosphere at school	47.9	12.9	39.2	2.91	1.308

1=strongly agree, 2 agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree. Source (Researcher's field data, 2016)

Table 4.4 reveals the school environment related causes of low academic performance. In all about six causes were under studied. Respondents reported positively to almost all the six understudied causes. However, some causes were preferred than others. For instance, lack of educational facilities in the various senior high schools (M= 1.78, SD=.985) was the most concerned cause of low academic performance as far as school environment was concerned. Due to over burden of the government, there were lack of adequate educational facilities such as adequate classroom blocks, computer laboratories and also computer aided tools to facilitate teaching and learning. Respondents strongly belief that when there were inadequate educational facilities it tends to affect student performance. This however opposes Danesy (2004) who posits that, facilitators and learners can make good use of any available facilities and materials

efficiently and effectively to achieve a high academic performance provided the learners were prepared to learn and follow instruction.

Again, inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials ($M=1.90$, $SD = 1.027$) was also reported among the environmental related factors of students low academic performance. Majority of the respondents (87.2%) strongly agreed that student low performance could be attributed inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials. Effective teaching and learning depends on the use of proper and adequate teaching and learning materials (Danesy 2004). However, most senior high schools lack the adequate materials to help students achieve their ultimate academic goal of good performance. Text books, chalks, markers among other material were not supply. Even if it was supplied comes late. Instructors sometimes have to use their monies to purchase cardboards for demonstration purposes to enhance teaching and learning. In the absence of these teaching and learning materials it affects student performance because lessons would be taught in abstract, there by resulting to low student academic performance.

According to Adeyela (2000) poor students to teacher ratio as well as class size cause poor instructional delivering resulting to poor academic performance. From Table 4.4, more than half (69.3%) and (70.7%) strongly agreed to Adeyela (2000) notion that poor students to teacher ratio and class size were major contributors of students low academic performance.

Adeyela (2000) posits that small class size enhances instructional delivery. Again Knaft (1995) also argues that affective teaching and learning is attained when there is a reasonable class size. He further explained that a reasonable class could be a class of 25 students or at most 30 students. However, about 70.7% of the respondent strongly agreed

that class size causes poor instructional delivery hence students' low academic performance. The study revealed that, due to the limited infrastructure in the schools, there were large sizes. There were as large as 80 to 90 students in a class. This therefore affects effective instructional delivery resulting to students' low performance. This finding there agrees to both Adeyela (2000) and Kraft (1994) views.

Finally on environmental related causes of low academic performance, about half (49.9%) either agree or strongly agree that unconducive atmosphere of the school (M=2.41) was a major contributing factor of low academic performance. Barry (2005) found out that a placid atmosphere was very good for teaching and learning and contributes to students' performance. Osei Mensah (2012) was of the view that certain subject such as mathematics, chemistry and physics were better absorb when taught in the morning. He continues that the atmosphere look very conducive in the morning of which the mind is stable. However the atmosphere at Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) was not as conducive as thought. The classroom blocks were close to the Bibiani-Kumasi Highway of which vehicles constantly use this road. The students and their facilitators were all at risk of the noise and other air borne pollutants emitted by various vehicles. Students were constantly attracted to what was happening outside their classroom. Most at times student concentrations were not in the classroom. It even become worse in the absence of a teacher. Moreover, there were not better shades for relaxation during leisure time. All these makes the place unconducive for teaching and learning which in effect results in the low academic performance of the students.

Relatedly, the researcher assessed the home related causes of students' low academic performance (Table 4.5)

Table 4.5 Home Related Causes of Student's Low Academic Performance

Home related causes of low performance	Percentage scoring of respondents			Mean	SD
	Strongly agree or agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree or disagree		
Inadequate provision of students needs by parents	71.9	8.6	19.5	1.46	.778
Large family size	56.1	8.6	35.3	2.42	.876
Low economic background	23.5	3.6	72.9	3.84	1.337
Less educated family background	15.8	7.1	77.1	3.89	1.204

1=strongly agree, 2 agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree. Source (Researcher's field data, 2016)

Table 4.5 presents the home related causes of low academic performance. Family size (M=1.52) was considered among the causes of low academic performance. Family size refer to the number of children in the reference family. The large the family the less the attention and devotion of each child by parents and the more the difficulties encountered by the parents in meeting the needs of children both physically and emotionally particularly in the austerity period when prices of food and commodities are skyrocketed (Asikhia, 2010). As a result children or students from larger family size tend to suffer in terms of the necessary attention needed from parents to carry on in life as far as education was concerned. Such students normally performance abysmally because they become both normally and emotionally disturbed thereby loosing concentration on whatever was been taught is school hence their low academic performance.

Majority (71.9%) of the respondents reported that students low academic performance was as a result of inadequate provision of students needs by their parents (M= 1.46, SD=.778). Again, respondents were of view that due to the large family size,

parents were not able to provide the adequate needs of their wards. Most students therefore could not afford a three- time square meals. As a result student were constantly driven away from school due to their inability to settle their tuition bills, feeding and other school materials which altogether helps in the students' academic performance. The constant driven away from school affects the students education because they would miss most topic taught in their absence which would subsequently affects their performance. Confirming Ghanney (2007) who found out positive parental attitude towards education, great parental support in all aspects of education combine to enhance students' progress in education

Furthermore, family educational background ($M= 2.30$) was also reported to be a major home related cause of students low academic performance. Acheampong (1992) found the education status of parents was a major factor determining a student's academic achievements. Parents with higher educational background probably understands education better than their counterparts with low academic status. As a result they tend to provide the necessary materials their children would need on enhance their education which intend helps in their children's academic progress. Again parents with higher educational status tend to either teach their wards at home or hire a private teacher to help their children at home. Therefore it was hardly for parents with lower educational status to help their children in terms of materials their children would need as both moral and emotional advice. This therefore corroborates that of Johnson and Kyles (2001) who posits that parental education particularly mother education has a big influence on students' school achievement. Fertig and Schimidt (2002) also argue that parent education has a vast influence on students' performance and students who parent has

higher educational status were most likely to perform better academically than those with low educational status. Finally, Socio - economic background of parents (M= 2.00) also contribute immensely to students low academic performance. More than half (62 %) of the respondents agreed that, socio- economic background of parents such as single – parenting, among others has influence on students’ academic performance. Major banks (1996) found out that, students from sing- parent house hold do not perform well in school as students from two – parents households. Barry (2005) supports this view by explaining that students from single- parents’ families were likely to have lower educational performance because single parent families on the average have lower level of income and were headed by parents with lower educational attainment and were less likely to be in the Labour force. Good parenting support by strong economic home background enhances strong academic performance of the child. This further predicts academic performance where the students is properly counselled in the choice of his/ her course and vocation that matches his / her mental ability, interest and capability.

4.4 Factors to Improve Students Low Academic Performance

The study sought to also find out measure that can improve students’ academic performance. Teachers, parents and students suggested several ways of improving students’ academic performance (Table4.6)

Table 4.6 Factors to Recuperate Low Academic Performance of Student

Measures to improve academic performance	Mean	SD	Ranking
Regular motivation of students	1.48	.515	1 st
Effectively assessment of students	1.53	.662	2 nd
Appropriate use of instructional methods	1.57	.638	3 rd
Adequate parental support	1.71	.989	4 th
Efficient measures to check teachers and students punctuality	1.77	.939	5 th
Good teacher to student ratio	1.87	1.038	6 th
Regular and prompt refresher causes for teachers	2.03	1.007	7 th
Adequate supply of teaching and learning materials	2.35	1.110	8 th
Counselling posts at schools	3.23	1.490	7 th
Provision of conduction environment	3.46	1.476	8 th

1=strongly agree, 2 agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree. Source (Researcher's field data, 2016)

The respondents underscored about eight measure to improve the academic performance of students. Among these measure were regular motivation of students (M= 1.48) the respondents reported that the academic performance of our senior high school students would be improved if student were regularly motivated being intrinsic or extrinsic. Motivation is important to the development of life- long learners, but is often hard to see in many classrooms. Festinger and carlsmith (1959) found that students' academic performance was most likely to improve if motivated in their classrooms. This was because students appreciate being motivated and therefore put in extra effort in learning and a particular subject and subsequently excelling in it.

Secondly, effectively assessment of students (M=1.53) also would improve the academic performance of students. Understanding of a concept taught depend on instructional text being constructed. Cheaper instructional text items would not bring out the exact understanding of a student likewise a very difficult text items. However, if text

items are effectively constructed to measure the outcome of a concept taught, the real understanding of the topic will be borne out from student score which will either call for reinforcement of a particular topic or not. If students are therefore assessed effectively, the academic performance would be improved because a facilitator would know where he/she has to work harder.

Furthermore, adequate use of instructional methods ($M=1.57$) was also considered as a measure to improve students' low academic performance. The information in Table 4.6 shows that respondents attested that, use of instructional methods would improve student performance. This was because, instructional method use contributes immensely to student understanding of a topic.

This data has indeed affirmed Salfi and Saeed (2007) who found a significant correlation between student's achievement and instructional methods used. Adediwura and Tayo (2007) also suggested that effective teaching using the right instructional methods at the right time was a significant predictor of students' academic achievement and concludes that effective teaching produces students of higher academic quality.

Moreover, it was reported that, adequate parental support ($M=1.17$) could improve student academic performance. This was because families where parents were advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a higher level of achievement in their children. They may also provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through an environment that encourages the development of skills necessary for success at school (Barry 2005). Furthermore, adequate supply of teaching and learning materials ($M=2.05$) was a measure reported to improve students' performance. Indeed, effective

teaching improves performance. Effective teaching however depends on the availability of adequate supply of teaching and learning materials. Therefore if teaching and learning materials are supply adequately, there was most likely to be effective teaching which will result in improved academic performance of students.

Table 4.6 further revealed that the academic performance of students would be improved if there exist counselling posts at schools (M=2.00). Counselling posts would seek to give appropriate counselling to teachers students and parents towards the achievement of students' performance. This confirms Lapan et.al, (2002) believes that performing a more proactive leadership role in empowering students to become self – regulated learners, professional school counsellors will both motivate young people to more fully realize their academic potential.

Finally, to improve the academic performance of students, our senior high schools should provide conducive environment for teaching and learning. Unconducive environment tends to cause low academic performance. Therefore, if a very tranquil ambiance was provided, at the various senior high schools, which is very good for teaching and learning would help improved the academic performance of students because, students would be eager to learn due to the conducive nature of the environment. This findings supports Barry, (2005) who holds the view that, a student educational outcome and academic success is greatly influenced by the type of school they attend. In his view, the school one attends is the institutional environment that sets the parameter of the student's learning experience. Barry, (2005), further argues that, markets and garages

located near schools which makes the environment unconducive always posed threats to students which affects their academic performance.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study assessed the perceived causes of senior high schools students' low academic performance and the measures that could improve the students' academic performance.

5.2 Summary of key Findings

After thorough assessment, the study found out that, the causes of low academic performance of senior high school students can be attributed to a number of teacher related causes. This includes, teacher absenteeism, inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials, and teacher over dependence on text books. Use less qualified teachers and inadequate assessment of students also were found to be teacher related causes of students low academic performance.

Furthermore, the study also identified students' related factors that contributed to student low academic performance. These included, peer group influence, student's shyness to seek clarification from teachers, increased indiscipline among students and wrong choice of courses. Moreover, inadequate educational facilities in the school, unconducive environment, and poor student to teacher ratio among others were school environment factors that contributed to low academic performance of students.

More so, socio – economic background, family educational background, family size and inadequate provision of student needs by parents were factors raised under home related causes of student low academic performance.

The study finally proposed regular motivation of students, effective and appropriate use of instructional methods, adequate parental support and provision of counselling post at schools as measures that could improve the academic performance of the senior high school student.

5.3 Limitation

The study focused on the causes of low academic performance of students in the Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) in the Atwima Nwabiagya district of Ghana. There were three main limitations to this project. Firstly some of the participants especially the teachers were reluctant to give out the necessary information even though permission have been sought and acceptance had been made.

Secondly, the sensitive nature of the gap understudy also made seeking for permission to conduct the study a bit difficult. The researcher provided a lot of evidence for instance an introductory letter to support the claim that this study was for academic purpose and confidentiality and anonymity were highly assured.

Lastly, the research was done at the same time academic work was also taking place. Indeed, the time duration for this research was a major constraint to the researcher. However, greater efforts were made to gather sufficient and relevant data for the study. Services of research assistants were obtained to identify respondents.

5.4 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusion were highlighted:

1. The study revealed that, with respect to teacher side factors, less qualified teachers, teacher absenteeism and teachers over dependence on text books contributed to students' low academic performance.
2. The study established that peer group influence, wrong choice of courses and indiscipline among student's also amounted to students characteristics of low academic performance.
3. Other factors revealed by the study under home related factors included, large family size, inadequate provision of student needs and socio – economic background of parents.
4. Poor student – to - teacher ratio, unconducive learning environment, and poor instructional delivery all contributed to student's academic performance.

The study therefore concludes that, most of the students in Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) do not perform very well in their West Africa Senior Secondary Schools Certificate Examination (WASSSCE). Few students could pass all their 8 subjects. Majority of them either fail one or more subjects. Their low academic performance was attributed to numerous factors of which stakeholders in education (Teachers, Students and Parents) were all involved.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the key findings, the following recommendations have been made:

1. It emerged from the study that there was inadequate supply of teaching and learning materials. The Atwima Nwabiagya District Educational Directorate should as a matter of urgency ensure that adequate and all necessary teaching and learning materials are provided to schools with the needed teaching and learning resources to help effective teaching and learning.
2. It also cropped up in the study that teacher absenteeism was a factor of students' low performance. The Headmaster with his able PTA executives should devise means to check and reduce teacher absenteeism drastically by accommodating most of the teachers in the school. As a matter of urgency there should be effective and efficient supervision and monitoring to also check absenteeism.
3. Head of schools, Supervisors and District Educational Directorate should conduct regular and prompt in-service training at the expense of the Educational Directorate to teachers to equip them with the modern trend of teaching and learning.
4. Due to the revelation of the study that poor student-to-teacher ratio also contributes to students' low academic performance, adequate infrastructure should be put in place to check poor student-to-teacher ratio. The number of students per class should be pegged at least 30 – 35.
5. It again emerged from the study that the un conducive nature of the school environment contributes to students' low academic performance. The authorities of Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) should therefore ensure that the school

environment is as conducive as ever for effective teaching and learning. The Head of school should encourage tree planting exercise at any available space to serve as a relaxation place for teachers, students and visitors.

6. There should be counselling post with Professional Educational Counsellors to counsel teachers, students and parents on better achievement of academic performance. Heads of schools should not entertain any change of course for any reason. This would help students to identify their challenges and boldly seek for redress at the appropriate quarters. Counselling would also help teachers and parents to involve themselves deeply in their children's education by seeking the best for their students and wards. Parents especially should be counselled to know that the best legacy they can give to their children is education. Therefore they should invest heavily to provide the needs of their children at all cost.
7. It emerged from the study that most students felt shy to seek for further clarification from their teachers. Teachers at Nkawie Senior High School (Technical) should as much as possible create a conducive rapport between them and their students so that students can always count on them. However, they should not take advantage of the rapport to mess up.

5.6 Suggestion for Further Study

Further studies could be conducted to find out factors affecting students' low academic performance in individual subjects. Mathematics, Integrated Science and English language could be used as a test case. Since this study was limited to Nkawie Senior High School (Technical), a further study would be necessary to compare Public

and Private Senior High Schools to establish the trend regarding the factors contributing to low academic performance in individual subjects.



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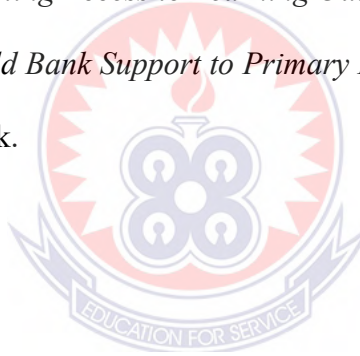
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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Teachers

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION-KUMASI
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

This Questionnaire seeks to solicit views from students, teachers, administrators and parents of students of Nkawie Senior High Technical School on the causes of low academic performance at the school. This is purely for academic work in partial fulfillment of the award of the Masters of Arts in Educational Leadership. You are kindly request to provide responses to the questions to enable the researcher contribute knowledge in the field of study. All information given will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your response would be highly appreciated for the success of the research. Thank you for your co-operation.

PART ONE: RESPONDENT PROFILE

Sex **Male** **Female**

Age 21-30 31-40 41 and above

Number of Years Taught 2-5 years 6-10 years 11 years and above

Educational Qualification [] Graduate [] Post Graduate [] Others (Specify)

CAUSES OF LOW ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN STUDENTS

TEACHER-RELATED FACTORS

STATEMENT					
RESPONSE	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. Less qualified teachers causes low academic performance					
2. Teacher absenteeism causes poor academic performance					
3. Inadequate assessment of students causes poor academic performance					
4. Teachers use various motivational techniques during instructional delivery					

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FACTORS

STATEMENT					
RESPONSE	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. Inadequate facilities in my school hinders lesson delivery					
2. Inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials cause low academic performance in students					
1. The atmosphere in my school is conducive for teaching and learning					
2. Poor student to teacher ratio causes low academic performance					
3. The class sizes in my school causes poor instructional delivery					
4. Inadequate provision of learning materials for students causes poor academic performance					
5. Inadequate funding causes a lack of educational facilities and subsequently poor academic performance					

STATEMENT	Response				
HOME CONDITIONS	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. Students from low economic background perform poorly in examinations					
2. Students whose parents are educated perform greatly during					

examinations					
3. Family sizes influence students' academic achievement					
4. My parents provide all my needs at school to help me learn efficiently					

STUDENTS' RELATED FACTORS

STATEMENT					
RESPONSE	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. My students spend a lot of time on their homework and assignments to help understand concepts					
2. My students have enough time to read their notebooks and handouts					
2. My students seek help from friends when they find difficulty in a particular subject					
3. My students understand concepts that are taught in class.					
4. My students health status is good enough to help them learn efficiently					

FACTORS THAT IMPROVE STUDENTS PERFORMANCE

STATEMENT					
RESPONSE	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. There are measures in place to check teachers' and students punctuality					
2. Teachers assessing students effectively ensures improvement in students' performance					
3. Appropriate use of teaching methods by teachers ensure an improvement in student performance					
4. Motivation helps arouses students interest and performance					
5. My school has made adequate provisions of facilities to ensure improvement in students' performance					
6. My school has made adequate provision of teaching and learning materials to aid in students learning					
7. School administrators have system in place for teacher retention					
8. The atmosphere in my school is conducive for teaching and learning					
9. Good student to teacher ratio causes high academic performance					
10. The class sizes in my school is of the required standard for effective teaching and learning					
11. Adequate parental support ensures improvement in students' performance					
12. Students whose parents are educated perform greatly during examinations					

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for students

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA

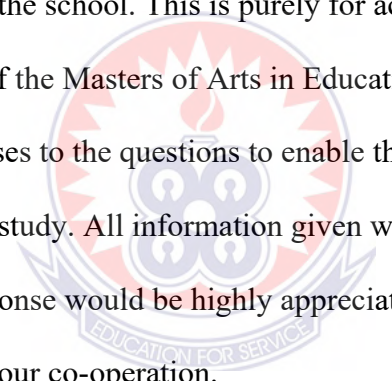
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION-KUMASI

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This Questionnaire seeks to solicit views from students, teachers, administrators and parents of students of Nkawie Senior High Technical School on the causes of low academic performance at the school. This is purely for academic work in partial fulfillment of the award of the Masters of Arts in Educational Leadership .You are kindly request to provide responses to the questions to enable the researcher contribute knowledge in the field of study. All information given will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your response would be highly appreciated for the success of the research. Thank you for your co-operation.



PART ONE: RESPONDENT PROFILE

Sex **Male** **Female**

Age 14- 20 21 and above

Class SHS 3

CAUSES OF LOW ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN STUDENTS

TEACHER –RELATED FACTORS	RESPONSE				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
There are less qualified teachers in my school.					
Teacher absenteeism causes poor academic performance					
Inadequate assessment of students causes poor academic performance					
Teachers failure to use various motivational techniques during instructional delivery					
Inadequate provision of learning materials for students causes poor academic performance					

STATEMENT					
SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FACTORS	SD	D	N	A	SA
Inadequate facilities in my school hinders lesson delivery					
The atmosphere in my school is conducive for teaching and learning					
Poor student to teacher ratio causes low academic performance					
The class sizes in my school causes poor instructional delivery					
Inadequate provision of learning materials for students causes poor academic performance					
Inadequate funding causes a lack of educational facilities and subsequently poor academic performance					

STATEMENT					
HOME CONDITIONS	SD	D	N	A	SA
Students from low economic background perform poorly in examinations					
Students whose parents are educated perform greatly during examinations					
Family sizes influence students’ academic achievement					
My parents provide all my needs at school to help me learn efficiently					

STUDENTS' RELATED FACTORS	SD	D	N	A	SA
I spend a lot of time on my homework and assignments to help understand concepts					
I have enough time to read my notebooks and handouts					
I seek help from friends when I find difficulty in a particular subject					
I understand concepts that are taught in class by teachers					
My health status is good enough to help me learn efficiently					

FACTORS THAT IMPROVE STUDENTS PERFORMANCE

STATEMENT					
RESPONSE	SD	D	N	A	SA
There are measures in place to check teachers' and students punctuality					
Teachers assessing students effectively ensures improvement in students' performance					
Appropriate use of teaching methods by teachers ensure an improvement in student performance					
Motivation helps arouses students interest and performance					
My school has made adequate provisions of facilities to ensure improvement in students' performance					
My school has made adequate provision of teaching and learning materials to aid in students learning					
School administrators have system in place for teacher retention					
The atmosphere in my school is conducive for teaching and learning					
Good student to teacher ratio causes high academic performance					
The class sizes in my school is of the required standard for effective teaching and learning					
Adequate parental support ensures improvement in students' performance					
Students whose parents are educated perform greatly during examinations					

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. Sex Male Female
2. Age group 30-35 36-40 years 41-50 years 51 and above years
3. Literacy
- No formal education
- Basic education
- Secondary education
- Tertiary education

Question	Response
1. How would you rate the performance of your ward's school in the just past WASSCE examinations?	
2. Do you make adequate provisions for your child in his current school?	
3. Does the school provide you data of your child's performance?	
4. How does the school provide you with data of your child?	
5. Do you think divorce at home can cause a decline in the performance of your child?	
6. How will you rate the relationship between you and your child in terms of your child's education?	
7. Are you directly involved in the education of your child?	
8. Do you think your child's school is making adequate effort to provide educational facilities	
9. How are parents and community members involved in the school's improvement Processes?	
10. How do you ensure that your child is receiving quality education from his or her school?	