UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR UNDERPERFORMANCE OF FIVE SELECTED PRIVATE BASIC SCHOOLS IN EFFUTU MUNICIPALITY

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FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR UNDERPERFORMANCE OF FIVE SELECTED PRIVATE BASIC SCHOOLS IN THE EFFUTU MUNICIPALITY

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A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy
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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Samuel Bonney, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in 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 thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Supervisor's Name: Prof. Edison Padjibo (Ph.D.)

Signature: ……..……...

Date: ……..……..……..……

DEDICATION

To my wife, children, parents, supervisor, lectures and friends for their continuous love and support.

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GLOSSARY

AP	Academic Performance
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
EMA	Effutu Municipal Assembly
EMED	Effutu Municipal Education Directorate
GES	Ghana Education Service
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PBL	Problem-Based Learning
PBS	Private Basic School
PI	Parental Involvement
SE	School Environment
SEF	Socio-Economic Factor
SES	Social-Economic Status
TF	Teacher Factor
TTPD	Teacher Training and Professional Development
UEW	University of Education, Winneba
WAEC	West African Examination Council

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors contributing for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality of Ghana. The research paradigm used to conduct the research was Positivism. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A quantitative research approach was adopted, with data collected from a population of 2515 and a sample size of 345 comprising teachers, students, and parents from five underperforming private basic schools. Structured questionnaires were used to gather data, and the findings were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that poor physical infrastructure, lack of teaching and learning materials, and limited co-curricular opportunities were major school environment challenges affecting student performance. Teacher-related factors such as inadequate professional development, low motivation, and limited use of innovative teaching strategies were also identified as contributing to poor academic outcomes. Socio-economic factors including low parental education, financial instability, and lack of home support further compounded the academic struggles of students. However, the study found that implementing strategies such as enhanced parental engagement, investment in school infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum reforms could significantly improve student performance. The study concluded that improving student performance in basic schools requires a multifaceted approach that addresses school resources, teacher capacity, socio-economic barriers, and institutional policies. By implementing targeted interventions, school administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders can create an enabling environment for quality education and better learning outcomes. Based on these findings, the study recommends that stakeholders, school proprietors, educational authorities, and community members collaborate to improve school conditions, support teachers professionally, and address the socio-economic challenges faced by learners. The study also suggests the need for further research into contextualized interventions that can be tailored to the unique needs of private basic schools in Ghana.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the background to the study on the role of education as a pivotal to holistic development of a person. The chapter discussed the problem that led to the study, how people perceive the performance of private schools. It further states the purpose of the study. It also lists the objectives and questions of the study. Also, the chapter discusses how the study is significant to policy theory, and professional practices. It further analysis the delimitations and limitations of the study. Meanwhile, operational definition where given to key words and concludes with the organization of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

Education is a fundamental driver of personal and societal development, shaping individuals and influencing the progress of communities and nations (Mensah & Ankomah, 2020). It extends beyond the mere transfer of knowledge, serving as an empowering force that fosters critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills (Muijs, 2010). Quality education has the potential to bridge social and economic inequalities, promote ethical reasoning, and prepare individuals to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. According to UNESCO (2021), effective education systems do not only equip learners with academic competencies but also nurture emotional intelligence, adaptability, and civic responsibility.

In high-income countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, research has shown mixed results regarding the academic performance of private schools. While some studies indicate that private institutions outperform their public

counterparts due to better funding, smaller class sizes, and highly qualified teachers, others argue that the perceived advantage is largely a result of selective student enrollment and socio-economic factors rather than superior teaching quality (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2014). A study by Choi et al. (2020) in South Korea found that once socio-economic background was controlled for private school students did not perform significantly better than public school students on standardized tests, challenging the assumption that private schools inherently provide better education.

In middle-income countries, such as India and Brazil, the rapid expansion of private schools, particularly low-fee private institutions have led to variability in quality and performance. Studies indicate that while elite private schools maintain high academic standards, many low-cost private schools struggle with poor infrastructure, unqualified teachers, and lack of effective regulation (Srivastava, 2013). In India, for example, private schools have been found to employ underqualified teachers with lower salaries compared to public school counterparts, leading to concerns about the quality of instruction (Kingdon, 2017).

In sub-Saharan Africa, the growth of private schools has filled gaps left by under-resourced public education systems (Amponsah, 2021). Many parents choose private schools due to perceptions of better discipline, teacher commitment, and English-language instruction (Tooley & Dixon, 2006). However, studies show that not all private schools deliver superior results, with many suffering from teacher absenteeism, overcrowding, and financial instability (Ohba, 2013). In Kenya, for instance, research has found that low-cost private schools often lack qualified teachers, leading to inconsistent learning outcomes (Ngware et al., 2018). Similarly, in Nigeria, Oketch et al. (2010) reported that many private schools struggle with poor

funding and inadequate teaching resources, leading to student underperformance in national assessments.

In Ghana, the growth of private basic schools has been driven by demand for improved education quality and dissatisfaction with public schools (Akyeampong, 2017). Despite their popularity, studies indicate that many private schools, especially low-cost ones, face significant challenges affecting student performance. Some of these challenges include: Unqualified and Underpaid Teachers; where any private schools rely on untrained teachers who receive lower wages than their public-school counterparts, impacting the quality of instruction (Anamuah-Mensah, 2019). In Ghana, low-cost private schools often lack libraries, science laboratories, and ICT facilities, unlike elite private schools, which hinders effective learning (Avoke, 2015). Poor School Management which has to do with weak administrative structures, lack of teacher motivation, and ineffective supervision contribute to underperformance (Nyantakyi, 2020). Socio-Economic Barriers where many students in private schools come from low-income households, where financial struggles impact their ability to afford quality education, access learning materials, and receive parental support (Acheampong, 2017).

In Ghana, disparities in educational quality particularly between private and public schools have raised concerns about the effectiveness of school management, teacher competence, and socio-economic influences on student performance (Ananga, 2011). While private schools are often perceived as offering higher academic standards, evidence suggests that many private basic schools struggle with underperformance due to challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, unqualified teachers, and limited parental involvement (Akyeampong, 2017). Understanding the factors contributing to

this underperformance is essential for developing targeted interventions that improve learning outcomes in private basic schools within the Effutu Municipality.

Realizing the immense role of education in national development, both developed and developing nations have undertaken educational reforms in order to make their educational systems functional and relevant to the socio – economic needs of their citizens. Ghana being one of the developing countries has carried out several educational reforms to change the structure and content of its educational system to make it suitable to meet the developmental needs of the people in the country. These reforms have also brought about huge investment in the development of infrastructure and establishment of private schools in order to make education accessible to all children of school going age.

Private basic schools play a significant role in complementing government efforts to provide quality education. In Ghana, private schools have proliferated, particularly in urban and semi-urban areas, to cater for the growing demand for basic education. However, despite their increasing presence, many private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality are underperforming academically, raising concerns among stakeholders including parents, educators, and policymakers. These institutions, while serving as essential contributors to the education sector, have encountered challenges leading to concerns about underperformance (Okyerefo, et al., 2011). To fortify the quality of education, a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing underperformance in some private basic schools is imperative. According to Okyerefo, et al. (2011), private basic schools operate within a dynamic educational landscape, shaped by diverse factors such as teaching methodologies, student motivation and institutional challenges.

The underperformance of learners in private basic schools can be attributed to several factors, including school environment, teacher quality, and socio-economic conditions of learners. The school environment, which includes infrastructure, learning resources, and administrative effectiveness, has a direct impact on student performance (Ampofo et al., 2021). Poorly equipped schools with inadequate teaching and learning materials often struggle to provide a conducive learning atmosphere. Teacher-related factors such as qualification, experience, motivation, and instructional methods also significantly influence student outcomes (Mensah & Ankomah, 2020). In many private schools, teachers are often underpaid and overworked, leading to reduced commitment and effectiveness in delivering quality education (Schleicher, 2019). Additionally, the lack of continuous professional development opportunities limits their ability to adapt to modern teaching methodologies (Schleicher, 2019). Socio-economic factors further contribute to the academic struggles of learners. Many students in private basic schools come from low-income backgrounds, where financial constraints hinder their access to essential learning materials and extra academic support (Owusu & Addae, 2019). Parental involvement and the home learning environment also play a crucial role in shaping students' academic success.

Addressing these underperformances by private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality requires a comprehensive understanding of the key factors contributing to their underperformance. Identifying school-related, teacher-related, and socio-economic determinants will provide insights for policy interventions aimed at enhancing academic performance. Therefore, this study seeks to explore these factors and recommend strategies for improving the quality of education in private basic schools within the Effutu Municipality.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Academic performance is a critical measure of educational success, serving as an indicator of the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes (UNESCO, 2021). However, private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality continue to record persistently low academic outcomes, raising concerns among educational stakeholders, including parents, school proprietors, and policymakers. Private schools are generally expected to deliver quality education comparable to or even better than their public counterparts due to their autonomy in curriculum implementation and resource management (Ampofo et al., 2021). Yet, despite efforts by school management and local education authorities to improve learning conditions, academic performance in many of these institutions remains unsatisfactory.

An analysis of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results from 2020 to 2023 highlights this concerning trend. The Table below illustrates the percentage of students who passed in selected private schools in the Effutu Municipality.

Table 1.1: BECE results of selected private schools (2019–2023)

School	% Passed 2019	% Passed 2020	%Passed 2021	% Passed 2022	% Passed 2023
A	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
B	0.0	0.0	9.09	0.0	9.09
C	0.0	.0.0	22.9	4.55	0.0
D	0.0	0.0	18.8	24	0.0
E	40	60	31.7	59.26	22.22

Source: Effutu Municipal Education Directorate (2023)

The above data demonstrates a consistent trend of underperformance in private basic schools within the municipality. These alarming results have sparked concerns within the Effutu Municipal Assembly and other significant educational stakeholders

regarding the quality of education offered in private schools. Mensah and Ankomah. (2020) argues that the municipal education directorate has repeatedly expressed concern over private school performance in the BECE. Similarly, Nyantakyi (2020) notes that despite various interventions such as teacher training workshops, parental engagement initiatives, and school improvement programs, academic performance in private schools remains subpar. This situation raises questions about whether students' inability to adhere to academic standards, teacher quality, or institutional management practices contributes to these poor outcomes.

Existing studies suggest that several factors influence student performance, including poor school infrastructure, lack of qualified teachers, inadequate instructional materials, and socio-economic challenges (Ampofo et al., 2021; Mensah & Ankomah, 2020). However, most of these studies focus on public schools, with limited research specifically examining private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality. The extent to which these factors impact learner performance in this context remains unclear, making it difficult to develop effective solutions tailored to private school settings.

Additionally, private school management practices, teacher motivation, and parental involvement have been identified as significant determinants of academic success (Owusu & Addae, 2019). While these factors have been widely studied in public education systems, empirical evidence on how they interact within private schools in the Effutu Municipality is lacking. Without a clear understanding of the root causes of academic underperformance, efforts to improve educational outcomes in these institutions may remain ineffective.

This study, therefore, seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by systematically investigating the factors contributing to the underperformance of private basic schools

in the Effutu Municipality. Specifically, it will examine school environment factors, teacher-related factors, and socio-economic influences, as well as explore strategies for improving academic performance. By identifying key challenges and proposing targeted interventions, this research aims to provide valuable insights for school administrators, educators, and policymakers in enhancing the quality of education in private schools.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the factors accounting for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality.

1.4 Research objectives

The study sought to:

1. examine school environment factors contributing to underperformance in private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality.
2. assess teacher-related factors influencing learner underperformance in private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality.
3. examine socio-economic factors affecting learner underperformance in private schools.
4. determine strategies to improve academic performance in private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality.

1.5 Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. what school environment factors contribute to the underperformance of learners in private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality?

2. what teacher-related factors contribute to the underperformance of learners in private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality?
3. what socio-economic factors contribute to the academic performance of learners in private basic schools?
4. what strategies can be used to enhance academic performance in private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study on the factors contributing for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality is significant to policy, theory, and professional practice. The results provided valuable insights that can inform educational reforms, contribute to theoretical discussions on school effectiveness, and offer practical strategies for improving teaching and learning in private schools.

a. Significance to Policy

The study had implications for educational policy formulation and implementation at the municipal and national levels. The results provided empirical evidence on the challenges affecting private basic schools, enabling policymakers to design targeted interventions to improve learning outcomes (Ampofo et al., 2021). Insights from this research helped education authorities and accreditation bodies strengthen regulations governing private schools, ensuring adherence to minimum standards in infrastructure, teacher qualifications, and curriculum implementation (Mensah & Ankomah, 2020). The study also helped policymakers allocate financial and technical resources effectively, prioritizing underperforming private schools in educational development plans (UNESCO, 2021). The results encouraged stronger collaboration

between private school proprietors, parents, and local government bodies in addressing challenges related to student performance (Owusu & Addae, 2019).

b. Significance to Theory

The study contributed to existing theoretical frameworks in educational research, particularly in the areas of school effectiveness and student achievement. Specifically, it examined how factors such as teacher quality, school leadership, and parental involvement influence learning outcomes, expanding theoretical perspectives on what makes a school effective (Scheerens & Bosker, 1997). By investigating how economic constraints and parental background affect student performance, this study provided empirical support for Bourdieu's (1986) theory of cultural capital, which emphasizes the role of socio-economic status in educational attainment. Existing studies on school performance largely focus on public schools, with limited research on private institutions. This study filled that gap by providing new data and theoretical insights specific to private basic schools in Ghana.

c. Significance to Professional Practice

This research offered practical benefits to educators, school administrators, and other stakeholders in the education sector.

Proprietors and headteachers of private basic schools gained data-driven insights on how to improve teacher recruitment, instructional quality, and school management practices to enhance student performance (Nyantakyi, 2020). Teachers benefited from recommendations on effective pedagogical methods, classroom management techniques, and assessment strategies that can help improve learning outcomes (Anamuah-Mensah, 2019). The study also highlighted the role of parental involvement in education, providing guidance on how families can support their

children's learning at home and collaborate effectively with schools (Epstein, 2011). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and development partners working in the education sector can use the results to design targeted interventions aimed at improving access to quality education in private schools.

This study contributed to evidence-based policymaking, enrich educational theory, and provided practical solutions for teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders. Ultimately, its results play a vital role in enhancing the quality of education in private schools and ensuring that students receive the support needed to succeed academically.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

This study was conducted within the Central Region of Ghana, with a specific focus on the Effutu Municipality. The research was further delimited to five selected private basic schools within the municipality, drawn from its three educational circuits: Effutu West, Effutu South, and Effutu Central. The study specifically examined academic performance in relation to the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results, serving as the primary measure of student achievement. Internal assessments such as class tests, quizzes, and end-of-term examinations were not included in the scope of the study, as the focus was on standardized external assessments that provide a comparative measure of student performance across schools.

Narrowing the study to underperforming private basic schools within Effutu Municipality helped the research provide a context-specific analysis of the factors influencing academic underachievement. The results were intended to inform educational policies, school management strategies, and interventions tailored to the

private school sector within the municipality. However, the results may have limited generalizability beyond the selected schools and geographical area.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Academic performance: In this study, academic performance refers to students' achievement levels in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), as measured by their pass rates and overall scores.

Underperformance: Underperformance is defined as the consistent failure of private basic schools to attain satisfactory BECE results, as determined by the Ghana Education Service (GES) grading standards.

Private basic schools: These are privately owned and managed primary and junior high schools within the Effutu Municipality that operate independently of government funding but are subject to national educational regulations.

School environment: The school environment includes infrastructure, learning resources, classroom conditions, and overall school climate, which may influence students' ability to learn effectively.

Teacher factors: Teacher factors refer to qualifications, teaching experience, instructional methods, motivation, and teacher-student relationships, which impact students' learning outcomes.

Socio-economic factors: These include parental income, educational background, employment status, and household conditions, which may affect students' access to quality education and academic success.

Parental involvement: This term refers to parents' active participation in their children's education, including helping with homework, attending school meetings, and providing financial and emotional support.

BECE (Basic Education Certificate Examination): The standardized national examination of Junior High School learners which is administered by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) at the end of their Junior High School education, to assess the academic proficiency and to assess their readiness to progress to Senior High School.

1.9 Organization of the study

The study was presented in five chapters. Chapter One included Introduction, Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Research Objectives, Research Questions, Significance of the Study, Scope and Delimitations, Operational Definitions of Terms, and the Organization of the Study. Chapter Two comprises a review of related literature on headteachers leadership styles and how it influences the job satisfaction of teachers. The chapter also discusses relevant theories underpinning the study. Chapter Three highlights the various methods employed in conducting the research. Here the specific tools and procedures used in collecting and analyzing data are explained. Chapter Four presents an analysis of results obtained from the study. Chapter Five provides a summary of the findings, draws conclusions and offers recommendations and suggestions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter of this study laid the foundation by presenting the background, problem statement, research objectives, and significance of the study, which focused on identifying the factors contributing to the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality.

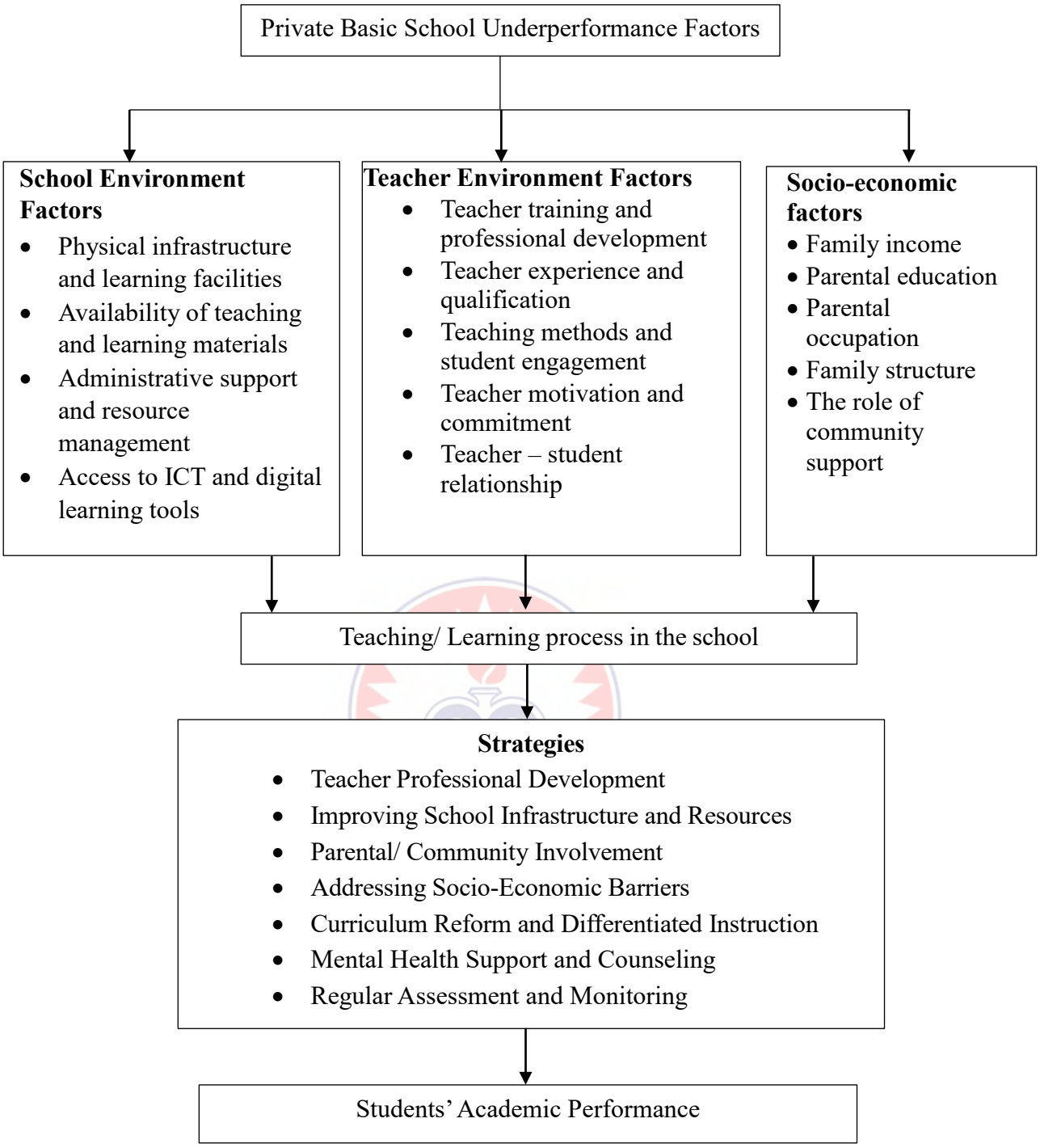
This chapter is devoted to conceptual framework and theoretical underpinning. It further reviewed literature on factors on school environment, teacher-related elements, and socio-economic conditions that influence students' academic performance, and proposed strategies for improvement. These similar or closely related institutional activities or characteristics were believed to be variables that influence academic performance of learners in one way or the other.

2.1 Conceptual framework

Private basic schools play a significant role in Ghana's education system, catering to a substantial number of learners. However, many of these schools face challenges that impact learners' performance. This framework identifies key factors contributing to underperformance in private basic schools.

The conceptual framework is structured around three main components:

1. School environment factors.
2. Teacher-related factors.
3. Socio-economic factors.



Source: Author (2025).

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

The framework suggests that a student's academic performance is not simply a result of isolated factors but rather a complex interplay of multiple influences, particularly from the family environment. These factors, including parental education level, socio-economic status, family support, and parental involvement in education, collectively shape the learner's ability to perform academically. The narrative emphasizes that these influences do not act in isolation but interact with each other, as evidenced by the two-sided arrows linking them. This interaction means that, for instance, a student from a high-income family may have better access to educational resources, while also benefiting from higher levels of parental engagement, which, in turn, may influence their academic motivation and performance. The model's one-sided arrow that flows from the four factors to the teaching and learning process further underscores the idea that the external factors (family-related) directly impact the educational process. These family factors influence how a student engages with the curriculum, their attendance, motivation, and the overall experience within the school system. For example, children from families with a high level of parental support may have a more positive attitude towards school, which will make them more receptive to the teaching and learning process. This positive engagement in turn boosts their academic performance (Li & Ma, 2010).

The teaching and learning process itself is shown to be a mediator, integrating these external family factors and impacting the student's outcomes. The effectiveness of this process is dependent on various factors such as the quality of teaching, school environment, resources available, and the degree of support students receive both at home and in school. For instance, a teacher's ability to adapt the curriculum to meet diverse student needs or provide additional support may help mitigate the potential negative impacts of a challenging home environment, such as limited parental

education or socio-economic struggles. The framework emphasizes the dynamic, multi-directional relationship between the home environment and the education system. It suggests that for improved academic performance, there needs to be a holistic understanding of how family factors contribute to shaping the learner's engagement with education. This interaction highlights the importance of creating educational strategies and policies that account for these broader influences, such as increasing parental involvement in school activities or offering more community-based support to address socio-economic disparities (Li & Ma, 2010).

In sum, academic performance is influenced by a combination of family-related factors that directly affect the student's engagement with the learning process, and these factors must be considered as interrelated elements that shape the educational experience. The framework calls for an integrative approach, considering how family dynamics intertwine with the school environment, to improve students' academic outcomes.

2.2 Theoretical underpinning

The study was guided by the systems theory of organizations, a framework developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in the 1950s, which has become one of the most influential theoretical models in understanding complex organizations. Systems theory was conceived during the intellectual revolution that followed World War II, although its roots can be traced to earlier works in biology and philosophy. The theory emphasizes that organizations, including schools, function as open systems, meaning they are constantly interacting with and influenced by their external environment. This interaction between the system and its environment is essential for the system's survival, growth, and adaptation.

In the context of this study, schools are considered dynamic entities that are constantly exchanging information, resources, and energy with their external and internal environments. The school, as an open system, does not operate in isolation but rather in a constant state of interaction with various factors such as socio-economic conditions, educational policies, community influences, and teacher and student dynamics. By focusing on these interrelationships, systems theory provides a comprehensive lens to understand how different factors both internal and external affect student performance.

The theory highlights the concept of emergence, which refers to the idea that the behaviour of a system cannot be fully understood by examining its individual components in isolation; rather, it is through the interaction of these components that new behaviours or outcomes emerge. In a school setting, for instance, student performance cannot solely be attributed to one factor, such as the quality of teaching. Instead, it is the interaction of teacher effectiveness, school resources, student socio-economic backgrounds, and parental involvement, among other factors, that collectively shapes academic outcomes. The emergent properties of the school as a system emerge through these complex relationships.

Furthermore, the interaction between the school and its environment plays a pivotal role in shaping the school's operations and overall effectiveness. Systems theory emphasizes the need to examine not only the internal processes within the school, such as teaching practices, curriculum delivery, and administrative support, but also how external factors, such as policy changes, community support, and the socio-economic status of students, affect the functioning and performance of the school.

In applying systems theory to this study, it became clear that a holistic understanding of the factors influencing academic performance requires an examination of both the internal operations of the school and its relationship with the broader environment. This approach ensures that all contributing factors whether they are related to the school infrastructure, teaching strategies, or socio-economic conditions are considered as part of an interconnected system that ultimately influences student outcomes. Thus, the study acknowledges that student underperformance cannot be attributed to any single factor but is the result of a complex web of interrelated elements that must be addressed comprehensively.

By using systems theory as the guiding framework, this study aims to identify the key components of the school system that need to be improved or better integrated to improve academic performance. It also recognizes that interventions targeting only one aspect of the system may not yield significant improvements unless the system as a whole is addressed. Therefore, this theory provides a robust conceptual foundation for understanding and addressing the multifaceted challenges that contribute to underperformance in private basic schools.

As adapted in this study, the systems theory holds that socioeconomic factors influences‟ students' academic performance in a school. That is school environment factors, teacher factors, learner motivation, parental level of education, parental involvement in children education, income of parent and financial and material support given to the children by the parent influences students' academic performance. This theory has its own shortcomings. The interrelationships among part of a system have to be recognized and understood by all people involved. The

theory also requires a shared vision so that all people in the school have an idea of what they are to accomplish.

2.3 School environment factors contributing to student underperformance

This section was devoted to review literature to address research question 1: what school environment factors contribute to underperformance in private basic schools? The school environment plays a crucial role in shaping the academic outcomes of students. A conducive learning environment characterized by adequate infrastructure, safe and inclusive spaces, access to learning materials, and supportive administrative practices has consistently been linked to improved academic achievement (Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008). In contrast, environments that lack these essential components can hinder student engagement, limit instructional effectiveness, and contribute to poor academic performance.

2.3.1 Physical infrastructure and learning facilities

The quality of physical infrastructure in schools plays a crucial role in shaping the educational experiences and academic outcomes of students. A well-structured and adequately maintained learning environment sets the tone for effective teaching and learning. Earthman (2004) emphasizes that schools equipped with clean, safe, and purposefully designed facilities such as spacious classrooms, durable furniture, proper lighting, and accessible sanitation are more likely to foster student engagement, improve attendance, and support academic achievement. These physical elements not only influence comfort and safety but also impact students' psychological readiness to learn.

In contrast, when school infrastructure is neglected, the learning environment becomes a barrier rather than a facilitator of educational success. Barrett et al (2019) points out that overcrowded classrooms, inadequate ventilation, broken desks, and noisy or visually distracting surroundings can undermine students' concentration and diminish their overall learning experience. Students in such environments often feel discouraged, which may lead to absenteeism, lower motivation, and poorer academic outcomes. Furthermore, these conditions can also place additional stress on teachers, limiting their ability to deliver quality instruction (Nyantakyi, 2020).

The relationship between infrastructure and student performance becomes even more critical in the context of under-resourced private basic schools, particularly in developing regions. In such settings, the disparity in infrastructure quality between schools often reflects broader socio-economic inequalities, reinforcing a cycle of disadvantage. Hence, the provision and maintenance of adequate physical infrastructure should not be viewed as a secondary concern but as a core component of educational planning and reform. When policymakers and school administrators invest in conducive learning environments, they lay the groundwork for more equitable and effective education systems (Ampofo et al., 2021).

2.3.2 Availability of teaching and learning materials

The presence and accessibility of teaching and learning materials are fundamental to delivering quality education and achieving positive student outcomes. These materials which include textbooks, teaching aids, laboratory apparatus, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources serve as critical tools that facilitate the teaching-learning process (Nyantakyi, 2020). They not only support curriculum

delivery but also stimulate students' curiosity, foster engagement, and promote a deeper understanding of concepts across various subjects (Nyantakyi, 2020).

Adeogun (2001) emphasizes that schools that are adequately resourced tend to offer more effective instructional delivery, which translates into improved academic performance. Access to relevant and up-to-date textbooks allows students to reinforce classroom instruction at their own pace, while teaching aids help teachers simplify complex topics and accommodate diverse learning styles. Laboratory equipment, especially in science and technology subjects, provides hands-on experiences that enhance conceptual understanding and critical thinking.

On the other hand, the absence or inadequacy of teaching and learning resources can significantly hinder educational outcomes. According to the World Bank (2018), many schools in low-resource settings struggle to deliver the curriculum effectively due to insufficient materials. This not only affects student engagement and comprehension but also limits teachers' ability to adopt interactive and student-centered teaching methods. In resource-constrained environments, students may share outdated textbooks or have no access to visual aids, ICT tools, or practical equipment factors that collectively contribute to underachievement (Li & Ma, 2010).

In the context of underperforming private basic schools, especially in marginalized or low-income areas, the scarcity of essential learning materials often mirrors systemic issues such as limited funding, weak school governance, and unequal access to educational resources. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated effort from policymakers, school owners, and community stakeholders to ensure that every learner has access to the tools necessary for academic success (Okyerefo et al., 2011).

Safety and security are critical components of an enabling school environment that promotes effective teaching and learning. A secure school setting not only safeguards students from physical danger but also fosters emotional well-being, which is essential for academic engagement and performance. When students feel protected and supported within the school premises, they are more likely to attend regularly, participate in class, and perform to their potential (Richmond & Manochehri, 2017).

Bosworth (1994) posits that a sense of safety within the school directly influences students' willingness to engage in academic activities. When children feel secure free from threats such as bullying, violence, harassment, or theft. they are more attentive in class and more open to collaboration and interaction with peers and teachers. A positive, protective environment fosters confidence and psychological stability, which are vital for cognitive development and academic achievement.

Conversely, schools that are plagued by safety concerns often see higher rates of absenteeism, poor concentration, and student withdrawal. Incidents such as bullying, lack of supervision during break times, and unregulated access to school compounds can create an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. These stressors not only disrupt students' mental and emotional states but also interfere with the overall learning process. In extreme cases, prolonged exposure to unsafe conditions may lead students to drop out or become disengaged from school altogether (Richmond & Manochehri, 2017).

In underperforming private basic schools especially those with limited funding or ineffective leadership ensuring adequate safety and security measures can be a major challenge. The absence of boundary walls, security personnel, surveillance systems, or structured policies on student discipline can compromise the overall school

climate. As such, establishing clear safety protocols, training staff on child protection, and fostering a culture of mutual respect and inclusion are essential steps toward creating safe learning environments that support academic success (Uline and Tschannen-Moran, 2008).

2.3.4 Administrative support and resource management

Administrative support and resource management are pivotal to the creation and maintenance of a positive and effective school environment. The leadership style and managerial competencies of school heads influence virtually every aspect of school functioning, including the allocation of resources, staff motivation, curriculum implementation, and ultimately, student academic performance (Tavani and Losh, 2016). According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), effective school leadership fosters a culture of academic excellence by promoting shared visions, encouraging collaboration among staff, and ensuring that both human and material resources are used optimally. Leaders who are proactive and supportive tend to inspire teachers to perform better, provide platforms for professional development, and facilitate regular supervision to maintain instructional quality. In such environments, students also benefit from enhanced learning experiences and well-coordinated academic programs.

Conversely, poor administrative practices can significantly hinder school effectiveness. Mismanagement of funds, lack of transparency in decision-making, inadequate instructional supervision, and insufficient communication channels between administrators, teachers, and parents can lead to operational inefficiencies. These challenges often contribute to teacher demotivation, absenteeism, and a general lack of accountability, all of which can negatively affect student performance.

In the context of underperforming private basic schools, especially those operating with minimal oversight or external support, strong administrative structures are essential. Without effective leadership and sound resource management, even schools with adequate infrastructure and teaching personnel may struggle to meet academic targets. Therefore, building the leadership capacity of school administrators through training and continuous professional development is crucial for transforming the school environment and supporting improved academic outcomes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005)

2.3.5 Co-curricular activities and student engagement

While academic instruction remains the primary focus of schools, co-curricular activities are equally vital for the holistic development of students. These activities which include sports, drama, debate, music, student clubs, and community service provide learners with opportunities to explore their interests, develop social skills, and build a sense of identity and belonging within the school environment (Eccles et al., 2003).

Fredricks and Eccles (2006) emphasize that structured extracurricular engagement contributes positively to students' academic motivation, self-regulation, and overall school attachment. Participation in co-curricular activities has been linked to improved time management, increased self-confidence, and enhanced interpersonal skills, all of which indirectly support academic achievement. These activities often serve as stress-relievers and offer students a platform to excel in non-academic areas, thereby promoting a more balanced and inclusive learning environment. Moreover, schools that promote co-curricular participation tend to witness better student-teacher relationships, reduced behavioral issues, and lower dropout rates (Eccles et al., 2003).

In contrast, the lack of access to engaging co-curricular programs may contribute to student boredom, absenteeism, and a diminished sense of school connectedness—factors that are known to correlate with academic underperformance (Sheerens et al, 1997).

In many underperforming private basic schools, the lack of adequate resources and staffing constraints can lead to a narrow focus on academic subjects at the expense of co-curricular activities (Li & Ma, 2010). Limited financial resources and staffing shortages often result in prioritizing core academic subjects such as mathematics, language arts, and science, leaving little room for extracurricular programs like sports, arts, music, and leadership development. As a result, students may miss out on the holistic development that these activities offer, which is essential for their cognitive, social, and emotional growth (Owusu & Yeboah, 2020).

Co-curricular programmes, which complement academic learning, are instrumental in fostering a well-rounded educational experience. Research indicates that students who engage in extracurricular activities tend to develop better social skills, time management abilities, and emotional resilience (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). Moreover, these activities provide opportunities for students to explore their interests, develop leadership skills, and build self-confidence. In turn, these factors contribute to greater school attachment, increased motivation, and improved academic performance (Eccles & Barber, 1999).

In the context of underperforming private schools, the integration of co-curricular activities can also help bridge gaps in student engagement. Many students in resource-poor environments may struggle to see the immediate relevance of academic subjects to their lives. Engaging in extracurricular activities can create a more

positive school experience, encouraging students to remain in school and engage with their academic work. Additionally, such programs can foster a supportive peer culture, where students feel more connected to their school and teachers, reducing the likelihood of disengagement and underachievement (Srivastava, 2013).

Thus, while these schools may face financial and staffing challenges, the strategic integration of co-curricular program into their routines can be a key factor in enhancing student engagement and supporting broader cognitive and emotional development (Srivastava, 2013). It provides an opportunity to develop students' skills and competencies in ways that traditional academic teaching may not. Educational leaders in underperforming schools should prioritize these program as part of their strategy to improve overall student outcomes (Feng, 2010).

2.4 Teacher related factors that contribute to the underperformance of students

This section was devoted to review literature to address research question 2: what teacher-related factors contribute to underperformance in private basic schools? Teachers are central to the learning process, and their qualifications, teaching methods, motivation, and commitment significantly influence student outcomes. Research consistently demonstrates that teacher quality is one of the most significant factors impacting student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teacher-related factors such as training, experience, instructional strategies, and the teacher-student relationship contribute directly to the quality of education provided and, consequently, the academic performance of students.

2.4.1 Teacher training and professional development

The professional development of teachers is crucial in enhancing their teaching effectiveness. According to Darling-Hammond (2017), continuous professional

development improves teaching practices, keeps educators updated on new instructional methods, and equips them with the skills necessary to address diverse learning needs in the classroom. Teachers who receive ongoing training are better able to incorporate new technologies, pedagogies, and assessments into their teaching, leading to improved student outcomes (Guskey, 2002).

The lack of professional development opportunities in under-resourced schools presents a significant challenge to improving the quality of education, and by extension, the academic performance of students. In many underperforming schools, especially those with limited financial resources, teachers may not have access to ongoing professional development or training that equips them with updated instructional methods and teaching strategies. As a result, these teachers may rely on outdated or ineffective teaching practices, which can fail to engage students and hinder their ability to meet academic standards (World Bank, 2018).

Rani and Kaur (2013) emphasize that teachers in schools with access to professional development are less likely to adopt innovative teaching approaches. These teachers may find it difficult to integrate new pedagogical methods, such as student-centered learning or the use of technology in the classroom, both of which have been shown to improve student engagement and academic outcomes. Without regular professional development, teachers may also struggle with addressing the diverse learning needs of their students, as they lack the necessary skills or knowledge to implement differentiated instruction. This gap in teaching strategies can exacerbate existing educational inequalities, particularly in underperforming schools, where students may already face external challenges that hinder their learning (Owusu & Addae, 2019).

Furthermore, without continuous professional teachers may experience burnout or low morale, which can directly impact their teaching effectiveness and, in turn, their students' performance. As stated by Darling-Hammond (2017), teachers who engage in ongoing learning and professional development are better equipped to meet the evolving needs of their students and are more likely to remain motivated and committed to their teaching careers. This underscores the critical importance of providing teachers with regular training and opportunities for professional growth to ensure that they are equipped with the skills and strategies necessary to improve student learning outcomes (Rani & Kaur, 2013).

Therefore, it is essential for educational administrators and policymakers to prioritize the professional development of teachers, especially in under-resourced schools. By investing in training programs, mentoring initiatives, and collaborative professional learning communities, schools can improve their teachers' instructional abilities, foster greater job satisfaction, and ultimately enhance the academic performance of their students.

2.4.2 Teacher experience and qualification

The qualifications and experience of teachers are fundamental in determining their ability to teach effectively. Experienced teachers are generally more confident and skilled in managing classrooms, differentiating instruction, and addressing students' needs (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teacher experience is also associated with higher levels of student achievement, as experienced educators tend to be better at adapting lessons, assessing student progress, and providing constructive feedback (Klassen & Tze, 2014).

The academic qualifications of teachers are widely recognized as a critical factor in determining the quality of education in schools. Teachers with higher qualifications, particularly those with advanced degrees or specialized training, possess a deeper understanding of the curriculum and subject matter they teach. As highlighted by Feng (2010), these teachers are more likely to employ evidence-based teaching practices that have been shown to enhance student learning and academic performance. Teachers with higher qualifications are also better equipped to manage diverse classroom settings adjust their teaching strategies to meet the needs of all students, and engage in reflective practices that improve their teaching effectiveness over time (Owusu & Addae, 2019).

In contrast, schools that face challenges in hiring qualified and experienced teachers, especially in under-resourced or rural settings, may struggle to provide students with the same quality of education. According to Akyeampong (2009), many private basic schools in such areas lack the financial resources to attract and retain qualified teachers, leading to higher turnover rates and a reliance on teachers with lower qualifications or inadequate training. This shortage of qualified teachers can have several negative effects on student outcomes. First, unqualified or less-experienced teachers may lack the expertise to effectively deliver the curriculum, resulting in poor understanding of key concepts and content by students. Second, these teachers may not have the necessary classroom management skills to create an environment conducive to learning, which can lead to disruptions, disengagement, and low student motivation. As a result, the academic performance of students in these schools may suffer significantly (Orodho, 2014).

Additionally, teachers with lower qualifications may have limited knowledge of pedagogical strategies and may be less familiar with the latest research on effective teaching practices. This can hinder their ability to incorporate modern instructional techniques, such as differentiated instruction or technology integration, which are essential for addressing the diverse learning needs of students. The lack of qualified teachers can also lead to limited professional development opportunities, as teachers may not have the necessary credentials to participate in advanced training or certification programs (Akyempong, 2009).

The importance of teacher qualifications in ensuring quality education cannot be overstated. Therefore, it is essential for policymakers, school administrators, and educational stakeholders to address the challenges faced by private basic schools in hiring and retaining qualified teachers. Strategies such as offering competitive salaries, providing professional development opportunities, and creating incentives for teachers to work in under-resourced or rural areas can help improve the overall quality of teaching and, by extension, student academic performance (Odeogun, 2001).

2.4.3 Teaching methods and student engagement

The teaching methods employed by teachers have a direct impact on students' engagement and academic performance. Traditional, teacher-centered approaches may not effectively engage students, leading to disengagement, low motivation, and poor academic outcomes (Kauchak & Eggen, 2011). Conversely, student-centered learning strategies that focus on active participation, collaborative learning, and critical thinking have been shown to enhance student engagement and academic achievement (Freeman et al., 2014).

Teachers who adopt innovative teaching methods that cater to various learning styles play a pivotal role in improving student academic performance. The use of diverse instructional strategies not only enhances the learning experience but also supports the engagement of students with varying needs and learning preferences. As Hattie (2009) notes, teachers who implement strategies such as problem-based learning, cooperative learning, and hands-on activities tend to foster more dynamic and participatory classroom environments. These methods encourage students to take an active role in their learning, which is crucial for developing deeper understanding and critical thinking skills.

Problem-based learning (PBL), for instance, presents students with real-world challenges that require them to apply their knowledge and collaborate with peers to find solutions. This approach not only helps students connect theoretical knowledge to practical situations but also strengthens their problem-solving abilities, which are essential for academic success (Owusu & Addae, 2019). Similarly, cooperative learning emphasizes group work, where students share ideas, support each other's learning, and develop communication and teamwork skills. Research by Darling-Hammond (2017) has shown that cooperative learning improves both academic achievement and interpersonal relationships among students, making it a highly effective teaching strategy.

Hands-on activities, on the other hand, allow students to engage directly with the material they are learning, which promotes active learning and helps reinforce theoretical concepts in a practical manner. These activities are particularly beneficial in subjects like science and mathematics, where abstract concepts can be difficult for students to grasp. By working with physical materials or conducting experiments,

students are more likely to retain information and develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter (Resnick, 1987).

Furthermore, the adoption of these innovative teaching methods addresses the diverse learning needs of students. Every student learns differently, and offering varied instructional strategies ensures that all students have access to the best opportunities for success. When teachers tailor their teaching to accommodate different learning styles—such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners they create an inclusive classroom environment where all students can thrive. As a result, students are more motivated to engage with the material, are better able to retain information, and are more likely to develop higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which are essential for academic achievement (Hattie, 2009).

2.4.4 Teacher motivation and commitment

Teacher motivation and commitment are also vital in determining the quality of education provided. Motivated and committed teachers are more likely to go above and beyond to ensure that their students succeed. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), intrinsic motivation, such as a passion for teaching and a commitment to student success, is a key factor in enhancing teaching effectiveness. Teachers who feel supported by their school leadership, are recognized for their efforts, and have opportunities for professional growth are more likely to be motivated and committed to their students' academic success (Locke & Latham, 2002).

In contrast, teachers who are demotivated or dissatisfied with their working conditions are significantly less likely to invest their time and energy into improving student outcomes. Teacher motivation is closely tied to the working environment, and when that environment is characterized by poor support, low compensation, and high

levels of stress, the quality of teaching and learning can suffer. Research has consistently shown that teachers with low morale, often a consequence of these unfavorable conditions, tend to become disengaged from their work, leading to lower levels of student engagement and achievement. Richmond and Manochehri (2017) found that poor working conditions and lack of professional support contribute to teacher burnout, which in turn affects their ability to effectively manage classrooms and deliver high-quality instruction. This disengagement can manifest in various ways, such as a lack of enthusiasm in the classroom, limited interaction with students, and a reduced willingness to go beyond the basic curriculum.

The impact of teacher dissatisfaction extends beyond the teachers themselves. Studies have shown that demotivated teachers often exhibit reduced levels of student-centered teaching, which directly affects the quality of student engagement and learning outcomes (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). Teachers who feel unsupported and undervalued may struggle to create positive, stimulating learning environments, which is crucial for fostering student motivation and success. Furthermore, low teacher morale can lead to high turnover rates, which disrupts the continuity of education and creates additional challenges in terms of teacher recruitment and retention. This is particularly problematic in under-resourced schools, where the constant turnover of teaching staff can lead to a lack of stability and long-term academic planning, ultimately hindering student progress.

To mitigate these challenges, it is essential for schools to foster a positive work environment that values teacher well-being. Research suggests that teachers who feel appreciated, supported, and fairly compensated are more likely to remain motivated and committed to their students' success (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Schools should

prioritize professional development opportunities, offer competitive salaries, and create supportive networks that help teachers manage stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, recognizing teachers' efforts through praise, awards, or career advancement opportunities can contribute to improving teacher morale.

Furthermore, schools can implement initiatives that promote a culture of collaboration and mutual support among staff. A positive work culture, where teachers feel they are part of a team that works together for student success, can foster motivation and improve job satisfaction. Teachers who feel supported by their peers and administrators are more likely to stay motivated and committed to their work, ultimately benefiting students' academic experiences and outcomes (Tooley, 2009).

2.4.5 Teacher-student relationship

The relationship between teachers and students plays a significant role in influencing academic performance. Positive teacher-student relationships, characterized by trust, respect, and mutual understanding, foster a conducive learning environment in which students feel valued and supported (Duncan and Murnane, 2011). When students have a strong, positive connection with their teachers, they are more likely to engage in the learning process, ask questions, seek help when needed, and feel confident in their abilities (Hamre & Pianta, 2001).

Negative teacher-student relationships can significantly affect students' emotional well-being, behavior, and academic outcomes. According to Kauchak and Eggen (2011), when teachers fail to establish supportive and positive connections with their students, it can result in an emotionally unsafe environment that undermines students' sense of belonging and trust within the school setting. Such environments, marked by conflict, neglect, or lack of individualized attention, can cause students to disengage

from their learning and even experience heightened levels of stress or anxiety. Disengagement often manifests as absenteeism, a lack of participation in class activities, and a general disinterest in academic pursuits, all of which contribute to poorer academic performance (Duncan & Murnane, 2011). These effects can be particularly pronounced among students from disadvantaged backgrounds, who may already be facing external challenges such as socioeconomic instability or lack of parental support.

Teachers who prioritize building strong, positive relationships with their students are more likely to create a safe and supportive learning environment that fosters trust, cooperation, and motivation. Establishing rapport with students, taking an interest in their personal and academic lives, and addressing their individual needs not only improves their emotional well-being but also enhances their academic outcomes. Research has shown that students who feel supported and valued by their teachers are more likely to have higher levels of self-esteem, intrinsic motivation, and academic achievement (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Positive relationships also encourage students to view the school as a safe place where they can take academic risks, ask questions, and make mistakes without fear of ridicule or punishment, which ultimately leads to improved learning outcomes.

Moreover, when teachers exhibit empathy, understanding, and patience, students are more likely to feel comfortable approaching them for help when needed, which is crucial for academic success. This supportive approach helps students navigate academic challenges, develop problem-solving skills, and build resilience. Teachers who demonstrate care and concern for their students' well-being are better equipped

to identify signs of disengagement or academic struggles early, allowing for timely interventions to address these issues before they escalate (Steinberg, 2019).

Conversely, when teachers adopt an authoritarian or indifferent stance, students may feel alienated and less motivated to engage with the curriculum. This lack of emotional support can result in students withdrawing from the learning process, leading to underperformance. Therefore, fostering positive teacher-student relationships should be considered a critical element of any strategy aimed at improving student outcomes. Teachers who take the time to understand and address the emotional and academic needs of their students play a pivotal role in enhancing both student engagement and academic achievement (Anamuah-Mensah, 2019).

Professional development, qualifications, experience, teaching methods, motivation, and teacher-student relationships, are crucial in shaping the academic performance of students. Ensuring that teachers have access to continuous training, are qualified, motivated, and employ effective teaching methods can significantly improve student outcomes. As research consistently shows, teachers are the most influential factor in determining the quality of education, and addressing the challenges they face is key to improving student performance. School administrators and policymakers must prioritize teacher support and development to foster a positive learning environment that maximizes student success (Opfer, 2011).

2.5 Socio-economic factors contributing to students' underperformance

This section was devoted to review literature to address research question 3: what socio-economic factors contribute to underperformance in private basic schools? Socio-economic status (SES) has long been recognized as a significant determinant of academic performance. SES encompasses various factors such as income, parental

education, occupation, and family structure, all of which influence students' access to resources, emotional support, and overall learning environment. A substantial body of research has demonstrated that students from low socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to underperform academically compared to their peers from higher SES backgrounds (Duncan & Murnane, 2011). This section will explore the ways in which socio-economic factors, particularly family income, parental education, and occupation, impact students' academic outcomes.

2.5.1 Family income and academic performance

One of the most direct socio-economic influences on students' academic performance is family income. Children from families with lower incomes often face numerous challenges that can hinder their educational success. These challenges include limited access to educational resources such as books, computers, and tutoring, as well as a lack of stable housing and proper nutrition, which are essential for cognitive development and concentration in school (Evans & Kim, 2013). Additionally, students from low-income families are more likely to attend schools with fewer resources, larger class sizes, and less experienced teachers, all of which can contribute to academic underachievement (Sirin, 2005).

Research by Acheampong (2018) highlights the link between family income and academic performance, noting that students from wealthier families are more likely to have access to high-quality early childhood education, extracurricular activities, and other academic support systems that give them an advantage in school.

Students from lower-income families often face a multitude of challenges that create significant barriers to their academic success. One of the primary challenges is financial stress, which not only affects the students themselves but also their families.

This stress can manifest in various ways, such as parents struggling to pay for basic necessities like food, housing, and healthcare, leaving little room for investing in their children's education. When families experience financial instability, parents may be unable to purchase educational materials, support extracurricular activities, or even attend school meetings. This lack of parental involvement in educational activities negatively impacts students' academic performance, as parental involvement is a critical factor in children's learning outcomes (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

Furthermore, students from low-income families may be required to work part-time jobs in order to contribute to their family's finances. These jobs often involve long hours or evening shifts, which can lead to poor time management and fatigue, leaving little energy or focus for schoolwork. The need to work part-time may also result in increased absenteeism, as students may have to miss school in order to fulfill work responsibilities or help at home (Jensen, 2009). These work commitments further compromise students' academic performance, as they may not have the time or opportunity to complete assignments, engage in after-school tutoring, or participate in school activities that enhance their learning.

Moreover, financial strain can also lead to psychological stress for both parents and children. Research by Evans and Kim (2013) highlights that children from economically disadvantaged families are more likely to experience high levels of stress, which can negatively affect their cognitive development and emotional well-being. When children are under constant stress, it becomes difficult for them to concentrate on their studies, retain information, and participate fully in school life. This lack of emotional and cognitive support can further hinder their academic performance and contribute to academic underachievement (Nyantakyi, 2020).

The combination of financial constraints, lack of parental involvement, and the need for students to work outside school often results in students from lower-income families having fewer opportunities to engage in academic enrichment activities, such as educational outings, tutoring, or extra-curricular activities. These barriers make it more difficult for these students to achieve academically when compared to their peers from higher-income families who have greater access to educational resources and support systems.

2.5.2 Parental education and academic success

Parental education plays a critical role in shaping students' academic performance. Parents who have higher levels of education are generally better equipped to support their children's learning, both academically and emotionally. These parents are more likely to engage in activities that promote academic success, such as reading with their children, assisting with homework, and attending school meetings (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). Furthermore, educated parents are often more knowledgeable about the education system and the importance of early childhood education, which enhances their ability to advocate for their children's needs and ensure that they receive appropriate academic support.

Students from families where parents have lower levels of education often face significant disadvantages in their academic journey, as the educational background of parents plays a crucial role in shaping their children's academic success. Parental involvement in a child's education has been shown to positively affect student achievement, but for many students with parents who have lower levels of formal education, this involvement may be limited (Sirin, 2005).

For instance, parents who themselves struggled academically or have low levels of education may feel less confident in helping their children with homework or understanding the academic demands placed on them. This can lead to a lack of academic support at home, where students may not receive the guidance or encouragement needed to succeed. According to research, children whose parents lack educational qualifications often have lower academic expectations for their children, which can translate into reduced motivation and engagement in schoolwork (Jeynes, 2015).

Moreover, lower-educated parents may also have limited access to resources that support their children's education outside of school. For example, they may not be able to afford additional educational materials such as books, tutoring, or extracurricular programs that are often essential for academic enrichment. These students may also have fewer opportunities for cultural and social enrichment outside the classroom that could foster critical thinking, creativity, and a love for learning (Sirin, 2005). The lack of these experiences outside of school can hinder cognitive development and limit students' ability to engage in the learning process when they are at school.

In addition to the academic help that parents may be unable to provide, there is often a lack of engagement in school activities, parent-teacher conferences, and school-related events, which further perpetuates the cycle of low academic performance. This disengagement can leave students feeling isolated, unsupported, and demotivated, leading to poor academic outcomes and increased dropout rates.

In contrast, students from families where parents have higher educational attainment tend to benefit from an environment rich in academic resources and support. These students are more likely to have parents who are involved in school activities, provide academic assistance at home, and set high academic expectations (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). As a result, these students are better equipped to navigate academic challenges and are more likely to perform well in school.

The educational level of parents has a direct impact on the academic success of their children. For students with lower-educated parents, the lack of academic support and limited access to enriching experiences can lead to academic disengagement and poor performance. This highlights the importance of creating interventions and support systems that help bridge the gap for students from lower-education backgrounds, ensuring they receive the necessary academic support to succeed (Owusu and Addae, 2019).

2.5.3 Parental occupation and educational outcomes

The type of occupation held by parents also has implications for students' academic success. Research indicates that children from families where parents hold professional or high-status jobs are more likely to perform well academically, as these parents often have more resources and flexibility to support their children's education (Jensen, 2013). Professional occupations are often associated with higher incomes, better access to resources, and greater educational expectations, all of which can positively influence students' academic outcomes.

Children from families where parents hold low-status or manual labor jobs often face a unique set of challenges that can hinder their academic success. These challenges are multifaceted, ranging from limited financial resources to stressful home

environments that affect students' ability to engage in their education. Parents in low-status jobs are typically subject to lower wages, fewer benefits, and less job security, which can create financial instability. As a result, they may struggle to afford educational resources such as books, school supplies, or extracurricular activities that can enhance their children's learning (Evans & Kim, 2013).

This financial strain can also affect parental involvement in their children's education. Parents working in manual labor or low-status jobs often have long working hours or irregular schedules, leaving them with little time or energy to engage with their children's academic activities. They may also be less able to attend parent-teacher conferences or school meetings, limiting their ability to support their children's educational development. Consequently, the lack of parental engagement can lead to a reduced understanding of their child's academic progress and needs, contributing to academic underperformance (Evans & Kim, 2013).

In addition to financial instability, students from these families may experience psychological stress due to their parents' precarious economic conditions. Research has shown that financial strain in the family is associated with increased levels of stress and anxiety among children (Evans & Kim, 2013). Children may worry about their family's economic situation, which can create emotional and mental barriers to learning. Stress can impair a student's cognitive abilities, such as concentration, memory, and problem-solving skills, which are essential for academic achievement. Furthermore, the unstable living conditions that often accompany low-status jobs—such as crowded housing or living in neighbourhoods with higher rates of crime or poverty can further exacerbate this stress and negatively impact a student's ability to focus on their studies.

Moreover, chronic stress from these external factors can affect students' health, leading to frequent absenteeism or low attendance rates at school. For example, children from families with limited financial resources may not have access to proper nutrition or healthcare, making them more susceptible to illnesses, which can lead to extended absences from school and missed learning opportunities. As absenteeism increases, so too does the likelihood of academic underperformance, as students miss critical lessons and fall behind in their studies (Owusu & Addae, 2019).

Furthermore, the lack of educational resources in low-income households may mean that children are not exposed to the kinds of academic enrichment that would allow them to develop their intellectual skills outside of the classroom. For example, they may not have access to books, tutoring, or a quiet place to study, which can limit their opportunities for academic improvement and personal growth.

Children from families where parents hold low-status or manual labour jobs face several barriers to academic success, including financial instability, limited parental involvement, increased stress, and lack of resources. These factors create an environment that makes it more difficult for students to thrive academically, which can contribute to lower levels of academic engagement and underperformance. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach, such as community support programs, school-based initiatives that support students from low-income families, and policies aimed at reducing financial and psychological stress in these households.

2.5.4 Family structure and academic performance

Family structure is another socio-economic factor that can influence students' academic outcomes. Students from single-parent households or those with less stable family environments often face additional challenges that can affect their academic performance. Single parents may struggle with balancing work and family responsibilities, which can limit the time and energy available to support their children's education (Epstein, 2018). Furthermore, children from single-parent families may experience emotional stress or financial insecurity, both of which can negatively impact their school performance.

Research indicates that students from two-parent households often experience better academic outcomes compared to their peers from single-parent households. This is primarily because two-parent families generally have access to more resources—both financial and emotional—and offer a more stable home environment, which positively impacts a child's academic performance. Studies have shown that children raised in two-parent households tend to perform better in school, exhibit fewer behavioural problems, and have greater opportunities for academic support (Amato, 2001). The presence of two parents can provide a more balanced division of parenting responsibilities, allowing one parent to focus on academic support while the other addresses other aspects of child-rearing, such as emotional well-being and physical needs.

However, it is crucial to recognize that family structure alone is not the sole determinant of academic success. Students from single-parent households are not inherently destined for poor academic performance. In fact, numerous studies have highlighted that parental involvement, parent-child relationships, and family support

systems significantly influence educational outcomes. Han and Yin (2016) emphasize that the quality of the parent-child relationship, the parent's level of education, and the overall family support system are far more significant than the number of parents in the household. Single parents who are highly involved in their children's education, who have higher levels of education themselves, or who maintain strong emotional and financial support systems, are likely to see positive academic outcomes in their children, despite the challenges posed by the absence of one parent.

The academic outcomes of children from single-parent families are thus context-dependent. For instance, a single mother with a high level of education, a stable job, and strong community support may be able to provide a nurturing and resource-rich environment for her children, resulting in academic success. Conversely, a single parent who struggles with financial instability, low educational attainment, or lack of social support may face more challenges in providing academic support and stability for their children (Okyerefo et al., 2011).

While children from two-parent households tend to have advantages in terms of resources and emotional support, children from single-parent households can also perform well academically, depending on factors such as parental involvement, quality of the parent-child relationship, and overall family support. As such, it is important to consider the broader context of family dynamics when assessing the academic performance of students (Oketch et al, 2010).

2.5.5 The role of community support

In addition to the individual family factors that influence a student's academic performance, the broader community context plays a significant role. Communities with strong social networks, access to libraries, recreational facilities, and academic

support programs provide children with a range of resources that enhance their learning and overall well-being. Research by Duncan and Murnane (2011) highlights the importance of a supportive community environment in fostering student success. Communities with abundant social capital often have organized programs that support children's academic achievement, such as after-school tutoring, mentorship programs, and extracurricular activities that foster both academic and personal growth.

Furthermore, social networks within communities, including relationships between neighbours, local businesses, schools, and other institutions, can create a positive environment that encourages educational attainment. These networks offer children access to resources such as study groups, community centers, and adult role models, which help to reinforce the value of education and provide additional support for academic success. On the other hand, children from low-income or marginalized communities often face a lack of access to these vital resources, which can compound the negative effects of socio-economic disadvantage. These communities may suffer from limited access to quality education, libraries, or recreational facilities, which are crucial for both academic achievement and holistic development. Without access to such resources, students may face difficulties in staying engaged with their studies or in acquiring the skills they need to succeed. Inadequate access to extracurricular programs or academic support can contribute to disengagement, a lack of motivation, and poor academic performance (Han & Yin, 2016).

Moreover, communities that are economically disadvantaged often have fewer educational opportunities, making it harder for students to break the cycle of poverty and improve their academic outcomes. For example, students who grow up in areas with high crime rates or unstable living conditions may also struggle with emotional

stress, which can detract from their ability to focus on academics. In these environments, the challenges of poverty and disadvantage can lead to greater absenteeism, lower academic expectations, and decreased opportunities for social mobility.

In conclusion, a community's resources and its level of social capital significantly impact students' academic performance. Communities with strong networks, access to resources, and academic support programs provide a conducive environment for learning. In contrast, students from marginalized communities face compounded challenges that hinder their academic progress, often exacerbating the socio-economic disadvantages they already experience. Therefore, it is crucial to address both family and community factors when designing interventions to improve students' academic outcomes.

In sum, socio-economic factors such as family income, parental education, parental occupation, family structure, and community support play a significant role in shaping students' academic outcomes. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds face a variety of challenges that hinder their academic success, including limited access to resources, emotional stress, and lack of parental support. Addressing these socio-economic disparities through targeted interventions and support programs is essential for improving the academic performance of students in underperforming private basic schools. Schools, policymakers, and communities must work collaboratively to ensure that all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have access to the resources and support necessary for academic success (Mensah and Ankomah, 2020).

2.6 Strategies to improve students' academic performance

This section was devoted to review literature to address research question 4: what strategies can be used to enhance academic performance in private basic schools? In the context of improving students' academic performance, several strategies have been identified as crucial to fostering a conducive learning environment. These strategies focus on addressing a range of factors, from teacher quality and school infrastructure to parental involvement and curriculum adjustments. In this section, we will explore various approaches that can contribute to improving academic outcomes, specifically in the context of private basic schools facing challenges that impede student success.

2.6.1 Teacher professional development

Teachers are at the forefront of influencing student outcomes, making professional development a key strategy in improving academic performance. Teachers who are equipped with current pedagogical knowledge, subject-specific expertise, and innovative teaching methods are better positioned to foster a positive learning environment (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Ongoing training and professional development programmes ensure that teachers remain updated on new teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, and technological advancements in education.

In private basic schools, especially those in under-resourced or marginalized areas, targeted professional development programmes become even more critical due to the limited financial and infrastructural support. Teachers in such schools may not have access to the same professional development opportunities as those in better-funded

institutions, which can impede their ability to stay updated with the latest teaching strategies, curriculum changes, and technological advancements (Rani & Kaur, 2013).

Targeted professional development focuses on practical and affordable strategies, ensuring that teachers are equipped with skills that they can immediately apply in the classroom, even within the constraints of limited resources. For example, rather than expensive workshops, school administrators can organize in-house training sessions or collaborate with local educational organizations to provide cost-effective, yet impactful, learning experiences. These programs might emphasize classroom management, effective use of available teaching resources, and differentiated instruction, which are highly beneficial in settings where teaching resources are scarce.

Moreover, collaborative learning communities can be a highly effective strategy in fostering professional growth. Teachers can come together in peer-learning networks to share teaching resources, discuss challenges, and work collectively to solve classroom issues. This approach not only provides opportunities for teachers to learn from each other but also promotes a sense of professional solidarity that is critical in environments where resources and morale may be low. Workshops focusing on student-centred learning, technology integration, and formative assessment techniques can be incorporated into these collaborative settings, enhancing both the skills and confidence of teachers (Han & Yin, 2016).

In-service training is another key element that ensures teachers receive continuous support. Given that many private basic schools are smaller and less formalized, providing training directly within the school environment allows teachers to attend without incurring additional costs. Teachers can benefit from tailored training

sessions on how to make the most of limited classroom materials or incorporate ICT tools, even in schools with minimal technological infrastructure (Guskey, 2002).

Ultimately, creating ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers is not only beneficial for their growth but also for the academic success of their students. By focusing on affordable, practical training that addresses the unique challenges of private basic schools, teachers will be better equipped to enhance their teaching methods, engage students more effectively, and ultimately improve academic performance (Rani & Kaur, 2013). This approach ensures that even in resource-poor settings, teachers are able to continuously refine their skills and remain committed to providing the best possible education for their students.

2.6.2 Improving school infrastructure and resources

The quality of school infrastructure plays a significant role in shaping student outcomes. Well-maintained buildings, modern classrooms, functional furniture, and access to learning materials enhance student learning and engagement (Earthman, 2004). Schools in under-resourced areas often struggle with poor infrastructure, which can lead to overcrowded classrooms, inadequate ventilation, and broken furniture, all of which detract from the learning experience.

Therefore, prioritizing investments in school infrastructure is essential for creating an environment that supports both teaching and learning. Adequate and well-maintained infrastructure, such as renovated classrooms, upgraded technology, and teaching aids, contributes significantly to student engagement, academic achievement, and overall school satisfaction. Research by Adeogun (2001) suggests that well-resourced schools provide a more conducive learning environment, where both students and teachers can thrive. For example, schools equipped with proper lighting, ventilation, and

functional furniture create a comfortable atmosphere, which has been linked to improved concentration and motivation among students.

Additionally, schools with access to essential teaching resources—such as textbooks, computers, and laboratory equipment—are in a better position to deliver high-quality, interactive instruction. Inadequate or outdated resources can hinder the ability of teachers to implement engaging and effective teaching methods. For instance, when students do not have access to updated textbooks or adequate laboratory materials, they are less likely to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are vital for academic success.

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into education plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of instruction. Li and Ma (2010) note that access to digital tools, such as computers and the internet, enables students to engage in student-centred learning, access diverse learning materials, and develop essential digital literacy skills. For instance, through ICT, students can access interactive simulations, educational games, and global information sources, which enrich their learning experience. This, in turn, fosters higher-order thinking and problem-solving abilities, both of which are crucial for academic achievement (Li & Ma, 2010). Moreover, the provision of internet access facilitates research and self-directed learning, empowering students to explore topics beyond the textbook and engage with up-to-date, real-world information. Digital learning tools also allow teachers to adopt innovative teaching methods, such as blended learning, where in-class instruction is complemented by online resources, fostering a more dynamic and flexible learning environment.

Furthermore, upgrading school infrastructure and integrating ICT aligns with global educational trends, which increasingly emphasize the role of technology in creating a 21st-century learning environment. Countries around the world are increasingly investing in digital tools and infrastructure to bridge the digital divide and ensure that all students have equal access to the educational opportunities provided by modern technologies.

In light of this, policymakers should prioritize investments in school infrastructure, focusing not only on physical amenities but also on technological upgrades and resource availability. This would ensure that students, especially those in under-resourced private schools, have the tools and environment necessary for optimal learning. As Adeogun (2001) and Li and Ma (2010) suggest, providing teachers with the resources they need whether physical materials or digital tools—plays a critical role in enhancing student engagement and academic performance, particularly in today's technology-driven educational landscape.

2.6.3 Parental and community involvement

Research consistently shows that parental involvement plays a significant role in enhancing student academic performance. Parents who engage with their children's education whether through regular communication with teachers, participation in school events, or providing academic support at home are more likely to foster positive attitudes toward learning (Epstein, 2018).

In private schools, particularly those with limited resources, fostering strong relationships between schools and parents is crucial for creating a supportive learning environment. According to Duncan and Murnane (2011), engaging parents in their children's education has a profound impact on student success. Schools should

implement parent engagement programs that encourage consistent communication, active participation in school events, and educational workshops. These programs can empower parents with the knowledge and skills necessary to support their children's learning at home, further enhancing the students' educational outcomes.

Parent involvement has been linked to various positive outcomes for students, including better academic performance, improved behavior, and higher levels of motivation. By staying informed about their children's progress, attending parent-teacher meetings, and supporting learning activities at home, parents can provide valuable reinforcement to what students learn in school. However, many parents may not always have the resources, skills, or time to effectively assist their children, especially in private schools with limited resources. Educational workshops can equip parents with strategies to support homework, create a conducive study environment at home, and encourage positive attitudes toward learning. These workshops can also provide guidance on how to help children manage their time, balance schoolwork, and participate in extracurricular activities (Tooley, 2009).

In addition to direct parent-school interactions, partnerships with local businesses and community organizations can offer additional support for students. For example, local businesses may provide funding or in-kind donations, such as books, computers, or materials, that can enhance the educational experience. Community organizations, such as libraries, museums, or youth centres, can offer extracurricular learning opportunities, tutoring programs, or mentorship initiatives that enrich students' academic experiences. These community resources not only fill the gaps where school resources may fall short but also help to build a stronger, more integrated learning ecosystem around students.

Moreover, these collaborative partnerships contribute to a sense of community and shared responsibility for student success. When schools, parents, local businesses, and community organizations work together, they create a network of support that addresses the educational needs of students from multiple angles. This can be especially beneficial in private schools, where financial constraints may limit the availability of in-house programs or resources. By tapping into the broader community, private schools can compensate for their lack of physical and financial resources and provide a more comprehensive, well-rounded education for their students (Tooley and Dixon, 2006).

Ultimately, creating a strong connection between schools and parents, as well as developing partnerships with local businesses and community organizations, is essential for private schools to thrive despite resource limitations. These collaborations not only provide additional resources but also reinforce the importance of a community-driven approach to student success.

2.6.4 Addressing socio-economic barriers

Socio-economic factors, including poverty, parental education levels, and financial instability, can significantly hinder students' academic success. Research consistently shows that children from low-income families face various barriers that impact their educational outcomes. These barriers may include inadequate access to educational resources, such as textbooks, uniforms, or school supplies, as well as challenges in maintaining consistent school attendance due to financial constraints (Jensen, 2009). Addressing these socio-economic challenges requires targeted interventions, such as financial support programmes that can alleviate the burden on families and enable students to access the necessary resources for their education.

One such intervention is the provision of scholarships or grants for low-income families, which can ensure that financial limitations do not prevent students from attending school or fully participating in school activities. For example, offering scholarships for textbooks, school uniforms, transportation, and other educational expenses can reduce the financial stress on families and help students maintain their school attendance. These types of financial aids ensure that students have the physical tools they need to succeed, while also providing families with the relief they need to support their children's education (Evans & Kim, 2013).

Beyond financial assistance, mentorship programmes and after-school tutoring can be critical in providing academic support to students at risk due to socio-economic factors. Mentorship programmes, in particular, can offer students guidance, encouragement, and motivation from role models who understand the specific challenges they face. This additional support helps students navigate the complexities of schoolwork, encourages positive behavioural changes, and builds self-confidence, which can directly improve academic performance. After-school tutoring also ensures that students who may struggle to keep up with their peers due to external challenges can receive additional academic help in a more focused, one-on-one environment (Jensen, 2009).

Moreover, addressing nutrition and healthcare is another critical strategy for improving students' overall well-being, which, in turn, enhances their academic focus and performance. Proper nutrition is vital for cognitive function, concentration, and overall health, all of which are necessary for academic success. Studies have shown that children who lack access to nutritious food may experience lower energy levels, difficulty concentrating, and absenteeism due to illness (Jensen, 2013). To combat

these issues, schools can collaborate with local health organizations to provide free or subsidized health services, ensuring that students receive routine medical checkups, vaccinations, and treatment for common illnesses. Additionally, nutrition programs, such as providing free or low-cost school meals, can help ensure that all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have access to healthy food that supports their physical and cognitive development. This holistic approach to addressing students' physical needs by ensuring they are well-nourished, healthy, and have access to necessary medical care can significantly reduce absenteeism and improve their ability to focus in class.

By tackling socio-economic challenges from multiple angles, schools can create a more supportive and equitable learning environment for students facing financial and health-related hardships. Providing financial assistance, implementing mentorship and tutoring programs, and ensuring access to proper nutrition and healthcare can address the root causes of socio-economic disadvantage and help level the playing field for all students, ultimately enhancing their academic performance and long-term success.

2.6.5 Curriculum reforms and differentiated instruction

To effectively address the diverse needs of students and improve their academic performance, schools must prioritize the development and implementation of a relevant and inclusive curriculum. A curriculum that is relevant ensures that the content and skills taught are aligned with students' real-world experiences, future career opportunities, and societal needs. It must also be adaptable, ensuring that all students, regardless of their backgrounds, learning abilities, or interests, can access the material and achieve academic success (Omari, 2011).

A key strategy for making the curriculum inclusive is the integration of differentiated instruction. This approach allows teachers to adapt their teaching strategies to accommodate students' varying learning styles, abilities, and interests. According to Tomlinson (2001), differentiated instruction enables teachers to provide tailored lessons that meet the specific needs of individual learners. For example, some students may benefit from visual aids, while others may excel through hands-on activities or collaborative learning experiences. Differentiation also includes offering varied levels of complexity in tasks, ensuring that both struggling learners and those who are advanced are appropriately challenged. Research consistently shows that when teachers use student-centred approaches and personalize learning experiences, students are more engaged, motivated, and likely to succeed academically (Tomlinson, 2001). By recognizing and addressing the diversity within the classroom, teachers create an environment where each student has the support and resources they need to thrive.

Moreover, as the world becomes increasingly globalized and technology-driven, there is a growing need for schools to prioritize curriculum reforms that emphasize essential skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. These competencies are vital for students' success in the 21st century, as they are foundational to navigating the complexities of the modern workforce and society. Curricula that encourage higher-order thinking and collaborative learning better prepare students for the challenges and opportunities they will encounter beyond school. Schools should ensure that the curriculum promotes inquiry-based learning, where students actively explore problems and generate solutions, rather than passively absorbing information. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of

content and equips students with the problem-solving skills necessary for success in both academic and professional settings (Klassen and Tze, 2014).

Additionally, schools should strive to implement curricula that are flexible enough to support enrichment programs, providing opportunities for students to explore subjects beyond the core curriculum. Such programs are especially important in areas like STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), which are critical fields for future innovation and career opportunities. By offering enrichment programs in STEM, students can delve deeper into subjects that spark their interest, often leading to greater enthusiasm and academic achievement. STEM education also nurtures critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, further preparing students for careers in technology and engineering fields, which are in high demand globally. Furthermore, enrichment programs allow schools to cultivate students' curiosity and help them develop the skills needed to pursue future academic and professional pathways with confidence (Freeman et al, 2014).

In sum, an inclusive and relevant curriculum, coupled with the integration of differentiated instruction and curriculum reforms focused on 21st-century skills, is essential for addressing the diverse needs of students and ensuring their academic success. Such an approach not only benefits individual students but also fosters a more equitable and effective learning environment where all learners can achieve their full potential.

2.6.6 Mental health support and counselling

Mental health is a crucial, yet frequently overlooked, factor influencing students' academic performance. Students experiencing mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, or trauma often struggle to focus, participate, and engage in their

studies. Mental health challenges can create significant barriers to learning by impairing cognitive function, memory, concentration, and emotional regulation. As a result, students may experience difficulties in managing academic workloads, interacting with peers, and maintaining positive relationships with teachers, all of which can contribute to underperformance.

Given the profound impact of mental health on students' academic success, it is essential for schools to implement mental health support programs that provide adequate resources for emotional well-being. One of the most effective ways to address mental health issues is by offering counselling services within schools. Guidance counsellors and school psychologists can play a pivotal role in supporting students by providing a safe space for them to express concerns, gain coping strategies, and work through emotional challenges. Studies by Sink and Stroh (2003) have shown that students who have access to emotional support and counselling services are better able to manage stress and anxiety, ultimately leading to improved academic performance. Furthermore, when students feel emotionally supported, they are more likely to be engaged in their learning, develop stronger social skills, and build resilience to academic challenges.

In addition to individual counselling, school-wide mental health initiatives can be instrumental in creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment. These initiatives may include activities that promote emotional wellness, such as mindfulness programs, stress management workshops, and peer support networks. Schools that prioritize mental health by integrating these practices into their culture demonstrate a commitment to fostering the overall well-being of their students. By reducing the stigma surrounding mental health and encouraging open conversations,

students may feel more empowered to seek help and overcome mental health challenges without fear of judgment.

Additionally, teachers and staff can play an essential role in supporting students' mental health by being trained to recognize signs of emotional distress and by fostering a positive, compassionate classroom atmosphere. When educators are sensitive to the mental health needs of their students, they can identify students who may be struggling and direct them to the appropriate resources for support. This proactive approach can prevent minor issues from escalating into more severe mental health crises that can significantly disrupt learning.

In summary, the integration of mental health services and support programs within schools is essential for improving student well-being and academic outcomes. By providing counselling, fostering mental wellness, and creating a supportive school environment, students are better equipped to manage academic challenges and perform to the best of their abilities. Schools should prioritize mental health as a critical component of the educational experience, recognizing that the emotional and psychological health of students is intrinsically linked to their academic success (Amoto, 2001).

2.6.7 Regular assessment and monitoring

Regular assessments are a critical component of the educational process, as they provide valuable insights into students' progress and learning outcomes. Through consistent use of both formative and summative assessments, teachers can evaluate the depth of students' understanding and determine where adjustments to instruction are needed. Formative assessments, conducted throughout the learning process, allow teachers to gauge student comprehension in real-time and make immediate

modifications to their teaching methods. On the other hand, summative assessments, typically administered at the end of a unit or term, offer a comprehensive evaluation of students' overall achievement and mastery of the material. By using a combination of these assessment types, teachers can create a more dynamic and responsive learning environment (Nyantakyi, 2020).

The value of regular assessments extends beyond the classroom, as school administrators also play an essential role in monitoring student performance data. By analysing trends and patterns in assessment results, administrators can identify which students or groups of students may require additional support or intervention. This process enables schools to address emerging learning gaps and ensure that no student falls behind. For example, data-driven approaches can highlight areas where students are consistently underperforming, prompting the implementation of targeted interventions such as remedial classes, tutoring, or differentiated instruction. In this way, schools can provide tailored support to individual students and promote more equitable learning opportunities (Tavani & Losh, 2016).

Moreover, the integration of data-driven decision-making into school management practices is crucial for improving academic outcomes. Fullan (2011) emphasizes the importance of using assessment data to inform decisions at all levels of school operation. By regularly collecting and analysing student performance data, educators can track the effectiveness of their teaching strategies, identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, and make informed decisions about resource allocation. This proactive approach ensures that instructional methods remain aligned with students' needs and supports a continuous cycle of improvement in both teaching and learning.

Additionally, collaborative data review among teachers and school leaders can foster a culture of shared responsibility for student success. When teachers come together to analyse assessment results and discuss strategies, they can learn from one another's practices and gain new insights into how to better meet students' diverse needs. This collaborative approach helps create a school-wide commitment to continuous improvement and academic excellence (Mensah & Ankomah, 2020).

Regular assessments and data-driven decision-making are powerful tools for enhancing student learning and academic performance. By systematically tracking student progress and responding to identified needs, educators and school leaders can make informed adjustments to teaching methods, interventions, and resources. This ensures that all students have the opportunity to succeed and achieve their full potential.

Improving academic performance in private basic schools requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the quality of teaching, school infrastructure, parental involvement, socio-economic factors, and mental health support. By focusing on professional development for teachers, improving resources, engaging parents and communities, addressing socio-economic challenges, and promoting inclusive curricula, schools can create an environment that fosters academic success for all students. Moreover, regular monitoring and adjustments to teaching practices will ensure that students receive the support they need to achieve their full potential.

2.7 Summary of chapter

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of existing literature related to the factors contributing to the underperformance of students in private basic schools. The review was organized according to the study's objectives, focusing on school

environment factors, teacher-related factors, socio-economic factors, and strategies to improve academic performance.

In the first section, school environment factors were discussed, emphasizing the importance of physical infrastructure, availability of teaching and learning materials, safety, administrative support, co-curricular activities, and ICT access. Research highlighted how inadequate infrastructure and insufficient resources can negatively affect students' academic outcomes. Moreover, a safe and supportive school environment, along with access to ICT and extracurricular activities, can significantly enhance student engagement and performance.

The second section focused on teacher-related factors, which play a pivotal role in student success. The literature review examined the impact of teacher qualifications, teaching methods, professional development, teacher motivation, and teacher-student relationships. It was found that qualified, motivated teachers who engage in continuous professional development and maintain positive relationships with students are better equipped to support academic achievement.

The third section delved into socio-economic factors affecting student performance. Factors such as family income, parental education, and family structure were identified as key determinants of academic success. Students from lower-income families or homes with limited educational resources were found to face greater challenges in achieving high academic performance. The review also pointed out the importance of community support and access to resources in mitigating socio-economic barriers.

Lastly, the chapter examined various strategies to improve academic performance, including targeted professional development for teachers, curriculum reforms, improved school infrastructure, and increased parental involvement. Research underscored the significance of creating a supportive and resource-rich school environment that fosters both academic and personal development.

Overall, the review highlighted the complex interplay between various factors influencing academic performance in private basic schools. It provided a strong theoretical foundation for the current study and set the stage for examining how these factors manifest in the context of the Effutu Municipality, with the goal of identifying actionable strategies for improving student outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the review of related literature on factors that influence underperformance of learners in private schools. The chapter discussed school environment factors, teacher related factors and socio-economic factors and further discussed strategies to improve learners' academic performance. This chapter outlined the procedures that were to be used in conducting the study. It focused on the research philosophy, research approaches, research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, instruments validity and reliability, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques

3.1 Philosophical underpinning

In the realm of research, the chosen philosophical framework serves as the cornerstone upon which the entire study is constructed (Creswell, 2014). This study was firmly rooted in the positivist research philosophy, a choice made to grant the researcher the flexibility to employ methods that are most apt for addressing the present research problem (underperformance in some selected Private Basic School). Creswell and Creswell (2014) assert that positivism is deemed particularly fitting for a study of this kind due to its capacity to facilitate the convergence of results stemming from quantitative methodology. Positivism is a research paradigm that is well-suited for this study on factors accounting for the underperforming private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality due to its emphasis on observable and measurable phenomena. This paradigm is grounded in the belief that reality is objective and can be quantified through empirical evidence (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). While this research is useful for quantitative research because of its empirical observable

features, however, it has underlying weakness. First, there is over-emphasis on Quantitative data, thus, overlooking rich contextual insights, leading to an incomplete understanding of complex social phenomenon. In order to overcome this, the researcher acknowledged the limitations of objectivity and incorporated reflective sections in the thesis where he evaluated the role of personal biases and context.

3.2 Research approach

The quantitative research approach was adopted for this study to examine the factors contributing for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality. Quantitative research relies on the measurement of variables expressed in numerical form and involves the systematic collection and statistical analysis of data (Apuke, 2017). This approach aligns with the positivist paradigm, which assumes that reality exists independently and can be objectively measured through structured data collection techniques such as questionnaires and surveys (Muijs, 2010).

The quantitative research approach was particularly suitable for this study, as it allowed for the systematic measurement and analysis of factors contributing for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality. This approach is grounded in the positivist paradigm, which assumes that social phenomena can be objectively measured and analyzed using statistical techniques (Creswell, 2014). Given the study's focused on identifying specific school environment factors, teacher-related factors, and socio-economic influences affecting academic performance, a quantitative approach ensures precision, reliability, and generalizability of results (Babbie, 2020).

One of the key strengths of quantitative research is its ability to handle large datasets and provide statistically valid conclusions (Bryman, 2016). By using structured questionnaires, the study can gather standardized responses, minimizing researcher bias and enhancing data comparability (Apuke, 2017). Additionally, quantitative research facilitates the application of statistical tests, such as correlation and regression analyses, to examine relationships between different factors influencing underperformance (Saunders et al., 2019).

Moreover, quantitative research is well-suited for educational studies, as it allows for objective evaluation of variables such as teacher qualifications, learning resources, parental socio-economic status, and student performance (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The use of descriptive statistics (e.g., means, percentages, and frequency distributions) enables the researcher to summarize findings efficiently, while inferential statistics help determine the significance of observed patterns (Neuman, 2014).

Furthermore, the quantitative approach ensures that the study's findings can be generalized to a wider population, making them useful for policymakers, school administrators, and education stakeholders (Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffin, 2013). Unlike qualitative research, which focuses on in-depth subjective insights, quantitative research provides empirical evidence that can inform evidence-based interventions and policy decisions aimed at improving academic performance in private basic schools.

Considering the study's focus on measuring predefined variables and establishing statistical relationships, the quantitative research approach was the most appropriate methodology. It enabled the researcher to collect reliable, objective, and generalizable

data, which are crucial for understanding and addressing the factors affecting academic performance in private basic schools. By applying structured data collection and statistical analysis techniques, this study contributed to a data-driven understanding of underperformance in private schools within the Effutu Municipality.

The weaknesses of quantitative research approach are lack of contextual depth, limited flexibility, difficulty in capturing the human experience and overreliance on instrument (eg. text and survey). Other weaknesses are sampling bias and generalization and statistical complexity. The research overcame these by conducting a pilot study to refine the instrument before full data collection and by acknowledging the limitations in discussing the data and suggesting areas where qualitative follow-up will be needed. The researcher also ensured the use of standardized validated instrument where possible, and clearly described how he established reliability and validity.

3.3 Research design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to examine the factors contributing for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality. A descriptive survey was a research design used to systematically collect and analyze data that describes the characteristics, behaviors, or opinions of a population (Creswell, 2014). This design was particularly appropriate for educational research, as it allows the researcher to gather quantitative data on school environment factors, teacher-related factors, and socio-economic influences affecting learner performance (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

According to Babbie (2020), a descriptive survey design enables researchers to obtain a detailed and accurate representation of a phenomenon by using structured

instruments, such as questionnaires and standardized tests. This approach ensures comparability of responses, making it easier to identify trends and relationships among variables. Given that, this study sought to identify patterns and trends in school underperformance. A descriptive survey design is ideal for capturing numerical data that can be analysed statistically (Bryman, 2016).

One of the main advantages of the descriptive survey method was its ability to handle large samples, allowing for generalization of findings to a broader population (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). In the context of this study, the design allowed for the collection of data from teachers, students, and headteachers in multiple private schools within the Effutu Municipality, providing a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Additionally, the use of structured questionnaires ensures that data collection is consistent and minimizes researcher bias (Zikmund, et al., 2013).

Furthermore, the descriptive survey design facilitates both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, and percentages were used to summarize responses (Neuman, 2014).

3.4 Site and sample characteristics

The study was conducted in the Effutu Municipality, located in the Central Region of Ghana. The Effutu Municipality is home to the historic city of Winneba, which serves as the municipal capital and a major educational hub, hosting institutions such as the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) and Ghana Statistical Service [GSS]. The municipality is characterized by a mix of urban and peri-urban communities, with education being a key sector that supports social and economic development. Despite the presence of educational institutions, concerns have been raised regarding the

academic performance of learners in private basic schools, making it a relevant location for this study.

The Effutu Municipality covers an estimated land area of 223.3 square kilometers and is bounded by the Gomoa East District to the west and north, the Gomoa Central District to the east, and the Gulf of Guinea to the south (Effutu Municipal Assembly, 2023). The area experiences a tropical climate, with two major rainy seasons (April to July and September to November), which may impact school attendance and learning conditions (GSS, 2021). The economic activities in the municipality include fishing, trading, and small-scale farming, with a growing emphasis on education and the service sector (Effutu Municipal Assembly, 2023).

Despite the economic potential of the municipality, income disparities and limited access to quality education infrastructure remain challenges, particularly for learners in private basic schools (Mensah & Korankye, 2022). These schools often struggle with inadequate learning resources, low teacher motivation, and high student-to-teacher ratios, which may contribute to the underperformance of learners (Owusu & Yeboah, 2020).

Education in the Effutu Municipality is delivered through both public and private institutions, with the Ghana Education Service (GES) overseeing curriculum implementation and school administration. While public schools receive government support in terms of teacher deployment and infrastructure, private basic schools operate independently and often struggle with financial constraints, leading to disparities in the quality of education provided (Effutu Municipal Education Directorate, 2022).

Research has shown that teacher qualification, school leadership, parental involvement, and socio-economic conditions significantly impact students' academic performance in private schools (Amponsah, 2021). In the Effutu Municipality, private schools vary in quality, with some excelling academically while others struggle with high failure rates in standardized assessments such as the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) (GSS, 2021).

3.5 Population

The population of a study refers to the entire group of individuals or elements that share common characteristics relevant to the research (Creswell, 2014). For this study, the population consists of parents, teachers, and students from five selected underperforming private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality. These schools have been identified based on their low academic performance in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) (Effutu Municipal Education Directorate, 2022). The inclusion of students, teachers, and parents as the study population is justified, as each group plays a crucial role in shaping academic performance. Students are the direct recipients of education, teachers are primary facilitators of learning, and parents provide financial, emotional, and academic support (Mensah & Korankye, 2022). Understanding their perspectives will help identify institutional, instructional, and socio-economic factors contributing to poor academic outcomes.

a. Students

Students are at the center of the learning process, and their academic achievements are influenced by various factors, including teaching methods, school environment, parental support, and socio-economic status (Owusu & Yeboah, 2020). By including students in the study, the research gathered first-hand insights into challenges they face, such as lack of learning materials, ineffective teaching strategies, or socio-

economic hardships that hinder their academic progress.

b. Teachers

Teachers play a significant role in determining the quality of education in private schools. The study focused on teachers' qualifications, experience, teaching methods, motivation, and challenges that impact student learning outcomes. Research has shown that teacher effectiveness is a key determinant of student performance (Amponsah, 2021). The inclusion of teachers in this study provided valuable data on pedagogical approaches, availability of teaching resources, and the challenges they encounter in underperforming private schools.

c. Parents

Parental involvement has been identified as a critical factor in students' academic performance (Epstein, 2018). Parents influence their children's education through financial support, home learning environments, and engagement with teachers and school activities (Acheampong, 2018). However, private school parents in low-income communities often face financial constraints, affecting their ability to provide adequate learning materials or afford quality education (Mensah & Korankye, 2022). This study examined the extent of parental involvement, financial burdens, and expectations regarding their children's academic success.

Table 3.1: Population of Teachers, Learners and Parents/Guardians of the five selected private schools

Category	Total Number
Teachers	90
Learners	1550
Parents/Guardians	875
Grand Total	2515

Source: Fieldwork data (2024).

3.6 Sample size and sampling technique

A sample refers to a subset of the population selected for the study to make inferences about the larger population (Creswell, 2014). Given that the study focused on five underperforming private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality, the sample included students, teachers, and parents from those schools.

To determine the appropriate sample size, Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size determination is applied:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where n =sample size

N=Population

e= margin of error

Thus

$$n = \frac{2515}{1+2515(0.05)^2}$$

n =345.11 n =345

The formula ensures that the sample is statistically representative, reducing errors and increasing the reliability of the results (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). The total population of students, teachers, and parents from the five selected private schools was estimated before applying the formula to determine the final sample size.

Considering the heterogeneous nature of the population, stratified random sampling technique was an obvious technique to be employed in the research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). This sampling technique was employed because the total number under investigation consisted of homogeneous sub-groups. The strata considered appropriate for this research were the teaching staff, learners and parents/guardians.

The relevant strata and their actual representation in the population were identified (Cohen, et al., 2018).

Simple random sampling, the purest form of probability sampling was then used to select a sufficient number of respondents from each stratum (Bryman, 2016). "Sufficient" in this context refers to a sample size large enough for one to be reasonably confident that the stratum represents the population. Each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. However, it follows from this that random sampling does not ensure that the various types of persons in the population will be represented proportionately. A sample size of 345 respondents was used for the study. This was made up of 14 teaching staff, 214 pupils and 117 parents/guardians.

On the part of learners and parent respondents, the stratified sampling technique was used to select the required number from each school and community. The assistance of class teachers was sought in the exercise to select the 214 learners. This process was followed irrespective of gender of pupils. This gave each learner equal chance of being part of the study. On the part of parent respondents, the assistance of learners was sought in the exercise to select the parents.

Table 3.2: Population and Sample Distribution

School	Teachers	selected teachers	Learners	Selected learners	Parents	Selected parents	Total
School A	22	4	390	54	195	26	607
School B	23	4	374	51	175	23	572
School C	15	2	301	42	170	23	486
School D	15	2	278	38	169	23	454
School E	15	2	207	29	166	22	388
Total	90	14	1550	214	875	117	2515

Source: Fieldwork data (2024).

3.7 Data collection instrument

The study employed structured questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument. A questionnaire is a research tool that consists of a set of standardized questions designed to collect quantitative data from respondents in a systematic manner (Creswell, 2014). Given the nature of this study, questionnaires were appropriate because they allow for efficient data collection from a large sample within a short period (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Questionnaires provide uniformity in responses, ensuring that data is collected consistently across all respondents, which enhances reliability and validity (Bryman, 2016). Since the study followed a quantitative research approach, structured questionnaires help in gathering numerical data that can be analysed statistically (Muijs, 2010). Also, compared to interviews or focus groups, questionnaires allowed the researcher to collect large amounts of data quickly and at a lower cost (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Respondents may feel more comfortable providing honest and unbiased responses in a questionnaire as compared to face-to-face interviews, reducing social desirability bias (Neuman, 2014).

The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended Likert-scale questions, divided into five key sections. The first section consisted of the demographic information. This section gathered data on respondents' age, gender, educational background, and role (student, teacher, or parent) to contextualize responses. The second section consisted of items related to school environment factors. The items assessed school infrastructure, availability of teaching and learning materials, and classroom conditions, as these factors influence academic performance (Mensah & Korankye, 2022). The third section consisted of items related to teacher-related factors. The items focused on teacher qualifications, instructional methods, motivation, and workload, which impact

student learning outcomes (Amponsah, 2021). The fourth section consisted of items related to socio-economic factors. Respondents provided insights on financial challenges, parental involvement in education, and home learning conditions, which play a role in student performance (Epstein, 2018).

Before full-scale data collection, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a small sample from a private school outside the selected study schools (Pallant, 2020). The goal was to identify ambiguities or unclear questions, test for reliability and validity using Cronbach's Alpha for internal consistency and ensure that the questionnaire effectively captures the required data. (Saunders et al., 2019).

Table 3.3: Factors Affecting Underperformance

Factors	Number of items
School environment factors	10
Teacher-related factors	10
Socio-Economic factors	10

Source: Fieldwork data (2024).

3.8 Validity of the instrument

Omari (2011), defined validity of instrument as what instrument is capable of measuring what is supposed to measure accurately, effectively and efficiently. Validity is the degree to which a test or other measuring device truly measures what it is purported to measure (Amponsah, 2021). To ensure this the instrument was pre-tested on a small sample from a private school outside the selected study schools. Pre-testing was done to evaluate whether the instrument had the capacity to measure the concept it intended to measure. The researcher employed the services of the research supervisor as an expert to assess and ensure the face validity, content and construct

validity of the instruments. After which the instrument was be modified to meet what it intends to measure.

3.9 Reliability of the instrument

Reliability is the extent to which results are consistent overtime and are accurate representation of the total population under study (Omari, 2011). Omari further explained that if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. Reliability can also be said to be the accuracy of work in the research (Apuke, 2017). For the research to be reliable it must prove that if it were to be done on a similar group of respondents in a similar context the similar results would be found (Ampofo, 2021). Also, the instrument is said to be reliable if it tends to give the researcher consistent results across time, place and similar instruments irrespective of who is using it (Omari, 2011). To ensure reliability of the instrument, the scores from the pre-test to be conducted was correlated to get a reliability coefficient using the Pearson's product moment correlation formulae with the aid of SPSS version 20. The overall reliability coefficient of 0.70 +; or above will be indicative of a good strength of reliability (Apuke, 2017).

Table 3.4: Reliability Scores of Instruments

Cronbach Alpha values of the instrument		
	Cronbach alpha	**Number of items**
School environment factors	0.824	10
Teacher related factors	0.840	10
Socio economic factors	0.703	10
Strategies for improving academic performance.	0.770	10

Source: Field Data (2024).

3.10 Data collection procedures

The data collection process is a critical phase of the study, as it ensures the systematic gathering of reliable and relevant data to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2014). Given the quantitative approach, this study used structured questionnaires administered to students, teachers, and parents in the five selected underperforming private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality.

The administration of the instruments began a week after the research instruments had been approved and met the reliability criteria to facilitate the administration of the instruments, a letter of introduction was obtained from the Department of Educational Administration, University of Education, Winneba. The researcher also obtained permission from the Effutu Municipal Education Directorate and the administrators of the selected private schools to allow access to students, teachers, and parents. The questionnaires were self-administered to teachers and parents, while student questionnaires were administered with the assistance of their class teachers to ensure clarity. The researcher used the drop-off and pick-up method, allowing respondents time to complete the questionnaire at their convenience, minimizing response bias (Bryman, 2016).

To maximize the response rate, the researcher followed up with reminder calls and visits to the schools. The researcher also emphasized the confidentiality and anonymity of responses to encourage participation (Neuman, 2014). The entire data collection process lasted for four to six weeks, depending on respondents' availability and willingness to participate. Regular progress check was conducted to ensure the timely completion of data collection.

3.11 Data analysis procedures

Data analysis is a crucial phase in research as it allows for the systematic interpretation of collected data to address the research objectives (Creswell, 2014). Since this study employed a quantitative research approach, the data collected through questionnaires and analysed using statistical techniques to derive meaningful insights.

Before analysis, the collected data was carefully checked for completeness and accuracy. After which the researcher followed these following steps: Identifying and correcting errors such as incomplete or inconsistent responses (Neuman, 2014), Assigning numerical values to responses, especially for Likert-scale and categorical variables, to facilitate statistical analysis (Pallant, 2020). Inputting data into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for efficient management and analysis (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019), handling missing data by using appropriate techniques such as mean substitution or listwise deletion, depending on the extent of missing values (Field, 2024).

Descriptive statistics was used to summarize and present the data in a meaningful way. This included frequencies and percentages which were used to analyse categorical variables such as demographic characteristics (Bryman, 2016). Measures of Central Tendency (Mean) was used to summarize respondents' perceptions of school environment, teacher-related factors, and socio-economic influences (Pallant, 2020). And Measures of Dispersion (Standard Deviation) was used to assess the spread of responses and variability in opinions across respondents (Saunders et al., 2019). The study utilized SPSS (Version 20) for statistical analysis due to its efficiency in handling large datasets and generating accurate statistical results

(Pallant, 2020). Microsoft Excel was also used for graphical presentations where necessary.

3.12 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are crucial in ensuring that the research is conducted responsibly, with respect for the rights and well-being of participants (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Since this study involved collecting data from students, teachers, and parents in private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality, the researcher adhered to ethical principles to protect participants and maintain research integrity.

3.12.1 Access

Formal letter of introduction was sought from the University and presented to targeted schools to introduce the research and formally seek permission for the inclusion of the institution in the study. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. No individual was forced or coerced into participating in the study. The process of respondent selection in the study was conducted in a manner that ensured the absence of bias towards any particular group or demographic trait, including but not limited to gender, age, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic position. The study allowed for the inclusion of all individuals who fell within the target group.

3.12.2 Informed consent

Prior to the conduct of the survey, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the respondents and verbally sought their consent to proceed with the answering of the questionnaire. Individuals who did not give their consent were not included in the study.

3.12.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality alludes to the mutual agreement established between the investigator and the participant, ensuring that any private or delicate data will be treated with the highest level of caution and discretion (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Confidentiality is fundamentally grounded on the establishment of trust. In compliance with the confidentiality consideration in research ethics, respondents were provided with a guarantee of confidentiality and the discreet handling of their information. Along this line. the respondents were provided with information on the duration for which the acquired data would be stored, and were given reassurances that the collected materials were solely for academic purposes.

3.12.4 Anonymity

Anonymity is occasionally considered as a type of confidentiality, specifically aimed at safeguarding the identity of individuals in a study (Creswell, 2014). A commonly held perception of anonymity posits that an individual's identity cannot be discerned or linked to the information available about them. To satisfy the anonymity consideration, the data was organized in a manner that ensures respondents responses were not associated with their identities.

3.12.5 Transparency

Further in compliance with other ethical considerations, the researcher avoided the use of ambiguous and misrepresentative items in the questionnaire during the survey. Respondents were informed on the use of information and ultimate circulation of final document which will be presented to the university for academic purposes (Neuman, 2014).

3.13 Summary of chapter

This chapter presented the research methodology adopted for investigating the factors contributing to the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality. The study employed a quantitative research approach, enabling the collection and analysis of numerical data to identify patterns and relationships among variables. A descriptive survey design was used to obtain information from a sample of teachers, students, and parents across five selected private basic schools within the municipality. The chapter detailed the population and sampling techniques, explaining the use of stratified and simple random sampling to ensure representation across the different respondent groups. The data collection instrument, primarily a structured questionnaire, was discussed along with measures taken to ensure validity and reliability. Ethical considerations such as confidentiality, informed consent, and voluntary participation were also addressed. Finally, the chapter outlined the data analysis techniques, which included the use of descriptive statistics: mean, standard deviation, and percentages to interpret the responses in line with the research objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described the research approach used for this study. A descriptive survey design was employed to collect data from the sampled teachers, students and parents from the Effutu Municipal. This chapter presented the results and discussions of the results obtained from the sampled teachers, students and parents. The study sought to establish the factors accounting for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality. The chapter started with the presentation of the background information of the respondent followed by the analysis of the results obtained from the field by means of descriptive statistics.

4.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presented the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including teachers, students, and parents, focusing on their sex, age, academic qualifications, years of experience, and occupational status. These characteristics provided insights into the composition of key stakeholders within private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality and their potential influence on academic performance.

4.2.1 Sex of respondents

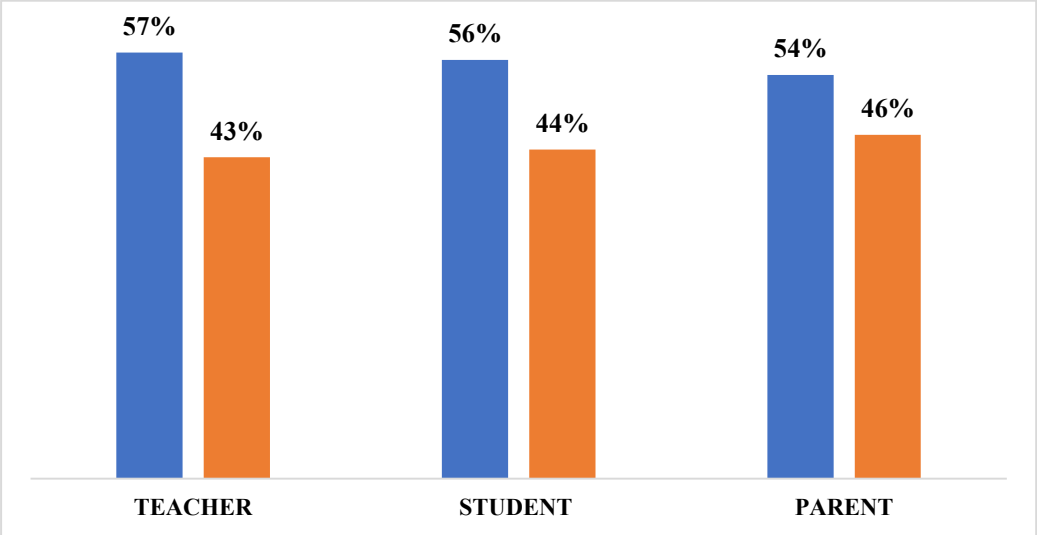


Figure 4.1: Sex of respondents

Source: Fieldwork data (2024).

The sex of respondents played a crucial role in understanding the dynamics of the factors influencing student performance in private basic schools. Gender differences in teaching styles, leadership approaches, and parental involvement shaped educational experiences and outcomes. Out of 14 teachers, 8 (57%) were male, while 6 (43%) were female. Also, out of 214 student respondents, 119 (56%) were male, while 95 (44%) were female. The parental demographic (117) data showed that 63 (54%) of respondents were male, while 54 (46%) were female. This significant gap suggests that fathers were more likely to participate in school-related engagements than mothers, possibly due to cultural norms regarding decision-making in education.

4.2.2 Age of respondents

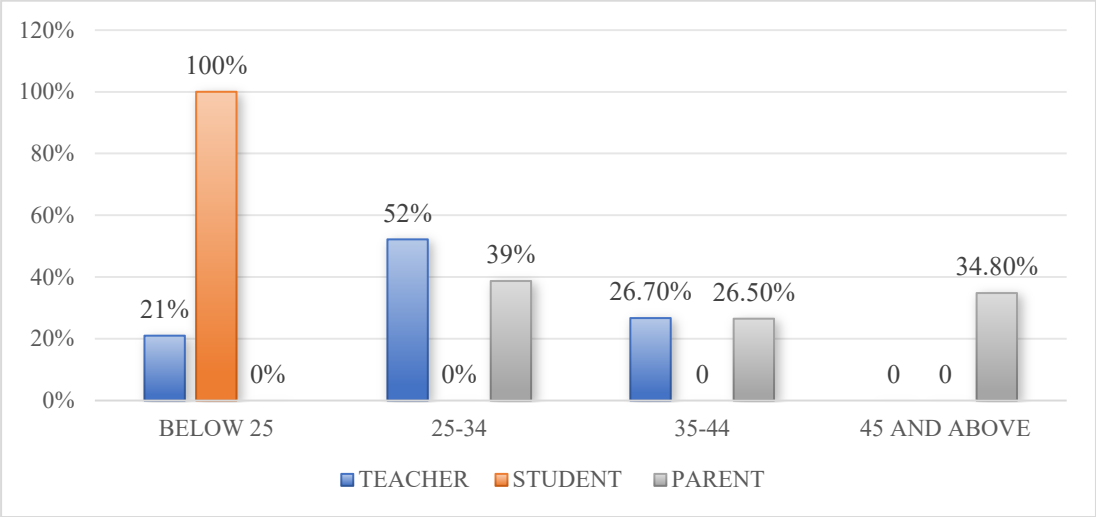


Figure 4.2: Age of respondents

Source: Fieldwork data (2024).

Regarding the age distribution, the majority of the teachers (52.2%) were within the 25-30 years age range, followed by 26.7% who were aged 35-44 years, and 21.1% who were below 25 years. This suggests that most private school teachers in the municipality were young professionals, which may have implications for teacher retention, experience levels, and instructional quality.

All students (100.0%) were between the ages of 14 and 18, which aligns with expectations, given that the study focused on basic school students. With regards to parents, 38.7% were aged 25-34 years, followed by 26.5% aged 35-44 years, and 34.8% aged 45 years and above. This diverse age representation suggested that parents in private basic schools come from different generational backgrounds, which could influence their level of involvement in their children's education and their financial capacity to support school-related expenses.

4.2.3 Academic qualification of respondents (Teachers and Parents)

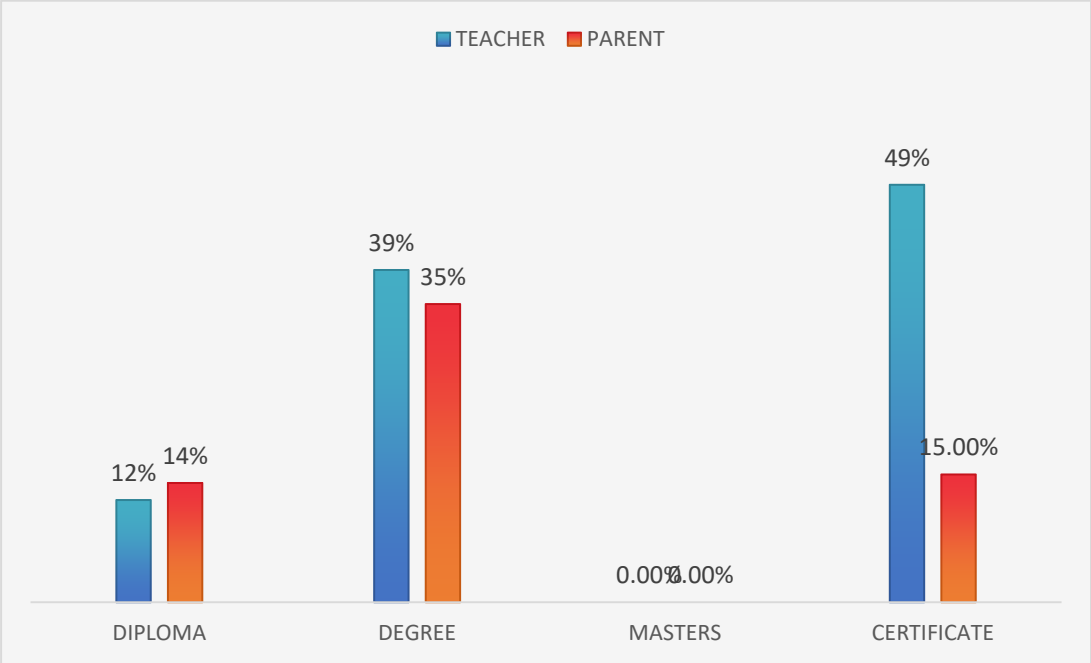


Figure 4.3 Academic qualification of respondents

Source: Fieldwork data (2024).

The study further examined the academic qualifications of teachers, revealed that 48.9% held certificates, 12.2% had diplomas, and 38.9% possessed degree qualifications. The dominance of certificate holders indicated that a significant proportion of teachers in private basic schools may not have advanced training in pedagogy, which influenced the quality of instruction and student learning outcomes. With regards to the parents**,** 34.8% had degree qualifications, 14.2% were diploma holders, and 14.8% were certificate holders.

4.2.4 Years of teaching experience (Teachers)

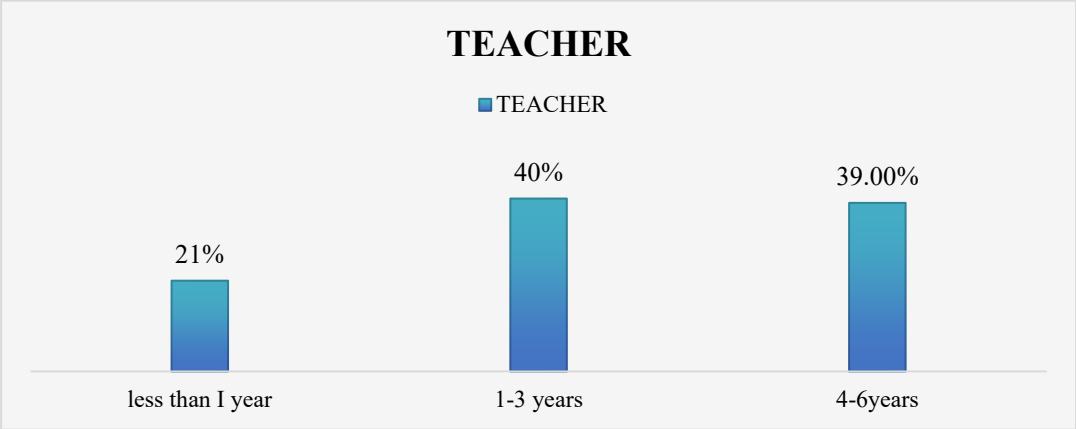


Figure 4.4: Working experience of teachers

Source: Fieldwork data (2024).

The results on teaching experience showed that 40.0% of teachers had 1-3 years of experience, followed by 38.9% with 4-6 years of experience, and 21.1% with less than one year of teaching experience. The prevalence of teachers with limited years of experience raised concerns about teacher turnover rates and their impact on student performance, as more experienced teachers tend to adopt more effective instructional strategies (Mensah & Ankomah, 2020).

4.2.5 Occupation of respondents (Parents)

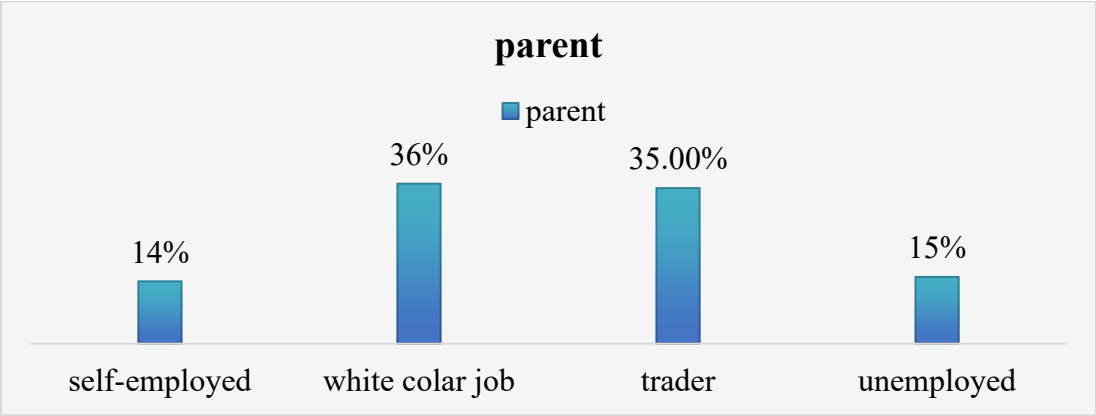


Figure 4.5: Occupation of respondents

Source: Fieldwork data (2024).

The study also examined the occupational background of parents, which revealed that: 36.1% were engaged in white-collar jobs, 34.8% were traders, 14.2% were self-employed, and 14.8% were unemployed. The high representation of white-collar workers and traders showed that most parents have some financial stability, enabling them to afford private school tuition. However, the 14.8% unemployment rate raised concerns about financial difficulties, which impacted timely payment of school fees and students' access to learning materials.

4.3 School Environment factors that account for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality

The school environment plays a critical role in shaping student learning experiences and academic performance. A well-structured and supportive school environment fosters student engagement, motivation, and overall success. According to Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008), the quality of school infrastructure and learning conditions directly impacts student outcomes, influencing attendance, motivation, and concentration. Similarly, research by Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009) emphasizes that a positive school climate, characterized by strong teacher-student relationships, discipline, and resource availability enhances both academic achievement and student well-being.

In the context of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality, various school environment factors, including classroom conditions, teacher support systems, discipline structures, and the availability of essential resources such as textbooks and technology, contributed to student performance. Studies have shown that inadequate school facilities and overcrowded classrooms hinder effective teaching and learning, leading to lower academic outcomes (Barrett, Treves, Shmis, Ambasz, & Ustinova,

2019). Moreover, the availability of teaching and learning resources is crucial, as insufficient instructional materials limit students' ability to grasp concepts effectively (Schleicher, 2019).

Table 4.1: School Environment Factors Responses from parents and learners (N=331)

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school maintains a safe and secure environment for learners.	3.89	1.106
The school environment is conducive for learning.	3.50	1.400
There is access to ICT facilities for teaching and learning.	3.49	1.473
The school has adequate classrooms and learning space.	3.32	1.423
The school has a functional library for learner use.	3.37	1.621
The school administration effectively manages resources for academic success.	3.29	1.638
School infrastructure (e.g., desks, blackboards) is in good condition.	3.20	1.365
The school provides enough co-curricular activities to enhance learning.	3.09	1.595
There are sufficient textbooks and teaching materials.	2.89	1.761
Frequent teacher strikes or absenteeism negatively affect learner's learning.	2.70	1.837
School environment factor index	3.27	1.360

Source: Fieldwork data (2024).

As recommended by Numally (1994) in a 5-point Likert scale, the mean scores were interpreted as very low (1.00 to 2.00), low (2.01 to 3.00), high (3.01 to 4.00) and very high (4.01 to 5.00). Tabachnick and Fidell (2012) suggest ± 2 standard deviation. The suggestion from these authors indicates that the S.D fell within the range. Therefore, it gives the evidence to conclude that the data was normally distributed.

Table 4.1 presents descriptive statistics regarding various aspects of the school environment and its influence on learning in private basic schools within the Effutu Municipality. The mean represented the average response from the 345 respondents,

while the standard deviation (SD) indicated the extent of variability in the responses. There was a total of ten items that were circular facts about school environment factors that affected students' academic performance. Item one: *Adequacy of Classrooms and Learning Space* (Mean = 3.32, SD = 1.423) suggests that respondents generally agreed that the school had adequate classrooms and learning space. However, the relatively high standard deviation (1.423) indicated diverse opinions, suggested that some schools may had sufficient infrastructure while others had not. Item two: *Availability of Textbooks and Teaching Materials* (Mean = 2.89, SD = 1.761) indicated that respondents were neutral or slightly disagreed with the statement that textbooks and teaching materials were sufficient. The high standard deviation (1.761) suggested wide variations in responses, implied that some schools may had adequate resources while others experienced shortages.

The third item, *Conduciveness of the School Environment* (Mean = 3.50, SD = 1.400) implied that respondents generally agreed that the school environment was conducive for learning. However, the standard deviation (1.400) suggested some level of disagreement, indicating that certain schools may lacked essential environmental factors such as proper ventilation, lighting, or noise control. The fourth item; *Condition of School Infrastructure* (Mean = 3.20, SD = 1.365) suggested that respondents somewhat agreed that school infrastructure, including desks and blackboards, were in good condition. However, the standard deviation (1.365) indicates some variation in perceptions, which may reflect disparities in infrastructure quality across different private schools.

The fifth item: *Availability of Co-Curricular Activities* (Mean = 3.09, SD = 1.595) suggested that respondents were neutral to slightly agreeing that there were sufficient

co-curricular activities to support learning. The relatively high standard deviation (1.595) showed that opinions varied significantly, meaning that while some schools provided these activities, others may lack them. The sixth item: *Safety and Security of the School Environment* had a Mean = 3.89, and a standard deviation of 1.106. The highest mean score (3.89) indicated that respondents strongly agreed that schools maintained a safe and secure environment for students. The lower standard deviation (1.106) indicated less variability, meaning most respondents shared similar views on school security. The seventh item: *Access to ICT Facilities for Teaching and Learning* (Mean = 3.49, SD = 1.473) suggested that respondents somewhat agreed that there was access to ICT facilities for teaching and learning. However, the standard deviation (1.473) suggested that access to ICT facilities varies across schools, with some having adequate resources while others may lack them.

The eighth item: *Functionality of the School Library* (Mean = 3.37, SD = 1.621) indicated that respondents generally agreed that schools had functional libraries for student use. The high standard deviation (1.621) suggested significant differences among schools, indicating that some schools may lack well-equipped libraries. The ninth item: *Resource Management by School Administration* (Mean = 3.29, SD = 1.638) implied that respondents somewhat agreed that school administrations effectively managed resources to promote academic success. The high standard deviation (1.638) suggested inconsistent experiences, meaning that some schools manage resources effectively while others struggled. The tenth item: *Effect of Teacher Strikes or Absenteeism on Student Learning* (Mean = 2.70, SD = 1.837) The lowest mean score (2.70) suggested that respondents leaned towards disagreement that teacher strikes or absenteeism negatively affected student learning. However, the

highest standard deviation (1.837) showed significant variation in responses, meaning that some schools were more affected by absenteeism than others.

The results of this study align with Ampofo et al., (2021) who highlighted the significance of adequate infrastructure, access to learning resources, and administrative effectiveness in determining the quality of education in private schools. The results showed that while most respondents agreed that classrooms and infrastructure were adequate (M = 3.32, SD = 1.423), the variability in responses suggested inequities among schools. This supported UNESCO's (2022) assertion that disparities in school infrastructure contribute to learning inequalities in developing countries. Hanushek and Woessmann (2020) also argued that inadequate learning spaces hinder effective teaching and student engagement.

Also, the limited availability of textbooks and instructional materials (M = 2.89, SD = 1.761) resonated with previous findings that resource shortages negatively affected academic performance in the private schools (Akyeampong, 2017). Darling-Hammond (2000) further emphasized that the quality of teaching materials influences student learning outcomes, reinforcing the need for improved access to instructional resources. The study also found a strong agreement (M = 3.89, SD = 1.106) that private schools maintained a safe and secured environment, which was in line with World Bank (2020) reports that school safety correlates positively with academic achievement. This supported OECD's (2019) claim that students perform better in environments where they feel safe and supported.

Findings indicated that access to ICT and library resources were moderate (M = 3.49, SD = 1.473 and M = 3.37, SD = 1.621, respectively). This aligned with Li and Ma (2010), who argued that limited access to digital resources and library facilities

hinders student-centred learning. The results also reinforce Li and Ma (2016) position that schools in developing countries often lack adequate ICT infrastructure, affecting digital literacy and academic performance. The study also showed moderate disagreement (M = 2.70, SD = 1.837) that teacher absenteeism negatively affected learning. This was somewhat inconsistent with Pianta (1999), who found that teacher absenteeism strongly impacts student performance. However, the high standard deviation in this study suggested that some schools had experienced higher absenteeism than others, which aligned with Klassen and Tze (2014), who argued that absenteeism has context-dependent effects on learning outcomes.

The results conformed with the systems theory as the study confirmed that resource adequacy (infrastructure, textbooks, ICT) influences student learning, supporting the systems theory principle that all subsystems must function efficiently for optimal performance (Von Bertalanffy, 1986). Also, the high rating of school safety aligned with Lackney (1999) assertion that a stable learning environment is crucial for the effectiveness of educational institutions as systems.

The results here, such as the adequacy of classrooms (M = 3.32, SD = 1.423), availability of learning materials (M = 2.89, SD = 1.761), and school infrastructure (M = 3.20, SD = 1.365), could be linked to the years of teaching experience among respondents. The study revealed that a significant proportion of teachers had less than six years of teaching experience, with 21.1% having less than one year, 40% having 1–3 years, and 38.9% having 4–6 years. Darling-Hammond, (2017) suggested that less experienced teachers struggled with resource management, classroom control, and adapting to infrastructural challenges, which impacted learning outcomes. Additionally, experienced teachers tended to have better pedagogical skills and

effectively navigated school-related challenges to improve student engagement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). This results underscored the need for targeted professional development programs to equip both new and experienced teachers with strategies to maximize available resources and mitigate the limitations posed by inadequate school facilities.

The study confirmed that school resources, safety, and administrative management significantly affected student learning and are in line with the systems theory principles. However, inequities in resource distribution and the unexpected response to teacher absenteeism challenged traditional systems theory assumptions, suggested the need for a more context-specific approach to understanding private school performance.

4.4 Teacher related factors that account for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality

Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping student learning experiences and academic success. Their qualifications, instructional methods, motivation, and professional development directly influence student performance (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Hattie (2009) revealed that effective teachers contribute to improved student outcomes by employing engaging pedagogical strategies, offering individualized support, and creating an inclusive learning environment.

In the context of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality, teacher-related factors such as qualifications, teaching methods, motivation levels, access to professional development, and teacher-student relationships were key determinants of academic performance. Studies suggest that a lack of continuous professional development and ineffective teaching strategies can lead to lower student

achievement (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Furthermore, teacher motivation has been linked to classroom engagement and student enthusiasm for learning (Han & Yin, 2016). However, issues such as poor remuneration, lack of job security, and inadequate professional support can contribute to teacher demotivation and absenteeism, negatively affecting student performance (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007).

Table 4.2: Teacher Related Factors Responses from teachers (N=14)

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers encourage students to develop independent learning skills.	4.08	1.373
The teacher-student ratio affects students' academic performance.	3.83	1.259
Teachers provide individual attention to struggling students.	3.51	1.431
Teachers frequently communicate with parents about student progress.	3.51	1.303
Teachers receive continuous professional development training.	3.31	1.525
Teachers frequently assess students' progress through tests and assignments.	3.29	1.480
Teachers effectively integrate technology into their lessons.	2.92	
There is high level of integration of teacher motivation and commitment	2.88	1.304
The school has qualified and experienced teachers	2.81	
Teachers use effective teaching methods to enhance learning.	2.81	1.606
Techer related factors index	3.30	1.4155

Source: Fieldwork data (2024).

As recommended by Numally (1994) in a 5-point Likert scale, the mean scores were interpreted as very low (1.00 to 2.00), low (2.01 to 3.00), high (3.01 to 4.00) and very high (4.01 to 5.00). Tabachnick and Fidell (2012) suggest $\pm$2 standard deviation. The

suggestion from these authors indicates that the S.D fell within the range. Therefore, it gave the evidence to conclude that the data was normally distributed

Table 4.2 provided insights into teacher-related factors influencing student performance in private basic schools. The results revealed a mix of strengths and weaknesses in areas such as teacher qualifications, instructional methods, assessment practices, motivation, and engagement with students and parents.

The mean score for *teacher qualification and experience* (M = 2.81, SD = 1.606) suggested that respondents perceived some deficiencies in the expertise of teachers within these schools. This aligns with Akyeampong et al. (2011), who found that many private schools in developing countries employ unqualified or underqualified teachers due to financial constraints. Similarly, the perception that *teachers use effective teaching methods* (M = 2.81, SD = 1.606) was relatively low, indicating possible gaps in pedagogical strategies, which may contribute to poor academic performance. In terms of *student assessment*, respondents indicated a moderate frequency of evaluation (M = 3.29, SD = 1.480). This finding is consistent with Black and Wiliam (1998), who argue that regular formative assessments improve student learning outcomes. However, if assessments are not well-structured or aligned with effective feedback mechanisms, they may not yield the intended benefits.

The mean score for *continuous professional development* (M = 3.31, SD = 1.525) suggests that teacher training was provided but may have not been consistent or impactful enough to enhance instructional quality. Guskey (2002) emphasizes that professional development is most effective when it is ongoing, collaborative, and linked to practical classroom applications. Without adequate training, teachers may struggle to adopt innovative teaching techniques that support diverse learning needs.

The study also found that *teachers provided individual attention to struggling students* (M = 3.51, SD = 1.431) and *frequently communicated with parents about student progress* (M = 3.51, SD = 1.303). These results align with research by Epstein (2018), which highlights that student-centered teaching and parental involvement significantly improved academic outcomes. However, the variability in responses, as indicated by the standard deviations, suggests that these practices may have not been uniformly applied across all schools.

The results also show that *Teacher motivation* appeared to be relatively low (M = 2.88, SD = 1.268), which is a concern, as Han and Yin (2016) suggests that motivated teachers exhibit higher levels of commitment and effectiveness. Low motivation could stem from inadequate salaries, lack of career growth opportunities, or unfavorable working conditions, all of which have been cited as key challenges in private schools (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). The *integration of technology in teaching* (M = 2.92, SD = 1.304) was also below optimal levels. In today's digital age, Li and Ma (2010) argue that technology-enhanced learning significantly improves student engagement and comprehension. However, if teachers lack the necessary training or if schools do not provide sufficient technological resources, the integration of ICT in education will remain limited.

The *teacher-student ratio and its impact on academic performance* received the highest agreement (M = 3.83, SD = 1.259), supporting the findings of Blatchford et al. (2011) that highlight the detrimental effects of overcrowded classrooms on effective teaching and learning. When class sizes are too large, teachers struggle to provide individualized instruction, leading to lower academic achievement. Finally, the strongest agreement was on *the need for teachers to encourage independent*

learning skills (M = 4.08, SD = 1.373), a factor supported by Zimmerman (2002), who emphasizes the importance of self-regulated learning in fostering long-term academic success. This indicates that while the teachers recognized the value of student autonomy, more structured efforts may have beens needed to guide learners in developing independent study habits.

The results of this study align with the Systems Theory, which posits that organizations, including schools, function as interdependent systems where various components interact to achieve collective goals. In this context, the school system comprises teachers, students, administrators, parents, and resources, all of which must work together for optimal academic outcomes. The low teacher qualifications and motivation suggest inefficiencies within the system, as a lack of well-trained and motivated educators weakens the overall structure. According to Hoy and Miskel (2008), an educational system with underqualified teachers disrupts the knowledge transmission process, leading to ineffective student learning. This aligns with Systems Theory, which argues that when one component of a system is weak, it affects the overall performance of the organization.

Additionally, the moderate levels of parental involvement and teacher-student interactions indicate that some parts of the system were functioning, but inconsistencies in communication and support mechanisms created gaps in student learning. Zambaga (2017) emphasizes the importance of a learning organization, where all stakeholders must continuously adapt and improve processes. In this case, professional development for teachers and better engagement strategies for parents would help strengthen the system. The limited integration of technology and the impact of high student-teacher ratios further illustrate how constraints in one area

affect the system as a whole. According to Fullan (2011), schools must be treated as dynamic systems that respond to changes in external and internal environments. If class sizes are too large and technological resources are insufficient, even the most dedicated teachers will struggle to maintain instructional quality.

The results here, such as the adequacy of qualified teachers (M = 2.81, SD = 1.606), teacher effectiveness in using instructional methods (M = 2.81, SD = 1.606), and continuous professional development (M = 3.31, SD = 1.525), can be linked to teachers' educational qualifications and years of experience. The data revealed that a significant proportion of teachers had less than six years of teaching experience, with 21.1% having less than one year, 40% having 1–3 years, and 38.9% having 4–6 years. Additionally, a majority of teachers held diplomas and bachelor's degrees. Research suggests that teachers with limited experience may struggle with classroom management, differentiated instruction, and student engagement (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Furthermore, the relatively low mean scores for teacher effectiveness indicate that additional training was necessary to enhance pedagogical skills. This aligns with Darling-Hammond (2017), who asserts that professional development programs significantly improve teaching competencies and student outcomes. The results highlights the need for structured mentorship programs and continuous in-service training to bridge the gap between qualification, experience, and effective teaching.

The results highlight critical weaknesses within the educational system of private basic schools, particularly in teacher quality, instructional practices, and resource availability. These gaps hinder the efficiency of the system, reinforcing the need for systemic reforms that prioritize teacher development, infrastructure improvement, and stronger stakeholder collaboration. Applying Systems Theory to these challenges

underscores the importance of a holistic approach where each component teachers, students, parents, and school administrators must function optimally to improve academic performance

4.5 Socio economic factors that account for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality.

Socio-economic factors play a significant role in shaping students' academic performance, particularly in private basic schools where financial stability and parental support are crucial for sustaining education. Research has shown that students from low-income households often face challenges such as inadequate learning resources, poor nutrition, and financial instability, all of which negatively impact their academic progress (Schleicher, 2019). Economic hardship can also lead to irregular school attendance, as parents may struggle to afford tuition fees, uniforms, and other educational expenses (UNESCO, 2022).

Parental education and involvement are also critical socio-economic factors influencing student success. Epstein's (2018) school-family partnership model highlights the importance of parental engagement in reinforcing academic achievement. However, in many low-income households, parents may have limited formal education, reducing their ability to provide academic support at home. Additionally, home responsibilities, such as chores and family work obligations, can take time away from students' studies, further affecting their performance (Jensen, 2013).

Table 4.3 Socio economic factors Responses from parents and teachers

(N=131)

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The availability of scholarships and financial aid helps students stay in school.	4.72	.562
Economic hardship affects students' concentration and attendance.	4.29	.733
Many students do not have access to private tutoring outside school hours.	4.28	.901
Peer pressure and social distractions contribute to academic underperformance.	4.23	.897
Lack of parental involvement negatively impacts student performance.	4.13	.827
Students from low-income backgrounds face financial difficulties that affect their learning.	3.98	1.062
Students lack access to essential learning materials at home.	3.71	1.205
Parents' educational background influences student academic success.	3.14	1.139
Many parents struggle to pay school fees on time.	2.69	1.363
Home responsibilities (e.g., chores, work) affect students' study time.	2.08	1.259
Socio-Economic factor index	4.522	.7087

Source: Fieldwork data (2024).

As recommended by Numally (1994) in a 5-point Likert scale, the mean scores were interpreted as very low (1.00 to 2.00), low (2.o1 to 3.00), high (3.01 to 4.00) and very high (4.01 to 5.00). Tabachnick and Fidell(2012) suggest $\pm$2 standard deviation. The suggestion from these authors indicates that the S.D fell within the range. Therefore, it gives the evidence to conclude that the data was normally distributed Table 4.3 presents the results for various socio-economic factors influencing student underperformance. The findings revealed that: *Parental struggles with paying school fees* (M = 2.69, SD = 1.363) received a lower mean, indicating moderate

disagreement among respondents. This indicates that while some parents faced financial challenges, others may not have found it a significant issue. Conversely, the statement **"***Students from low-income backgrounds face financial difficulties that affect their learning***"** (M = 3.98, SD = 1.062) received a higher mean, indicating stronger agreement, implying that financial struggles remained a significant barrier for many students. Item three: *Lack of parental involvement negatively impacts student performance* (M = 4.13, SD = 0.827) had a high mean score, suggesting a strong consensus that parental engagement plays a crucial role in student achievement. Similarly, **"***Parents' educational background influences student academic success"* **(**M = 3.14, SD = 1.139) had a moderate mean, indicating some level of agreement but also diverse opinions, possibly due to differences in socio-economic status and cultural expectations regarding education.

The mean for *home responsibilities affecting study time* (M = 2.08, SD = 1.259) is low, suggesting that most respondents did not perceive household chores and work as significant barriers to academic performance. This contrasts with other studies that highlight excessive home responsibilities as a major obstacle, particularly in low-income families (Amato, 2021). Item six: *Peer pressure and social distractions contribute to academic underperformance* (M = 4.23, SD = 0.897) had a high mean score, confirming that negative peer influence was a key factor affecting student performance. The statement **"***Many students do not have access to private tutoring outside school hours***"** (M = 4.28, SD = 0.901) further reinforces the lack of academic support outside the classroom, which may limit students' ability to improve their performance. Item eight: *Students lack access to essential learning materials at home* (M = 3.71, SD = 1.205) suggests that while many students struggle with this issue, some may have sufficient learning resources. Item nine *Economic hardship affects*

students' concentration and attendance" (M = 4.29, SD = 0.733) had one of the highest mean scores, indicating strong agreement that financial difficulties directly impact student engagement and school attendance. Item ten: "*The availability of scholarships and financial aid helps students stay in school*" (M = 4.72, SD = 0.562) received the highest mean, signifying overwhelming agreement that financial assistance iwas a critical factor in ensuring student retention.

The study revealed that economic hardship negatively affected students' concentration and attendance (M = 4.29, SD = 0.733), a finding consistent with Hanushek and Woessmann (2017), who argue that students from low-income backgrounds often struggle with school attendance and engagement due to financial stress and lack of resources. The significant role of scholarships and financial aid in keeping students in school (M = 4.72, SD = 0.562) supports the argument made by Orodho (2014) that financial support mechanisms, such as bursaries and fee waivers, improve student retention and academic success. The high mean score for lack of parental involvement affecting student performance (M = 4.13, SD = 0.827) corroborates research by Epstein (2018), who asserts that strong parental engagement leads to better academic achievement and student motivation. The influence of parents' educational background on student success (M = 3.14, SD = 1.139) is consistent with the findings of Checchi (2017), who posits that highly educated parents provide better academic support and foster a learning culture at home. The study also found that peer pressure and social distractions contribute to academic underperformance (M = 4.23, SD = 0.897). This aligns with Steinberg (2019), who highlights that peer influence can either enhance or hinder student achievement, depending on the type of peer groups involved.

The study supports the interdependence of subsystems in education, as financial constraints, parental involvement, and school environment collectively affect student performance. The high mean score for scholarships and financial aid ensuring student retention (M = 4.72, SD = 0.562) demonstrates how external support mechanisms (subsystems) can improve educational outcomes, supporting the systems theory's emphasis on interconnectivity. Systems theory assumes all subsystems function harmoniously, yet the findings reveal imbalances. For example, strong parental involvement is crucial, yet many parents do not engage in their children's education (M = 4.13, SD = 0.827).

The results here, such as financial hardship affecting student concentration and attendance (M = 4.29, SD = 0.733) and the importance of scholarships and financial aid in keeping students in school (M = 4.72, SD = 0.562), can be directly linked to the occupation of parents. The study revealed that 34.8% of parents were traders, 36.1% were in white-collar jobs, 14.2% were self-employed, and 14.8% were unemployed. Research by Sirin (2005) indicates that parental socio-economic status (SES) is a strong predictor of student academic achievement, as families with stable incomes can provide better educational resources, tutoring, and a conducive home learning environment. The study's findings support this, as students from lower-income backgrounds were more likely to struggle with financial barriers that hinder academic performance. Additionally, Bøe and Haug (2017) argue that parental employment status influences student motivation and educational aspirations, with children from unemployed or low-income households facing higher risks of academic disengagement. These findings highlight the need for policymakers and school administrators to implement financial assistance programs and career support initiatives for parents to improve student outcomes. The results reinforce the notion

that education is a dynamic system where various factors interact to shape student outcomes.

4.6 Strategies to improve students' academic performance

Improving students' academic performance requires a multidimensional approach that addresses both institutional and external factors affecting learning. Effective strategies focus on teacher development, school infrastructure, parental involvement, financial support, technology integration, and student support services.

Table 4.4 Strategies to Improving students' Academic Performance

(N=345)

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Guidance and counseling services will help students stay focused on academics.	4.70	.737
Improving school infrastructure will contribute to better academic performance.	4.48	.774
Schools should integrate more technology into teaching.	4.43	.562
Monitoring and evaluating school performance regularly will improve education outcomes.	4.37	.675
Increasing teacher training and professional development will improve student performance.	4.33	.752
Extra-curricular activities should be structured to support academic success.	4.11	1.168
Parents should be more involved in their children's education.	3.99	.624
Providing more learning materials and resources will enhance academic outcomes.	3.91	.957
Teachers should adopt student-centered learning approaches.	3.78	1.233
Government support for private schools will enhance education quality.	3.07	1.417
Strategies for improving academic performance index	4.00	1.088

Source: Fieldwork data (2024).

The results provide insights into key strategies that can improve academic performance in private schools. The analysis reveals strong support for interventions

such as teacher training, school infrastructure improvement, technology integration, and guidance and counselling services. As recommended by Numally (1994) in a 5-point Likert scale, the mean scores were interpreted as very low (1.00 to 2.00), low (2.o1 to 3.00), high (3.01 to 4.00) and very high (4.01 to 5.00). Tabachnick and Fidell (2012) suggest ±2 standard deviation. The suggestion from these authors indicates that the S.D fell within the range. Therefore, it gives the evidence to conclude that the data was normally distributed

4.6.1 Strongly supported interventions (Mean > 4.3)

The study revealed that *Guidance and counseling services* (M = 4.70, SD = 0.737) received the highest level of agreement, suggesting that stakeholders recognized its importance in helping students remain academically focused. *Improving school infrastructure* (M = 4.48, SD = 0.774) was also highly rated, aligned with Uline and Tschannen-Moran, (2008) who argued that better school facilities contribute to enhanced student learning. *Integrating more technology into teaching* (M = 4.43, SD = 0.562) highlights the increasing demand for digital resources in education. This was supported by Li and Ma (2010), who found that technology-enhanced learning improves student engagement and performance, and *Monitoring and evaluating school performance* (M = 4.37, SD = 0.675) indicated the importance of continuous assessment and quality assurance mechanisms in driving educational improvements.

4.6.2 Moderately supported interventions (Mean 3.9 – 4.3)

The results also revealed some interventions that were not widely accepted but had a moderate rate of acceptance. It revealed that *Teacher training and professional development* (M = 4.33, SD = 0.752) confirms Darling-Hammond (2017) view that ongoing professional development enhances teacher effectiveness and student

learning outcomes. *Extra-curricular activities structured to support academics* (M = 4.11, SD = 1.168) reflected the recognition that non-academic activities contribute positively to cognitive and social development (Eccles et al., 2003). *Parental involvement in education* (M = 3.99, SD = 0.624), though relatively high, suggested a need for better engagement strategies. This aligned with Epstein (2018), who emphasizes that parental involvement positively impacts student motivation and achievement, and *Providing more learning materials* (M = 3.91, SD = 0.957) showed moderate agreement on the role of adequate educational resources, consistent with Schleicher (2019), who argued that resource availability is a key determinant of academic success.

4.6.3 Less supported interventions (Mean < 3.9)

Student-centered learning approaches (M = 3.78, SD = 1.233) received lower agreement, suggesting mixed perceptions about its effectiveness in private school settings. Some teachers found it challenging due to large class sizes, curriculum constraints, or lack of training (Freeman et al., 2014). Government support for private schools (M = 3.07, SD = 1.417) had the lowest mean, indicating divided opinions. While some respondents believe in public-private partnerships, others were skeptical about government intervention in private education (Tooley, 2009).

The study revealed that student success was influenced by multiple factors, including infrastructure, teacher competence, and parental involvement, supporting the systems theory's view that education operates as an interconnected system. The emphasis on monitoring and evaluating school performance (M = 4.37) aligned with the feedback mechanism in the systems theory, where continuous assessment allowed schools to identify weaknesses and implement improvements. The low-rating for-government

support (M = 3.07, SD = 1.417) challenged the assumption that external influences (government policies) always strengthen the education system. Some respondents perceived government intervention as a limitation rather than an enabler.

4.7 Implications of the findings for educational administration

The results presented significant implications for educational administration, particularly in managing and improving private basic schools. These implications highlight key areas such as teacher development, school infrastructure, parental involvement, technology integration, financial support, and performance monitoring. Addressing these areas effectively enhanced student learning outcomes and overall school performance.

One of the most significant result of the study was that teacher training and professional development (M = 4.33, SD = 0.752) were crucial to improving student performance. This aligned with Darling-Hammond(2017), who emphasized that continuous professional development improves teaching effectiveness, ultimately leading to better student outcomes. However, the study also found concerns regarding teacher qualifications (M = 2.81, SD = 1.606) and effective teaching methods (M = 2.81, SD = 1.606), suggesting that many teachers in private schools may have lacked the necessary pedagogical skills to maximize learning. This is consistent with Akyeampong et al, (2011), who found that many private schools in developing countries employ underqualified teachers due to financial constraints. To address this gap, educational administrators must prioritize structured training programs, mentorship initiatives, and professional learning communities to equip teachers with modern teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, and ICT skills.

Schools that invest in regular teacher training tend to perform better academically due to improved instructional delivery.

Another critical area identified was school infrastructure, which was found to be a major determinant of student academic success, with a mean score of 4.48 (SD = 0.774). This was consistent with the findings of Uline and Tschannen-Moran(2008), who argued that the quality of school buildings significantly affects student motivation, attendance, and academic engagement. However, the study also found that perceptions regarding the adequacy of classrooms and learning spaces (M = 3.32, SD = 1.423) and the condition of school infrastructure (M = 3.20, SD = 1.365) were only moderately positive, suggesting room for improvement. Poor infrastructure can create discomfort, distraction, and even health risks, which hinder effective learning. School administrators must, therefore, ensure that classrooms are spacious, well-ventilated, and adequately furnished with learning materials. Investment in infrastructure maintenance and upgrades is essential in creating a conducive learning environment.

Parental involvement was another area highlighted in the study, with a mean score of 3.99 (SD = 0.624), indicated that parents play a crucial role in student academic success. This supports Epstein's (2018) model of school-family partnerships, which suggested that strong collaboration between parents and schools leads to better student engagement, discipline, and performance. However, the study also found that lack of parental involvement negatively impacted student performance (M = 4.13, SD = 0.827), suggested that many private schools struggled with limited parental engagement, particularly in lower-income communities. School administrators should implement programs that encourage parents to take an active role in their children's

education. Strategies such as regular parent-teacher meetings, digital communication platforms, and workshops on home-based learning support can significantly enhance parental participation.

Technology integration in teaching was also recognized as a key factor in improving academic performance, with a mean score of 4.43 (SD = 0.562). This aligned with Li and Ma(2010), who argued that integrating ICT in education enhances student engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. However, the study also found that teachers' ability to integrate technology into lessons (M = 2.92, SD = 1.304) was relatively low, indicating gaps in digital literacy and access to technological resources. Many private schools lacked the necessary ICT infrastructure, and teachers may not be adequately trained to maximize technology in learning. Implicitly educational administrators must advocate for investments in digital tools such as interactive whiteboards, e-learning platforms, and internet access to facilitate blended learning. Additionally, teachers needed adequate training on integrating digital tools into their teaching methods to ensure effective utilization.

The study also highlighted the importance of student support services, particularly guidance and counselling (M = 4.70, SD = 0.737), in keeping students focused on their academics. The role of school counselling was well established in previous research, with Sink and Stroh (2003) demonstrating that effective guidance programs contribute to improved student discipline, motivation, and academic performance. However, the study also found that teachers' ability to provide individual attention to struggling students (M = 3.51, SD = 1.431) was only moderately rated, which may indicate high student-teacher ratios or workload challenges. Implicitly educational administrators must prioritize hiring professional counsellors and implementing

structured student support programs to help learners navigate academic and personal challenges.

Another key result of the study was financial barriers to learning, as economic hardship was found to significantly impact students' concentration and attendance (M = 4.29, SD = 0.733). Schleicher (2019) explained that students from low-income backgrounds often face academic challenges due to financial instability, lack of learning materials, and poor nutrition. The study further found that scholarships and financial aid (M = 4.72, SD = 0.562) were crucial in keeping students in school. This implied that educational administrators should establish scholarship programs, engage with corporate sponsors, and introduce flexible tuition payment plans to alleviate financial burdens on students and their families.

Moreover, the results indicated the need for strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (M = 4.37, SD = 0.675) to track student progress and school performance. Fullan (2011) asserted that effective monitoring systems help identify areas of weakness and guide data-driven decision-making in education. However, the study also found that teachers' frequency of assessing students' progress (M = 3.29, SD = 1.480) was moderate, indicating potential inconsistencies in assessment practices. Implicitly school administrators should implement regular assessments, teacher performance evaluations, and student feedback mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement in teaching and learning outcomes.

Finally, the study highlighted mixed perceptions on government support for private schools (M = 3.07, SD = 1.417). While some stakeholders believed that increased government intervention can enhance the quality of education in private institutions, others feared that it could lead to excessive regulation and loss of autonomy. Tooley

(2009) argues that a balanced public-private partnership can benefit private schools by improving access to resources while maintaining institutional independence. What one can imply from this was that educational administrators should advocate for policies that provide government support for infrastructure development, teacher training, and curriculum enhancement without undermining the operational autonomy of private schools.

Again, the results implied that educational administrators must take a systemic approach to school improvement, ensuring that all components such as teacher quality, infrastructure, financial support, parental engagement, and performance monitoring are effectively integrated and managed. A fragmented approach will only lead to partial solutions, whereas a well-coordinated system ensured that improvements in one area positively impact the entire school environment.

4.8 Implications of the findings for educational policy

The results of this study provided critical insights for educational policymakers seeking to improve the academic performance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality. The study identified several key factors that influence student outcomes, including teacher training, school infrastructure, parental involvement, financial barriers, technology integration, and guidance and counselling services. These results emphasized the need for policy interventions that create an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning in private schools.

One significant result of the study was the need for teacher training and professional development, as respondents strongly agreed that enhancing teacher skills would lead to better student performance ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.752$). However, the study also revealed concerns about teacher qualifications ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.606$) and the use of

effective teaching methods (M = 2.81, SD = 1.606), suggesting that many teachers in private schools may have lacked the necessary competencies to maximize student learning. This aligned with Darling-Hammond (2017), who emphasized that well-trained teachers play a crucial role in student success. Additionally, the results reflect those of Akyeampong et al. (2011), who observed that private schools in low-income settings often rely on unqualified teachers due to financial constraints. Implicitly, policymakers should address these challenges by establishing structured in-service training sessions, offering incentives for teachers to pursue further education, and fostering partnerships between private schools and teacher training institutions.

The study also highlighted the importance of school infrastructure in promoting academic achievement, as indicated by the high mean score (M = 4.48, SD = 0.774). However, teachers' perceptions of the adequacy of school facilities (M = 3.20, SD = 1.365) suggested that many private schools still struggle with infrastructural deficiencies. Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008) argued that a well-maintained school environment positively impacts student motivation and learning outcomes. Implicitly, policymakers should introduce minimum infrastructure standards for private schools, provide financial support such as grants or low-interest loans for school improvements, and encourage public-private partnerships to enhance educational facilities.

The study further underscored the critical role of parental involvement in student success, with respondents agreeing that lack of parental engagement negatively affects student performance (M = 3.99, SD = 0.624). This was consistent with Epstein's (2018) model of school-family partnerships, which highlights the benefits of active parental participation in a child's education. However, the study also found

that teachers' communication with parents about student progress (M = 3.51, SD = 1.303) was only moderately rated, indicating that existing parent-teacher interactions may be inadequate. What this implied was that, to foster greater parental involvement, policymakers should introduce structured engagement programs, mandate regular parent-teacher interactions, and implement community-based awareness campaigns to educate parents on their role in academic development.

Another key issue emerging from the study was financial hardship as a barrier to education, with economic difficulties significantly affecting students' concentration and attendance (M = 4.29, SD = 0.733). Additionally, the study found that access to financial aid and scholarships (M = 4.72, SD = 0.562) played a vital role in ensuring student retention. This aligned with Schleicher (2019), who argued that financial instability often leads to school dropouts and underperformance. To address this challenge, policymakers should design need-based scholarship programs, facilitate corporate sponsorships for private school students, and offer tax incentives to private school proprietors who provide financial assistance to low-income families.

The study also revealed strong support for technology integration in education, with respondents agreeing that incorporating ICT into teaching enhances learning outcomes (M = 4.43, SD = 0.562). However, the study also found that teachers' ability to integrate technology into lessons (M = 2.92, SD = 1.304) was relatively low, indicating gaps in digital literacy and resource availability. This supported Li and Ma (2010), who found that digital learning tools improved student engagement and problem-solving skills. Implicitly, policymakers should develop national guidelines for ICT adoption in private schools, subsidize digital resources such as smart boards

and tablets, and promote partnerships between technology firms and private schools to improve digital access.

Furthermore, guidance and counselling services were identified as an essential component of academic success (M = 4.70, SD = 0.737), echoing the findings of Sink and Stroh (2003), who noted that well-structured counselling programs improve student discipline and focus. However, the study also found that teachers' ability to provide individual attention to struggling students (M = 3.51, SD = 1.431) was moderate, suggesting that many schools lack specialized student support services. The implications drawn from this is that, policymakers should mandate the establishment of guidance and counselling units in private schools, train and deploy certified school counsellors, and provide funding support for these services.

Another significant result was the need for regular monitoring and evaluation of private schools, with respondents agreeing that systematic oversight would improve education outcomes (M = 4.37, SD = 0.675). However, the study also found that teachers' frequency of assessing students' progress (M = 3.29, SD = 1.480) was moderate, indicating potential inconsistencies in assessment practices. This supported Fullan's (2011) argument that data-driven decision-making enhances school effectiveness. Consequently, policymakers should develop standardized performance evaluation frameworks, implement mandatory school assessments, and establish regional education support units to oversee private school operations.

Finally, while there was mixed feedback on government support for private schools (M = 3.07, SD = 1.417), the study suggested that some form of intervention was necessary. Tooley (2009) argued that balanced public-private partnerships can help improve the quality of education in private schools without compromising their

autonomy. However, the study also found concerns about teacher motivation (M = 2.88, SD = 1.268), suggested that policies aimed at supporting private school teachers through financial incentives or professional development programs may be needed. Policymakers implicitly should explore ways to support private schools through subsidies, infrastructure development programs, and capacity-building initiatives while ensuring that regulatory measures do not hinder innovation and flexibility.

The low ratings on teacher effectiveness, parental engagement, and technology integration suggested inefficiencies within the system, reinforcing the idea that when one component is weak, it negatively impacts overall school performance (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). For example, the low levels of teacher motivation (M = 2.88, SD = 1.268) and ineffective teaching methods (M = 2.81, SD = 1.606) indicated systemic constraints that affect instructional quality. Blatchford et al. (2011) argued that overburdened and undertrained teachers struggle to create engaging learning environments, ultimately reducing student performance. Furthermore, the strong correlation between financial hardship and student outcomes suggested that economic barriers act as bottlenecks in the education system, affecting attendance, concentration, and retention.

To address these challenges, policymakers must take a systems-based approach that considers the interconnected nature of teacher development, infrastructure, financial support, parental involvement, and performance monitoring. A fragmented approach that only tackles isolated issues will likely result in limited improvements, whereas a holistic policy framework ensures that all components function effectively to support student learning. By applying systems thinking, policymakers can develop comprehensive strategies that strengthen teacher training, technology integration,

financial aid programs, and monitoring mechanisms, ultimately leading to sustained improvements in private basic schools.

4.9 Implications of the results for professional practice

The results of this study provided crucial insights for educators, school administrators, and other education professionals, emphasizing key areas that require improvement to enhance student performance in private basic schools. These implications touch on teacher effectiveness, instructional strategies, school management, parental engagement, and student support systems, all of which are critical to fostering an environment that promotes academic excellence.

One of the most significant implications for professional practice was the need for continuous teacher training and professional development. The study revealed that increasing teacher training has a strong potential to improve student performance (M = 4.33, SD = 0.752). This result aligned with research by Darling-Hammond (2017), who stresses that well-trained teachers are more effective in delivering quality instruction and managing classroom dynamics. Implicitly, professional teachers must actively engage in ongoing professional development programs, attend workshops, and participate in peer-learning activities to refine their pedagogical skills and stay updated with modern teaching methodologies. School administrators should also establish in-house training programs and collaborate with educational institutions to provide training opportunities for their staff.

Another crucial implication was the need for resource mobilization to improve teaching and learning materials. The study found that providing more learning materials and resources significantly enhances academic outcomes (M = 3.91, SD =

0.957). This supported the argument by Schleicher (2019) that inadequate educational resources hinder student engagement and comprehension. As a result, school administrators should prioritize the procurement of essential textbooks, laboratory equipment, and digital learning tools. Teachers should also explore innovative teaching techniques, such as using locally available materials and integrating technology to compensate for resource limitations.

The results also highlighted the importance of parental involvement in student learning, as respondents agreed that parental engagement plays a crucial role in academic success (M = 3.99, SD = 0.624). This was consistent with Epstein's (2018) model, which emphasizes school-family partnerships as a foundation for student achievement. Implicitly, Professional Teachers and School Administrators must develop structured programs that encourage parents to participate actively in their children's education. This could include organizing parent-teacher meetings, offering workshops on effective home learning support, and implementing communication channels that keep parents informed about their child's academic progress.

Furthermore, the study underscored the significance of improving school infrastructure (M = 4.48, SD = 0.774), a factor supported by Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008), who found that a well-maintained school environment positively influences student motivation and performance. In response, Professional School Management should prioritize infrastructure development by ensuring that classrooms are well-ventilated, learning spaces are adequately furnished, and sanitation facilities are well-maintained. Schools should also advocate for funding support from government agencies, private organizations, and community stakeholders to enhance their facilities.

The integration of technology into teaching and learning is another important aspect of professional practice. The study found that incorporating technology in classrooms significantly benefits student learning (M = 4.43, SD = 0.562), which aligned with the findings of Li and Ma (2010), who emphasize that technology enhances student engagement and critical thinking. Educators must, therefore, embrace digital tools such as interactive whiteboards, e-learning platforms, and multimedia resources to create dynamic learning experiences. Additionally, schools should invest in ICT training programs for teachers to equip them with the necessary digital skills to facilitate effective technology-based instruction.

Another critical area of concern was the need for guidance and counselling services, as respondents strongly agreed that such services help students stay focused on academics (M = 4.70, SD = 0.737). This result was supported by Sink and Stroh (2003), who note that school counselling programs contribute to student discipline, emotional well-being, and academic success. As a result, schools should establish well-structured guidance and counselling units, recruit trained counsellors, and create a supportive environment where students can seek academic, social, and emotional assistance.

Additionally, the study highlighted the importance of structured monitoring and evaluation in schools, with respondents affirming that regular performance assessments contribute to improved education outcomes (M = 4.37, SD = 0.675). According to Fullan (2011), data-driven decision-making is crucial in educational institutions. Therefore, Professional School Administrators should implement systematic evaluation strategies, such as periodic student assessments, teacher

performance reviews, and school-wide improvement plans, to track progress and make informed decisions that enhance educational quality.

While the study also found mixed views on government support for private schools (M = 3.07, SD = 1.417), it suggested that some level of intervention is needed. Research by Tooley (2009) indicated that strategic public-private partnerships can improve education quality in private schools without compromising their independence. Professional School Administrators should, therefore, engage with government agencies and policymakers to explore possible avenues for financial support, training programs, and infrastructure assistance.

4.10 Chapter summary

In sum, the results of this study have far-reaching implications for professional practice in education. Teachers must continuously upgrade their skills, school administrators should improve resource allocation and infrastructure, and educational stakeholders must foster stronger collaboration between schools, parents, and government institutions. By implementing these changes, private schools can create a more effective learning environment that enhances student performance and overall educational quality.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the results and discussions of the results obtained from the sampled teachers, students and parents. This chapter presents a summary of the key results of the study, highlighting the major factors contributing for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality. It also provided conclusions drawn from the analysis and discusses their implications for educational stakeholders, including school administrators, policymakers, teachers, and parents. Finally, the chapter offered recommendations aimed at improving academic performance in private basic schools by addressing identified challenges related to school environment, teacher-related factors, socio-economic influences, and strategic interventions. These recommendations were designed to inform future policy directions and enhance the quality of education in private schools within the municipality.

5.2 Summary of results

The summary of the results provides a comprehensive overview of the key insights derived from the study. It highlights the dominant factors that account for the decline in academic performance of students in the Effutu Municipality. Additionally, the results outlined effective strategies for enhancing the academic performance of students, emphasizing communication, professional development, and collaboration.

5.2.1 School-environment factors that account for the underperformance of students

The study revealed that the school environment played a critical role in shaping student academic performance in private basic schools within the Effutu Municipality. The results indicated that while some schools had adequate classrooms and learning space, others faced infrastructural challenges that negatively affected learning. Additionally, the availability of textbooks and teaching materials was found to be inadequate, highlighting resource constraints that could hinder effective instruction.

The study also found that the conduciveness of the school environment significantly impacted student learning. Schools that maintained a safe and secure atmosphere reported better student engagement and attendance, reinforcing the importance of a well-managed school setting. However, concerns were raised about the availability and quality of co-curricular activities, which are essential for holistic student development.

Moreover, access to ICT facilities for teaching and learning was found to be moderate, suggesting the need for enhanced digital integration in private schools. The presence of a functional library also received a mixed response, indicating inconsistencies in access to academic resources. Additionally, school administrators' ability to effectively manage resources for academic success was rated fairly, pointing to potential gaps in leadership and resource allocation.

One of the most concerning results was the impact of frequent teacher strikes and absenteeism on student learning. The disruption caused by such occurrences highlights the need for better teacher motivation and accountability measures to ensure uninterrupted instructional delivery. Overall, the study emphasized the

importance of a well-resourced, secure, and supportive school environment in fostering academic excellence in private basic schools.

5.2.2 Teacher-related factors that account for the underperformance of students

The study highlighted the significant influence of teacher-related factors on student academic performance in private basic schools within the Effutu Municipality. One of the key result was that the availability of qualified and experienced teachers was rated relatively low, suggesting a need for improved teacher recruitment and retention strategies. Similarly, the effectiveness of teaching methods used to enhance learning was also rated at the same level, indicating potential gaps in pedagogical approaches that may hinder effective knowledge delivery.

The frequency of student assessment through tests and assignments was rated moderately, signifying that while assessment practices exist, they may need to be more consistent and rigorous. Additionally, the study found that continuous professional development opportunities for teachers were somewhat adequate, reinforcing the need for regular capacity-building programs to keep educators updated with modern teaching strategies.

Individualized student support was another crucial aspect, with teachers providing attention to struggling students being rated fairly well. However, teacher motivation and commitment were rated lower, suggesting that issues such as inadequate incentives, heavy workloads, and lack of career growth opportunities may be affecting teacher morale. The integration of technology into lessons was found to be moderate, indicating that while efforts have been made to incorporate ICT into teaching, more investment is needed to maximize its benefits. The study also revealed that the teacher-student ratio significantly influenced student academic performance,

highlighting the need for manageable class sizes to enhance personalized learning experiences.

Furthermore, communication between teachers and parents regarding student progress was rated fairly high, suggesting that most teachers engage with parents but may require structured mechanisms to improve feedback consistency. Finally, the study found that teachers encouraged students to develop independent learning skills at a relatively high level, emphasizing the role of teachers in fostering student autonomy in learning.

Overall, the results underscored the importance of improving teacher qualifications, motivation, teaching strategies, and professional development opportunities to enhance the quality of education in private basic schools. Addressing these teacher-related factors was crucial for boosting student performance and ensuring sustainable academic success.

5.2.3 Socio-economic factors that account for the underperformance of students

The study revealed that socio-economic factors significantly influenced student academic performance in private basic schools within the Effutu Municipality. One of the key result was that many parents struggle to pay school fees on time, indicating that financial constraints limit students' access to consistent education. Furthermore, students from low-income backgrounds were found to face financial difficulties that affect their learning, supporting the argument that economic hardship negatively impacts school attendance, concentration, and overall academic success.

Parental involvement was another crucial factor, with result showing that a lack of parental engagement negatively affected student performance. This suggests that many parents may not be actively involved in their children's academic progress, which could be due to work commitments, low literacy levels, or a lack of awareness of their role in education. Additionally, the study found that parents' educational background influences student academic success, highlighting the intergenerational impact of education.

Home responsibilities, such as chores and work obligations, were also found to affect students' study time, indicating that many students had competing demands that limit their ability to focus on academics. Additionally, peer pressure and social distractions emerged as a major contributor to academic underperformance, suggesting that external influences play a critical role in shaping student behaviour and learning outcomes.

The lack of access to private tutoring was identified as another challenge, with many students unable to afford additional academic support outside school hours. Similarly, students' lack of access to essential learning materials at home was rated moderately high, further emphasizing the role of economic conditions in determining educational opportunities.

Another significant factor was the effect of economic hardship on students' concentration and attendance, which was rated highly. This result aligned with research indicating that financial instability often leads to irregular school attendance, poor academic engagement, and, in extreme cases, school dropouts. However, the study also found that the availability of scholarships and financial aid played a crucial

role in helping students stay in school, reinforcing the importance of financial support mechanisms in ensuring educational continuity.

Overall, the findings suggest that addressing socio-economic challenges—such as financial aid for students, enhanced parental involvement, and measures to reduce social distractions—could improve student performance in private basic schools. By implementing policies that provide economic support and encourage parental engagement, stakeholders can mitigate the negative impact of socio-economic factors on education.

5.2.4 Strategies to improve the academic performance of students in the Efuttu Municipality

The study identified several key strategies that can enhance the academic performance of students in private basic schools within the Effutu Municipality. One of the most significant result was the importance of increasing teacher training and professional development. Respondents strongly agreed that continuous training equips teachers with modern pedagogical skills, improving instructional quality and student learning outcomes. This aligned with the argument that well-trained teachers positively influence student performance by employing effective teaching strategies and classroom management techniques.

Another critical strategy was improving school infrastructure, which was highly rated. The study found that well-maintained school buildings, adequate learning resources, and proper classroom facilities contribute to a conducive learning environment. Respondents also emphasized the need for better integration of technology into teaching, highlighting the role of digital learning tools in enhancing student engagement and comprehension. Parental involvement emerged as a vital factor in

student success, with respondents agreeing that parents should be more engaged in their children's education. Schools should foster stronger collaboration between parents and teachers through regular meetings, digital communication platforms, and parental education programs. Additionally, extra-curricular activities were identified as an important component of academic success, suggesting that structured programs can improve student discipline, motivation, and overall learning experiences.

The study also highlighted the significance of guidance and counselling services in supporting students academically. Effective counselling programs can help students manage personal and academic challenges, improving focus and motivation. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation of school performance was rated highly, emphasizing the need for regular assessment of both students and teachers to ensure continuous improvement in education quality.

Another key result was the need for increased government support for private schools. While opinions were mixed, some respondents believed that financial and policy interventions from the government could improve infrastructure, teacher training, and overall school management without compromising school autonomy.

Overall, the result suggest that a combination of teacher development, infrastructure improvement, parental engagement, technology integration, student support services, and effective school monitoring are essential strategies for enhancing academic performance in private basic schools. By implementing these strategies, school administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders can create an enabling environment for better student outcomes.

5.3 Conclusions

This study examined the factors contributing for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality, focusing on school environment, teacher-related factors, socio-economic influences, and strategies for academic improvement. The results highlighted the complex interplay of these factors and their collective impact on student achievement. The study revealed that the school environment played a significant role in shaping student performance. Issues such as inadequate classrooms, insufficient learning materials, and poor infrastructure were identified as major barriers to effective teaching and learning. A well-maintained and resource-rich school environment was found to be crucial for fostering student engagement and academic success. To bridge the performance gap, stakeholders must prioritize investment in school infrastructure, provision of learning resources and creation of conducive learning environment.

Teacher-related factors also emerged as a critical determinant of student performance. While teacher qualification and experience are essential, the results suggested that the quality of teaching methods, continuous professional development, and teacher motivation significantly impacted learning outcomes. The study emphasized the need for ongoing training programs and improved teacher-student interactions to enhance instructional effectiveness. By addressing these teacher-related challenges, schools can enhance teaching quality and boost student achievement.

Socio-economic factors were found to be significant contributors to student underperformance. Many students from low-income backgrounds struggled with financial difficulties, lack of learning materials at home, and limited parental involvement. Economic hardship was also identified as a major challenge affecting

student concentration and attendance. The study underscored the need for financial support systems, such as scholarships and flexible payment plans, to ease the burden on struggling families. By addressing these socio-economic barriers, we can create more equitable learning opportunities and improve learner outcomes.

To address these challenges, several strategies were identified to improve student academic performance. Key strategies recommendations included strengthening teacher training and professional development, improving school infrastructure, increasing parental engagement, integrating technology into teaching, and expanding student support services like guidance and counselling. Additionally, the study highlighted the importance of regular monitoring and evaluation to track student progress and ensure accountability in school management.

In conclusion, the study demonstrated that improving student performance in private basic schools requires a multifaceted approach that addresses school resources, teacher capacity, socio-economic barriers, and institutional policies. By implementing targeted interventions, school administrators, policymakers, and stakeholders can create an enabling environment for quality education and better learning outcomes.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations were proposed to address the factors contributing for the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality.

1. Improving the school environment

The study found that inadequate classrooms, insufficient learning materials, poor infrastructure, and limited access to ICT facilities negatively impacted student

performance. To address these challenges: School administrators should invest in infrastructure development by ensuring classrooms are spacious, well-ventilated, and furnished with adequate learning materials. Schools can also establish functional libraries and ICT resource centres to facilitate digital learning and research, and regular maintenance of school facilities, including desks, blackboards, and sanitation facilities, should be prioritized to create a conducive learning environment.

2. Enhancing teacher training and professional development

The results indicated that the quality of teaching methods, lacked of continuous professional development, and low teacher motivation contribute to student underperformance. Therefore. school management should organize regular in-service training programs to equip teachers with modern instructional strategies, including student-centred approaches and technology integration. Teacher development policies should also encourage professional learning communities where teachers can share best practices and innovative teaching methods, and The Ministry of Education should partner with teacher training institutions to provide specialized training programs tailored for private school educators.

3. Addressing socio-economic barriers to education

Economic hardship, lack of parental involvement, and limited access to learning materials at home were identified as significant barriers to student success. To mitigate these challenges, private schools should establish scholarship programs and flexible tuition payment plans to support students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds. Government agencies and corporate organizations such as Ghana Library Authority and Mineral Commission should also provide sponsorships and financial aid packages to assist low-income families in affording quality education. Schools should implement structured parental engagement programs, including

regular parent-teacher meetings, workshops, and digital communication platforms, to enhance parental participation in student learning, and community initiatives should be developed to provide students with supplementary learning resources, such as free textbooks, after-school tutoring, and mentorship programs.

4. Strengthening student support services

The results showed that guidance and counselling services played a crucial role in student discipline and academic success. Therefore, schools should establish well-structured counselling units with trained professionals to provide academic, emotional, and career guidance to students. The government should also collaborate with educational institutions to develop training programs for school counsellors and ensure that every private school has access to professional counselling services, and schools should implement mentorship programs where older students, teachers, and community leaders can provide guidance and motivation to learners.

Implementing these recommendations can be a way stakeholder in the education sector can work collaboratively to address the key challenges affecting private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality. These targeted interventions will contribute to improved student performance, enhanced teacher effectiveness, and the overall development of quality education in private schools.

5.5 Limitations of the study

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, certain limitations were encountered, which may have impacted the scope and generalizability of the results.

Firstly, the use of a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument limited the contextual depth of responses. While the quantitative approach facilitated the collection of broad-based data from a relatively large sample, it did not allow for

the exploration of deeper personal experiences, perceptions, and meanings associated with the underperformance of students in private basic schools. Secondly, the study's design offered limited flexibility in probing emerging issues during data collection, thereby constraining the richness of data that might have been obtained through qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups. Thirdly a notable limitation was the difficulty in capturing the nuanced human experiences of students, teachers, and parents, especially regarding emotional, psychological, and socio-cultural dynamics that may influence academic performance.

To mitigate these limitations, efforts were made to ensure the clarity and relevance of questionnaire items by conducting a pilot study, which helped to refine the instrument. The researcher also maintained rigor in data analysis through statistical validation and ensured transparency in the interpretation of results.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

While this study has provided valuable insights into the factors contributing to the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality, there were several areas that warrant further investigation, future research should adopt a longitudinal approach to track the academic progress of students over time. This would provide deeper insights into how interventions such as teacher training, parental involvement, and school infrastructure improvements impact student outcomes in the long run. Also, a comparative study examining the differences in academic performance between private and public schools in the Effutu Municipality could offer a broader understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of both sectors. This would help policymakers develop targeted strategies for improving education across all school types.

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APPENDIX

FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR THE UNDERPERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE BASIC SCHOOLS IN THE EFFUTU MUNICIPALITY

Introduction:

This questionnaire is designed to collect data for a study on the factors influencing the underperformance of private basic schools in the Effutu Municipality. Your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. Please answer the questions honestly.

Section A: Demographic Information

(Please tick [✓] where appropriate)

Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Age:

- ☐ Below 25 years
- ☐ 25 – 34 years
- ☐ 35 – 44 years
- ☐ 45 years and above

Role in the school:

- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Student

Educational qualification (for teachers):

- ☐ Certificate
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Degree
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

Number of years in the school (for teachers and students):

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1 – 3 years
- ☐ 4 – 6 years
- ☐ More than 6 years

Section B: School Environment Factors

(Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking [✓] the appropriate box.)
Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. The school has adequate classrooms and learning space.					
2. There are sufficient textbooks and teaching materials.					
3. The school environment is conducive for learning.					
4. School infrastructure (e.g., desks, blackboards) is in good condition.					
5. The school provides enough co-curricular activities to enhance learning.					
6. The school maintains a safe and secure environment for students.					
7. There is access to ICT facilities for teaching and learning.					
8. The school has a functional library for student use.					
9. The school administration effectively manages resources for academic success.					
10. Frequent teacher strikes or absenteeism negatively affect student learning.					

Section C: Teacher-Related Factors

(Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.)
Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. The school has qualified and experienced teachers.					
2. Teachers use effective teaching methods to enhance learning.					
3. Teachers frequently assess students' progress through tests and assignments.					
4. Teachers receive continuous professional development training.					
5. Teachers provide individual attention to struggling students.					
6. There is a high level of teacher motivation and commitment.					
7. Teachers effectively integrate technology into their lessons.					
8. The teacher-student ratio affects students' academic performance.					
9. Teachers frequently communicate with parents about student progress.					
10. Teachers encourage students to develop independent learning skills.					

Section D: Socio-Economic Factors

(Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.)
Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. Many parents struggle to pay school fees on time.					
2. Students from low-income backgrounds face financial difficulties that affect their learning.					
3. Lack of parental involvement negatively impacts student performance.					
4. Parents' educational background influences student academic success.					
5. Home responsibilities (e.g., chores, work) affect students' study time.					
6. Peer pressure and social distractions contribute to academic underperformance.					
7. Many students do not have access to private tutoring outside school hours.					
8. Students lack access to essential learning materials at home.					
9. Economic hardship affects students' concentration and attendance.					
10. The availability of scholarships and financial aid helps students stay in school.					

Section E: Strategies for Improving Academic Performance

(Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.)
Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1. Increasing teacher training and professional development will improve student performance.					
2. Providing more learning materials and resources will enhance academic outcomes.					
3. Parents should be more involved in their children's education.					
4. Improving school infrastructure will contribute to better academic performance.					
5. Schools should integrate more technology into teaching.					
6. Guidance and counseling services will help students stay focused on academics.					
7. Government support for private schools will enhance education quality.					
8. Teachers should adopt student-centered learning approaches.					
9. Extra-curricular activities should be structured to support academic success.					
10. Monitoring and evaluating school performance regularly will improve education outcomes.					