SOCIO- ECONOMIC STATUS (SES) OF PARENTS AND ITS EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE AWUTU SENYA AND EFFUTU EDUCATIONAL DIRECTORATES IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA

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DANIEL YELKPIERI

CENTRE FOR LABOUR MARKET STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated how much influence the SES of parents has on students' achievements in the Awutu-Senya and Effutu Educational Directorates of the Central Region of Ghana. The study focused on parents' financial status, educational qualifications, jobs, enabling learning environment provided by parents and the type of school attended and how these affected students' achievements. The study adopted a cross sectional and a multi-site case study designs. The population consisted of school officials, teachers, students of SHS and parents in the Awutu Senya and Effutu Educational Districts in the Central Region of Ghana. A sample size of 531 respondents was chosen for the study. The instruments used in the data collection were questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, direct observation and secondary data. A range of sampling techniques from simple random, purposive, census, to cluster sampling techniques was adopted in selecting the participants. The researcher used descriptive and inferential statistics in presenting the data. Respondents agreed that parents' financial circumstances affected students' academic achievements in the study area. Respondents were of the opinion that learning environment provided by parents at home determined the academic achievements of students. The study found that students from high socio-economic homes were provided with most of the materials they needed to succeed in their education than their counterparts. Respondents agreed to some extent with the assumption that educational qualifications of parents influenced students' academic success. They argued that parents' educational attainments enhanced home environment for students' learning. The study made original contributions by highlighting parents' financial difficulties they faced in promoting their children's education, isolating some of the influences of SES of parents on students' learning and providing policy implications. The study recommends that Government of Ghana should expand its youth training programme on skills acquisition to cover all categories of people who desire skills.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BECE: Basic Education Certificate Examination

CLMS: Centre for Labour Market Studies

GES: Ghana Education Service

GSS: Ghana Statistical Service

JHS: Junior High School

NAEP: National Assessment of Educational Progress

SES: Socio-Economic Status

SHS: Senior High School

WAEC: West Africa Examination Council

WASSSCE: West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination

GPRS: Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy

Chapter 1

Background of the Study

Introduction

The study seeks to investigate how much influence the socio-economic status (SES) of parents has on their children's academic achievements in the Awutu-Senya and Effutu Educational Directorates of the Central Region of Ghana. The research will spell out the aims of the study and how it intends to achieve this in the thesis. The researcher's investigation has revealed that there are studies conducted on how social class influences children's educational progress and attainments in basic schools in Ghana (Antwi, 1992 and Agyeman, 1993), however, there are no similar studies in the case of Senior High Schools (SHS) in Ghana. In order to achieve the aims of this study, the researcher was guided in his discussion of the research question by these themes which were derived from the existing literature. First, parents' financial circumstances and how it affects students' academic achievements in the Awutu Senya and Effutu Educational Districts. In the second place, the research will investigate the type of learning environment provided by parents at home and how it determines the academic achievements of students in the study area. In addition, parents' educational qualifications and its influence on students' academic success is another area of interest, and parents' jobs and its influence on children level of attainments. The type of schools that students attend and its influence on students' educational achievements. In addition to the above themes, the research will test three hypotheses.

Research Problem

One of the key social functions of education is to prepare the youth and equip them with skills necessary for economic development in every country (Antwi, 1992). It is in this regard that much importance is attached to education by both developed and developing countries such as United Kingdom (UK), France, South Africa, Nigeria, and Singapore among others. Antwi's concept and understanding of education is highlighted in these words:

> ...modern governments regard education not only as a service to be provided by the state for its members but also as a useful capital investment in human resources.

> (Antwi, 1992:220)

Antwi implies that there is a direct relationship between the level of educational attainment and socio-economic development of individuals and the nation as a whole. This is the reason why nations spend good percentage of their annual budget on education in order to ensure that they provide quality education to their nationals. For example, Ghana allocated 21.22% (GHC 2,871,680,218) out of GHC 13,529,706,950 in 2012 to the educational sector (Republic of Ghana, 2012). Even though this amount may not suffice the education sector in terms of the resources required to provide quality education. However, if the money was allocated to priority projects on time and used for the purposes for which the money was allocated then it could improve the situation of education in Ghana. The Centre for National Affairs (CNA) observes that Ghana is below the 'UNESCO threshold of 6% of GDP allocation to education' (Ghanaherald.com, 2014:2). In Nigeria, the education sector received N400.15 billion, which represented 8.43% of the budget (Abayomi, 2012). This amount was said to be far below the 26% recommended by UNESCO. As a result, concerned education stakeholders called on government for the upward review of the amount. Meanwhile, in Singapore, it is $10.6 billion (Ministry of Education, 2012), whilst in the UK the Education Department was allocated £1,894.9 million for the year 2012 (Department of Education, 2011).

It is in this respect, that 'vigorous human resource development is one of the three strategic priorities of Ghana's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II (GPRS II)' (National Development and Planning Commission, 2005b: xxi) cited in Higgins (2009). Higgins observes that the objective of the human capital development is to bring about 'development of knowledgeable, well-trained and disciplined labour force with the capacity to drive and sustain private sector led growth' (National Development and Planning Commission, 2005b). The Government of Ghana sees education as central to the GPRS II, which includes 'a major sub-sector of the human resource development pillar' (National Development and Planning Commission, 2005a:42) cited in Higgins (2009). She notes the nation's commitment to education is shown in Ghana's Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) policy, which provides two years of kindergarten, six years of primary school and three years of Junior High School (JHS) free to all children of school-going-age in Ghana (Government of Ghana, 2007).

For this purpose, secondary education and training has been seen as one of the key avenues to increase the youth capacity for economic growth and social development (Antwi, 1992 and Sutherland-Addy, n.d). Sutherland-Addy (n.d.:8) observes that secondary education is

'indispensable for young people', for it guarantees 'productive citizens' who 'lead healthy lives'. She notes that graduates from secondary schools provide the labour market with 'modern knowledge and skills, readiness to take initiatives, and ability to solve problems'

In spite of these laudable advantages that secondary education provides for the development of the country, only few students can access it in Ghana either because of inequitable provision or inability to afford the cost involved. These disparities in access and affordability of education have been a source of worry to the Government of Ghana for some time now. A World Bank report shows that both primary and secondary school enrolment has increased (World Bank, 2007b) cited in Higgins (2009), however, she notes that Ghana's gross and net enrolment figures are below the sub-Saharan Africa average at primary level, and above average at secondary level (World Bank, 2006). Coulombe and Wodon (2007:67) cited in Higgins (2009) observed that there is a strong correlation between poverty and low primary and secondary net and gross enrolment rates. They further note that in spite of free basic education, poorer people are unable to educate their children.

Many students in secondary schools in Ghana are unable to pursue their education as expected due to inequitable socio-economic differences that they experience. There are many capable students who are confronted with disadvantages which impede their academic progress in school. Students from low socio-economic homes compete unfavourably with their counterparts from high socio-economic homes to enter the best secondary schools in the country. Antwi observed that children from the elite homes have access to television, radio, libraries and toys' and as a result 'enjoy cultural continuity between the home and the school' (Antwi, 1992:215). Higgins (2009:5) made similar observation when she indicated that students must meet the SHS admission criteria, which is 'more challenging for students from poor households and poor districts'. Many are the students who work hard to get good grades to enter any of the prestigious secondary schools in the country, yet they cannot afford the financial responsibilities that come along with it. This argument is supported by Antwi (1992:215) when he observed that 'statistical data are non-existent' for students who had 'admission on merit to secondary schools' but could not take their places as a result of 'financial reasons'. As a result, some students with very good grades opt for second rate secondary schools. In Ghana, because of the Computerised Schools Selections and Placement Systems (CSSPS), SHS are categorised according to their endowment, in terms of facilities, teachers and their

academic performance. On the basis of these some schools are classified as "A" schools, while others are classified as "B" and "C" schools.

This category of students from low income homes hardly have enough money to pay their school fees at the beginning of the school term, and therefore, are faced with the fear of being asked to go home for non-payment of fees. Some students 'throughout their school career are haunted by the fear of dismissal for being in arrears in the payment of their fees' (Antwi, 1992:215). This type of anxiety affects students psychologically and unsettles them in school. This affects students' confidence level and reduces their concentration in school and subsequently affects their level of academic achievements.

These situations sometimes force some students to drop out of school and those who do not drop out have to contend with high level of absenteeism which does not promote effective and quality learning in school. Forsyth and Furlong (2003:2) note that financial hardships that drive students from less affluent backgrounds into part-time or full-time employment to finance their education usually have 'negative impact on coursework'. The reason is that some of these students have to look after themselves so from time to time they absent themselves from school in order to work to get some money to pay their school fees and buy other educational needs.

Beside the financial challenges that they face, this class of students are equally disadvantaged in terms of their home environment which inadvertently affects their general academic output in school. This stems from the fact that, educational attainment is directly associated with students' social and cultural differences in the home environments (Nabuka, 1984; Glick, 1994; Wiggan, 2007; Kellet and Dar, 2007). It is worth noting that understanding the impact of poverty on literacy opportunities in the home can inform policy and practice in the classroom, particularly with regard to strategies to compensate for identified disadvantages (Kellet and Dar, 2007; Ornstein and Levine, 2006). Knowledge of the effects of poverty on students' learning and academic progress would inform policy-makers to put in place social interventions that will bring some reliefs to parents and children. For example, central government can provide community library services and/or remedial classes among other measures for disadvantaged communities.

In addition, these students may not have well educated adults at home to inspire them by way of providing them with information on how to progress in their education. When students have role models around them, they are motivated to keep their educational

dreams alive by working hard. Jerrim and Micklewright (2009:2) in a study revealed that 'children's educational outcomes vary sharply with their parents' socioeconomic background'. They considered the child's ability within the Haveman and Wolfe framework, which considers two determining factors: 'home investments represented by the quantity and quality of time and goods inputs in the child, and heredity' (Jerrim, and Micklewright, 2009:4). These disparities in socio-economic backgrounds of students affect them directly and indirectly in their educational pursuits and do not provide a level playing ground for children from low socio-economic homes. This has instigated the researcher to undertake this study to stress the need for conscious political action to put measures in place to bring about equal educational opportunities for all students.

In line with the objectives of the study the following hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant effect of learning environment provided by parents at home on students' academic achievements.

2. There is no significant effect of educational qualifications of parents on students' academic success.

3. There is no significant effect of the type of school students attend on their academic achievements.

Contribution of the Study to Knowledge

The study made distinctive contributions in the following areas:

- Identifying some of the financial difficulties parents encounter in supporting their children's education;
- Isolating the influence of SES on students' learning; and
- Policy implications.

The study has highlighted the seriousness of poverty in Awutu-Senya and Effutu Educational Districts and how it affects children's education. In Ghana, there are many students who get good grades to merit admission into any of the prestigious secondary schools, yet are unable to afford the school fees. Antwi (1992:215) notes that there are a good number of students who could not take their places in secondary schools because their parents did not have the money to pay for the initial cost.

However, children from high socioeconomic homes do not have such experiences but get a better support from their parents. These children by virtue of their parents' ability to pay for their education were sent to 'special schools' like 'International, preparatory and experimental private schools' where they were prepared for the Common Entrance Examination which enabled them to obtain admission into well-endowed schools, which provided them 'access to universities at home and abroad' (Antwi, 1992:215).

Secondary education in Ghana is highly subsidised by government, yet, it is 'still not cheap to every parent' (Antwi, 1992:215). Parents in low socio economic class find it difficult to pay their students' fees outright and have to arrange and pay it by instalments. Antwi notes that it became easier for a son of a Ghanaian graduate to enter into a secondary school than a 'son of a man with primary education'. A study carried out by Foster and Clignet in the early 1960s in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire 'based on estimates of selectivity indices of various occupational categories' in respect of 'secondary school enrolment' (Antwi, 1992:214) found that:

> the chance of a son of a higher administrative official attaining secondary school is more than 23 times greater than that of a farmer, whereas in Cote d'Ivoire the comparable differential advantage is more than 32 times.

It means that children from high socio-economic homes had better opportunity of being admitted into secondary school than a son of a farmer who scored higher than his counterpart from high socio-economic home. The present study has similar findings which call for immediate attention. The implication is that government must take strict measures in the interim to identify needy students and subsidise their education, while government ascertain the feasibility of providing fee-free SHS as stipulated by the 1992 constitution of Ghana.

The influence that SES has on students' learning and achievement levels is enormous irrespective of the geographical location, race, gender, culture and level of intelligence. This study highlights the seriousness of the problem in the study area for all stakeholders to reflect on it and come out with a way forward. Forsyth and Furlong (2003:1) note further that, 'student poverty, indebtedness' and other educational related hardships 'deter many young people from becoming students' and also 'shorten the educational careers of disadvantaged young people who have entered higher education'. These experiences that some students encounter are not different from what students in Ghana and for that matter

the study area experience. Antwi (1992:215) observes that, some students 'throughout their school career are haunted by the fear of dismissal for being in arrears in the payment of their fees'. This affects students psychologically in school. Sometimes some students drop-out from school as a result of such experiences.

Mooney, Knox, and Schacht (2007:263) noted in their studies that children who come from 'middle and upper socioeconomic brackets' 'perform better in school and complete more years of education than children from lower socioeconomic class families'. In support of their argument they indicated that 'high-income students are six times more likely to graduate with a bachelor's degree in five years' compare to 'lower-income students'.

The findings of this study brings to the fore the inequalities that have characterised the educational system in Ghana even among public schools. Higgins (2009:4) notes that 'persistent geographical disparities in education access' have been identified as a challenge to the development drive of Ghana in GPRS II as 'one of the three policy issues and gaps in the secondary education sub-sectors'.

This unacceptable situation moved the Government of Ghana to take an initiative that brought into being a model secondary school policy in 2003 to address the disparities in secondary education in Ghana. The policy calls for 'upgrading one secondary school in each district to a 'model secondary school status' (Higgins, 2009:4). The policy objective is to provide each educational district with 'a school that could be compared favourably with the leading schools' in Ghana.

It is further pointed out that government failure to move resources to the 'poorest districts or the districts with the worst education facilities', means that the government had missed 'an opportunity to bring districts with the weakest educational facilities and performance up to a minimal' acceptable level (Taylor, 2007) cited in Higgins (2009:5). It is in the context of this type of disparity that Fredua-Kwarteng (2004:2) suggested that if 'government wants to find objective criteria for distributing our educational resources, it must conduct a needs assessment of each school according to predetermined standards' in order to ensure fair distribution. He also observed that this policy 'entrenches vertical or class-based division' which is not good for Ghana.

It must be emphased that government efforts to expand access and improve the quality in SHS in Ghana would not solve the problem of unequal opportunities that exist in our SHS level. The reason is that, there are so many students in the SHS in Ghana who are unable to afford the cost of education at this level, because they are from low socio-economic homes. It is in this respect, that the 1992 constitution of Ghana enjoins politicians to consider the introduction of free SHS to enable such students benefit from quality SHS education just like their counterparts from high socio-economic homes.

The introduction of fee-free SHS in Ghana by government was met with misgiving and reservations from sections of Ghanaians. As a matter of concern, various stakeholders have expressed their opinions on the feasibility and sustainability of such a policy in Ghana, considering the prevailing economic situation. It is in this light that Obour (2014:2) expressed the view that 'we must develop the courage, self-confidence and capacity to subject' the policy to 'rigorous scrutiny by questioning its rationality; feasibility; affordability; sustainability; and objectives'. The Centre for National Affairs (CNA) joins other stakeholders of education who believe that 'free and quality SHS policy as proposed by a number of political parties' is the solution to the JHS graduates who 'do not have the requisite skills and competences to engage in reasonable economic ventures on their own' (Ghanaherald.com, 2014:1). They are of the opinion that, if the policy is properly implemented it would provide an avenue for 'smooth transition for all students from JHS to SHS, and allow them time to 'acquire usable skills and also mature at the SHS level'.

The findings of the study would call for equalisation of opportunities for students in terms of access, quality infrastructure, facilities and teachers. The findings of the study would re-echo the need for government to revisit its model school policy introduced by President John Agyekum Kufour's administration in 2001.

Justification of the Present Study
A close observation of students' academic achievements over the years by the researcher has shown that disadvantaged SHS which are patronized by students from poor homes perform abysmally compared to their advantaged counterparts in examinations. Geographically, Awutu-Senya and Effutu Municipality are located between latitudes 5020 degrees north and latitudes 0025 degrees west and 0037 degrees west on the eastern part of the Central Region of Ghana. Awutu-Senya and Effutu Municipality are bordered to the north by West Akim District, to the north-east by Agona East Municipality, to the south by

the Gulf of Guinea, to the south-west by Gomoa East District and to the East by Ga West Municipality. Effutu Municipality has one public university, the University of Education, Winneba, a Community Health Nurses Training School and Command and Staff College.

Awutu-Senya and Effutu are coastal towns located in the Central Region of Ghana . The main occupations of the people are fishing, farming, petty trading and a small percentage are engaged in the public sector. The decision to carry out the study in these two educational districts was informed by the low SES of parents and low academic achievements among students. A World Bank report (2004:42) reveals that 'poorer children' in disadvantaged schools are not 'reaping educational benefits' from their education and therefore will not benefit from any educational gains. This is underscored by the fact that brilliant but needy students in Effutu Municipality could not get admission into SHS (Effutu Municipal Education Directorate, 2010).

A study carried out in the Gomoa District in the Central Region of Ghana observed that pupils were entrapped in self-catering situation which rendered the acquisition of quality education a daunting exercise (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007). It is noted that some of the schools in the directorates have 'repeatedly scored zero percent (0%)' in 2006 (Effutu Municipal Directorate of Education, 2010:22). Ofosu-Kusi's research seems to agree with the report of Effutu Municipal Education Directorate (2010). At the SHS level, subject analysis of 2003 WASSCE shows that out of the 361 candidates presented for the examination, 51.9% passed in core mathematics, while 50% passed in elective mathematics out of 164 students and 43.1% passed in physics out of 117 candidates who sat for the examination. On the basis of these findings, the study seeks to investigate how much influence the SES of parents has on children's achievements in SHS in the study area?

Social Class in the Ghanaian Context
In the traditional Ghanaian set up, the extended family system was a binding factor that brought the nuclear and members of the extended family together. However, formal education gradually introduced social class into the Ghanaian society. It is noted that education and job placement were used as avenues to ensure that social class is entrenched in the Ghanaian society (Antwi, 1992 and Agyemen, 1993). This new development gradually made 'a social myth of the idea of education serving as a key to open social mobility in the developing countries' as opposed to 'open society of the industrialised nations' (Antwi, 1992:213). The introduction and acceptance of the 'new educational

system provided an avenue whereby people moved into the administrative class of the colonial administration' (Antwi, 1992:214). During this period, there were no private school, however, mission schools were under the strict supervision of the 'officials of the Education Department and subsidised' by government. This system provided an equal educational opportunity for every Ghanaian child to 'a new elite status or middle class'. It afforded a Ghanaian child from 'a humble home in a rural settlement to pass through his village school to secondary school and then to university at very little cost'.

This observation indicates that education has been used as a means of social mobility of people from a less privileged class to a privileged class (Agyeman, 1993 and Antwi, 1992). However, since majority of parents were poor and could not afford to send their children to the 'special schools' their children even though may be brilliant could not perform well to merit admission into one of the best secondary schools in the country.

Social class has come to stay with Ghanaians a result of western formal education and culture such as urbanisation and the nuclear family system. However, Ghanaians, have not abandoned their extended family system entirely. This is what makes a difference between the class system in Ghana and other social class systems in other parts of the world. The concept of social class as practised in the Ghanaian context will be taken further in the general discussion of social class later in the literature review.

Background Definitions

Class and Socio-Economic Status

Some scholars in sociology perceive class as more about lifestyles of people since it determines even the 'birth weight and cause of death, when to marry and whom to marry... (Conley, Strully and Bloom, 2003) cited in Hout (2007:2). This line of argument clearly portrays division (Wright, 1997; Giddens, 2005; and Bob, 2008). The reason is that class societies are formed primarily between two opposing classes, one stronger and the other weaker (Giddens, 2005 and Bob, 2008). This implies that class portrays a master-servant relationship, and this explains why the rich in society wants to 'rule' the poor because by virtue of their wealth they are influential and powerful in their communities (Giddens, 2005; and Bob, 2008).

Socio-economic status is the social standing of an individual in society with respect to his or her level of education, income, type of occupation and general quality of life. It also includes his or her access to goods and services in the market place. The upper-class

'persons are influential and powerful in their communities' (Ornstein and Levine, 2006:320). On the other hand, people with low socio-economic statuses are seen as 'low in prestige and power'. Indeed, the factors that determine one's class may vary from one society to another and even within the same society.

Studies have established that there is a 'strong relationship between social class and educational achievement' (Ornstein and Levine, 2006:320). They note that different studies have proved that 'working-class students have performed less well than middle and upper- class students'. In support of this argument, Mooney, et al.(2007:263) are of the view that 'one of the best predictors of educational success and attainment is socio-economic status'.

The upper class is the highest on the class structure. This is sub-divided into upper-upper class and lower-upper class (Warner, 1949; Coleman and Rainwater, 1978). The upper-upper class people are born into rich families (Warner 1949, Coleman and Rainwater, 1978) which probably implies they inherited their wealth from family members. Coleman and Rainwater (1978) describe them as people who have college degrees with a household income level of over $60,000 as at 1978. Thompson and Hickey (2005), consider the upper class as group of people who have control over the nation's economic resources and political affairs. One characteristic of the upper class is that they have a united front. Just as Marx observes that the proletariat or the suffering masses who became 'more conscious of their shared class position and common interest of overthrowing capitalism' and therefore mobilized themselves to 'resist capitalist exploitation' (Bob, 2008:56). This means class society embraces solidarity and may aim at protecting their positions in society (Hout, 2007; and Bob, 2008).

The lower-upper class are individuals who have made it by dint of hard work either through education, entrepreneurship and other high paid jobs (Warner, 1949 and Coleman and Rainwater, 1978), unlike the upper-upper class who are born into it or inherited it. This class consists of successful elites, top professionals, senior corporate executives, entrepreneurs among others. They have degrees from good Colleges and their household income is in excess of $60,000 (Coleman and Rainwater, 1978).

The second category of people on the social structure is the middle class. The middle class is made up of individuals of an upper middle class who are professionals, managers and small business owners who have distinguished themselves through high educational

attainment and are economically secured; and the lower middle class, consists of semi-professionals such as technical workers, technicians, sales personnels and clerical workers (Ornstein and Levine, 2006:320). Even though the groups overlap, there are major differences between them.

The lower middle class have low educational attainment with considerable less autonomy at the work place, and lower incomes compared to the upper middle class (Thompson and Hickey, 2005 and Gilbert, 1998). This class is made up of people with technical and lower-level management ranks such as craft peoples who work for the middle class (Williams, Swayer, and Wahlstrom, 2005).

However, sociologists like Gilbert, Henslin, Hickey, and Thompson have indicated that the upper middle class constitutes 15% of the American population. This is a reasonable percentage of the American population, it is therefore, no wonder that Gilbert (1997) indicated that the upper middle class has grown over the years and this has resulted in a change in its composition. He notes that the secret of their success is the increasing awareness of the importance of education and certification. They are noted to have graduate degrees such as Masters in Business Administration and PhDs. They usually have income levels that exceed $100,000 per household (US Census, 2005).

 The last stratum on the social structure is the working class. This is divided into upper working class who include skilled craft workers and lower working class made up of unskilled workers (Ornstein and Levine, 2006). They observed that 'skilled workers may be either middle class or working class', taking into consideration their education, income, and other factors such as the community in which the people live (Ornstein and Levine, 2006:320).

Studies conducted reveal that the working class constitute about 53% of the American population (Gilbert 1998; and Thompson and Hickey, 2005). One can therefore say that a larger percentage of the population is in the working class. A situation like this makes occupation an important determinant of class than income (Levine, 1998). In addition, Ornstein and Levine have identified another social class they call underclass' which can be identified with Coleman and Rainwater's (1978) the bottom class within the working classes.

Students' Performance

Students' performance refers to their abilities in intellectual exercises in standardised test such as Criterion Reference Test (CRT) and summative assessments like examinations in schools. In the United States poor children are more likely to perform poorly than non-poor children (Mooney, et al., 2007). This finding is supported by the fact that family income or socioeconomic status is a stronger predictor of educational ability and achievement outcomes of students (Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 1997 and Mooney, et al., 2007). Further research has revealed that 'high income students are six times more likely to graduate with a bachelors' degree in five years' than their 'low-income students' counterparts (Toppo, 2004 cited in Mooney, Knox, and Schacht, 2007;264).

In Ghana, it is observed that the socioeconomically advantaged parents or the dominant class provided 'better preparation for the Common Entrance Examination' which enabled their children to qualify for the 'highly selective secondary schools', which provided opportunities to 'universities at home and abroad' (Antwi, 1992:215). Available records show that performance of public SHS in the Municipality in some subject areas are not encouraging. In 2003 in particular, students recorded low performance in Elective Mathematics (50%), Core Mathematics (51.9%), History (29.5%), French Language (53.1%), Economics (46.3%) and Geography (46.3%) (Effutu Municipal Directorate of Education, 2010:17). If such low performance was recorded in a school that could be classified as an advantaged school, then one wonders what the performance in the disadvantaged schools were. In the case of the disadvantaged SHS students performance was low especially in 2007 in which case students recorded the following passes in core subjects like English Language (58.3), Mathematics (58.8), Integrated Science (54.8) and Social Science (89.6). However, performance seems to have improved over the years as performance in 2012 in core subjects such as Mathematics (95.5%), Integrated Science (99.7%), English Language (100%) and Social Studies (100%) show. That notwithstanding, the low performance in the disadvantaged SHS still gives a cause to worry.

An Overview of the Study

This study is divided into six chapters. The first chapter presents the background of the study. This includes; introduction, research problem, justification for the study, purpose and objectives of the study. The hypotheses and the significance of the study also forms part of chapter 1. In the introduction the researcher highlights the disparities in secondary

school provision in Ghana and its effects on students' performance. The concept of social class in the Ghanaian context is addressed in this chapter.

The second chapter engages in critical discussion of the theoretical, conceptual and empirical review of the literature of the study. Theoretical underpinnings highlight on Bourdieu's cultural and social capitals. This provides the focus and situational context of the study in Ghana. Discussion of the relevant empirical review is part of this chapter. This discusses local and international studies to provide the study a direction and focus. The review focused on the research questions in the following areas:

i)   Class and educational achievement;

ii) Educational qualifications of parents and its influence on students academic success;

iii) Parents' jobs and income and its influence on students' achievement, and

iv) Types of school student attend and their influence on academic achievement.

The third chapter discusses the analytical frameworks and methodology of the study. This chapter highlights on ontological and epistemological underpinnings, research paradigms, positivism and interpretive paradigms, cross-sectional and case study approaches. The methods used in the data collection process included semi-structured questionnaire, semi-structured interview, development and pilot-testing the instruments. Sampling of respondents and their compositions, questionnaire administration and organisation and conducting of interviews and data presentations and analysis plan were discussed in this section. The fourth and five chapters present the results of both questionnaires and interview data and discussions of the study. The sixth chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

Chapter 2

Theoretical, Conceptual and Empirical Review

Introduction

In chapter one, the relevant educational context with respect to how socio-economic status affect students' academic achievement in school in Ghana was highlighted to locate the study. Chapter two entails theoretical and conceptual frameworks and empirical literature of the study. First, the theoretical concepts on cultural and social capitals will be explained, forms of cultural and social capitals will also be outlined and their importance highlighted. Second, the concept of socio-economic-status and social class will be discussed in relation to their meanings and various classifications developed by sociologists, criteria used and limitations identified in their usage. The third aspect reviews empirical literature of the study.

Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study

In most African cultures, social classification is not popular since Africans practise the extended family system and live communal life (Cadwell, 1969; Peil, 1977; Mbiti, 1990; Hardiman, 2003; and Amedzro, 2005). The researcher used Bourdieu's theory on cultural and social capitals, because other scholars have observed that social class is emerging in the traditional African society which has brought about inequalities in diverse forms such as social, economic and political (Addae-Mensah, et al., 1973; Prewitt, 1974; Antwi, 1992 and Agyeman, 1993). They noted that after political independence, the 'new administrative class in Ghana had become a dominant class and sought ways to maintain its position for their children through the domination of the avenues of recruitment in the ruling class (Antwi, 1992 and Agyeman, 1993).

Cultural Capital

 The concepts of cultural and social capitals were developed in the early 1960s by the French sociologist, Bourdieu and his colleague to help unravel the notion that '[e]conomic obstacles are not sufficient to explain' educational disparities in children's attainments from different social backgrounds (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1964, and 1979). Lamont and Lareau (1988:154) argue that the concept of cultural capital is important because it has improved sociologists' understanding of the process through which social stratification systems are maintained'. As a result, Bourdieu and Passeron's publications (1979 and 1964) received much attention at first because it proposed a new idea of the process by

which 'social and cultural resources of family life shape academic success in a subtle and pervasive fashion' (Lamont and Lareau, 1988:154).

Meaning of Cultural Capital

The concept cultural capital has grown to assume a dimension that has varied meanings, and sometimes contradictory to the original meaning. Lamont and Lareau made an observation that... 'the concept performs different roles in their various writings' (Lamont and Lareau, 1988:155). This suggests that Bourdieu and Passeron were not consistent in their usage of the concept in their writings. For example, they note that in *Inheritors* (1979 and 1964) Bourdieu and Passeron used cultural capital to consist of 'informal academic standards which are also a class attributes of the dominant class' (Lamont and Lareau, 1988:155). These standards and attributes they identified as 'informal knowledge about the school, traditional humanist culture, linguistic competence and specific attitudes, or personal style' (Lamont and Lareau, 1988:155).

In *Reproduction* (1977 and 1970), Bourdieu and Passeron usage of the term cultural capital 'retains its original definition as academic standards' (Lamont and Lareau, 1988:155). However, they note that 'the constitutive items are narrowed, and some are defined in more detail'. In this work, cultural capital is 'described as including only linguistic aptitude (grammar, accent, tone), previous academic culture, formal knowledge and general culture, as well as diplomas'. In addition, they observe that 'attitudes toward school, manners and personal style, and taste for high culture are now conceived of as class ethos rather than cultural capital'.

Others have refined the concept of cultural capital and define it differently. For example, cultural capital is identified as knowledge of high culture (DiMaggio and Useem, 1978) and educational attainment (Robinson and Garnier, 1985) cited in Lamont and Lareau (1988:153). It is also defined as the curriculum of the elite schools (Cookson and Persell, 1985a), the symbolic mastery of "practices" (Martin and Szelenyi, 1987), the capacity to perform tasks in culturally acceptable ways (Gouldner, 1979) and participation in high culture events (DiMaggio and Mohr, 1985) cited in Lamont and Lareau (1988). The many definitions give an impression that cultural capital has generated a lot of interest among sociologists which is also indicative of the fact that it is an important concept in sociology.

Bourdieu (1986) identifies three forms of cultural capital and these are: (1) the embodied state incorporated in mind and body, (2) the objectified state such as cultural goods like

books, artefacts, dictionaries etc, and (3) the institutionalized state forms, for example educational qualifications.

Forms of Cultural Capital

In this sub-section, the three forms of cultural capital outlined earlier will be examined in details. Bourdieu observes that most of the characteristics of cultural capital can be deduced from the fact that, in its basic state, it is associated to the body and in that respect regarded as 'embodiment' (Boudieu, 1986:4). In other words, the addition of 'cultural capital in the embodied state' which takes the form of 'culture, cultivation, bildung, presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation', which therefore suggests a 'labour of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor'(Boudieu, 1986:4). He likens it to the acquisition of a 'muscular physique' which 'cannot be done at second hand' and when it is achieved it becomes part of the body. It is on this basis that Throsby (1999:3) describes the embodied state as 'a long-lasting disposition of the individual's mind and body'. This suggests that acquisition of knowledge must necessarily be undertaken by 'oneself', an effort that requires a 'personal cost', an 'investment, above all time, but also of that socially constituted form of libido, *libido sciendi*, with all the privation, renunciation, and sacrifice' it entails (Bourdieu, 1986:4). He suggests that the embodied state is the 'least inexact of all the measurements of cultural capital'. The implication is that the embodied state is the only form of cultural capital that does not lend itself to any specific standard length of acquisition of a body of knowledge and time.

Unlike, formal education where students are required to complete a given course in a given period, the embodied state is an informal type of education where skills and experiences are acquired over the years add up to one's repertoire of knowledge. Cultural capital in its embodied state is regarded as 'competence and skill that cannot be separated from its bearer' (Weininger and Lareau, n.d:1) is similarly described as 'external wealth' that has been made part of a person and cannot be transferred instantly to another person like 'money' or 'property rights' or as a gift or legacy, be bought or exchanged (Bourdieu, 1986:5).

By objectified state, he means that 'the objects themselves may function as form of cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1986 and Weininger and Lareau, n.d:2) in as much as their use suggests a level of cultural capital. Bourdieu (1986:7) notes that cultural capital, in the

objectified form has a number of characteristics which are 'defined only in the relationship with cultural capital in its embodied form'. Cultural capital in its objectified state takes the form of cultural goods such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments; etc (Bourdieu, 1986 and Throsby, 1999) is transmissible in its material forms. Bourdieu (1986) argues that a collection of objectified forms of cultural capital like paintings can be transmitted just in the same way as economic capital. This suggests that cultural goods can be acquired both in the form of material by purchasing it and symbolically as a painting for decorative purposes. In order to possess a machine which is a cultural capital one must necessarily have economic capital before s/he can acquire it since s/he is not the possessor of the embodied cultural capital.

Finally, by the institutionalized state forms, he means that in every society which has a system of formal education, when the school certifies individuals' competencies and skills by giving them certificates, then, it means the embodied cultural capital takes on an objective value or an academic credential (Bourdieu, 1986 and Throsby, 1999). Bourdieu (1986:8) observes that by giving 'institutional recognition on the cultural capital possessed by any given agent', the qualification 'makes it possible to compare qualification holders and even to exchange them'. He further notes that institutionalisation makes it possible to set exchange rates between cultural and economic capital by 'guaranteeing the monetary value of a given academic capital'.

This suggests that the competence or the certificate becomes an asset or a means of making profit in the labour market. Put differently, Bourdieu, is of the view that institutionalisation performs a function for cultural capital similar to that performed by money in the case of economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986 and Weininger and Lareau, n.d:2). The benefits that accrue from education to 'children from different classes and class fractions' are determined by one's social class and its associated rich endowments such as books, televisions, internet facilities among others.

Importance of Cultural Capital

The concept of cultural capital in sociology of education has an important role in children's educational progression and achievements. Lareau (1987) in a qualitative study highlighted the importance of cultural capital in the education of children. She points out that the 'influence of family background on children's education' has an important place in the 'field of sociology of education' (Lareau, 1987:73). Lareau observes that social

scientists have documented, elaborated, and replicated the influence of family background on children's education (Jencks, et al., 1972; Marjoribanks, 1979). She further observed that studies on cultural capital previously 'focussed primarily on educational outcomes' and 'very little attention was given to the process through which these educational patterns are created and reproduced' (Lareau, 1987:73).

Through ethnographic studies over the past fifteen years, she notes that 'important strides have been made in our understanding of social processes inside the school' (Lareau, 1987:73). This is underscored by the fact that 'classroom learning is reflexive and interactive and that language in the classroom' is as a result of the uneven 'sociolinguistic experiences of children at home' (Bernstein, 1975, 1982; Cook-Gumperez, 1973; Heath, 1982, 1983; Labov, 1972; Diaz, Moll, and Mehan, 1986; Mehan and Griffin, 1980) cited in Lareau (1987:73).

Studies have shown that the curriculum, the hidden curriculum, the social organisation of the classroom, and the school's authority relationships that exist between teachers and students have also contributed in diverse ways in school processes and social reproduction (Aggleton and Whitty, 1985; Anyon, 1981; Apple, 1979; Erickson and Mohatt, 1982; Gearing and Epstein, 1982; Gaskell, 1985; Taylor, 1984; Valli, 1985; Wilcox, 1977, 1982) cited in Lareau (1987:73).

Related studies have shown that parental involvement in schooling plays an important role in children's educational performance (Epstein, 1984 and Marjoribanks,1979) cited in Lareau (1987:73). She further observed that increased parental participation in education has received priority attention from educators who believe it promotes educational achievement (Berger, 1983; Seeley, 1984, National Education Association, 1985; Robinson, 1985; Trelease, 1982; Leichter, 1979).

Social Capital

Aside cultural, economic and symbolic capital, Bourdieu also examined social capital which relates to the other forms of capital discussed earlier. Each of these concepts cannot be understood in isolation because they are closely related. Social capital is obtained through social interactions which exist between the family and the bigger society which constitutes a social network. Social capital is 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu, 1986:9),

which are recognised by members of society. Putnam (2000) defines social capital by providing a descriptive definition in the words; 'whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them'. This suggests that social capital is closely related to what some have called "civic virtue" cited in Pedagogies for Change (n.d.). The difference is that "social capital" calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in the sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital (Putnam, 2000:19) cited in Pedagogies for Change (n.d.). In effect, social capital refers to relationships, togetherness, trust, connections, networking together for economic and social development for the benefit of all members of society.

This kind of network guarantees members of the society with support which Bourdieu (1986:9) refers to as 'collectivity-owned capital', which is more of a certificate which 'entitles them to credit in the various senses of the word'. He noted that 'these relationships may exist only in practical state'; in the form of 'material and/or symbolic exchanges' which help in cementing the ties between them. Aside this, conscious steps may be taken to socially institute them and guarantee by the application of a common name such as a name of a family, a class, or a tribe etc, governed by a set of rules and regulations as a recognised society bonded by an act. This implies that members of the network are to ensure solidarity within their ranks as a way of maintaining a closely knit tie. This can be likened to Elias' (1994:444) concept of 'figuration' cited in CLMS M1U2 (2004) which creates an 'interweaving' web-like society in which people are interdependent on each other. The nature of the society provides an environment that is 'more compelling and stronger than the will of the individual people composing it' (Elias, 1994:444) cited in CLMS M1 U2 (2004:66).

This highlights the importance of Elias' discussion that views human beings in groups and 'in terms of chains of interdependence' (CLMS M1U2, 2004:66). This was Elias' way of 'addressing a number of problems of structure and agency' in society. It must be noted that the quantum of the social capital owned by an 'agent' 'depends on the size of the network of connections' (Bourdieu,1986:9) that can be mobilised alongside the quantum of economic, cultural or symbolic capital owned by each of its compatriots or members in

the network. The reason is that the network 'exerts' some influence on the volume of the capital an agent possesses.

According to Li, Pickles and Savage (2005), there are three types of social capitals and these are:

1. Neighbourhood attachment. This concerns the extent to which people attach themselves to their neighbourhood. This is a good example of 'situational network or weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973; Pahl, 2000) cited in Li, et al. (2005:112).

2. Social network. This type of social capital 'measures the extent of people's intimate interaction with those beyond immediate family (Li, et al., 2005:112)', and the degree to which people believe they belong to social network. This is an example of informal personal network.

3. Civic participation. Civic participation is regarded in research studies as 'sources of social capital' (Li, et al.,2005:112). Li and associates note that most of the studies proceed either by counting the number of memberships in specific civil organisations as an index of stock of social capital in society at a particular time (Hall, 1999; Paxton, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Li et al., 2002). This is an example of formal civic engagement.

Importance of Social Capital

The benefits members of the group derive is 'solidarity', prestige, material things and forms of services that accrue from the membership (Bourdieu, 1986:9). Other benefits of social capital are that:

- Social capital is associated with better health, higher educational achievement, better employment outcomes and lower crime rates (Office for National Statistics, n.d.:1).

- Available evidence shows that social capital brings about cohesion in societies which is 'critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable' (The World Bank Group, 2011:1).

Even though, members do not purposively pursue these benefits they derive them by virtue of their membership and solidarity which results in 'material profits', in the form of 'all the type of services accruing from useful relationships, and symbolic profits, like

prestige. For example, it is observed that where a person grows up 'sharply affects' his likelihood of 'benefiting from the educational system' (Prewit 1974) cited in Michieka (2011:1). In a similar way, Alwy and Schech (2004) cited in Michieka (2011) note that allocation of public amenities in Kenya has always been done based on ethnic pattern; those in administration always fight for their ethnic groups.

However, membership of these networks does not come easy. Members need to make conscious effort to institute the network and also initiate members into the network in order to establish the connections that will bring about 'useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits' (Bourdieu, 1986:10) for family members or communities of which one belongs. This is usually done by consecrating members be they as brothers, sisters or cousins, in order for them to be recognised and accepted as true members of the network. The relationship is reproduced 'through the exchange' of gifts, words, women in marriages which cement the ties and produce 'mutual knowledge and recognition' (Bourdieu, 1986:10). By this act, members of the group are bonded by the customs, norms or rules of the group and are restricted by these in their actions.

The above argument notwithstanding, unlike the western countries where the nuclear family system is practised and each family is occupied with its own business, in the Ghanaian context, it is the extended family system that is practiced, even though education and urbanization have introduced the nuclear family system into the Ghanaian society. The reason is that Africans are deeply bounded by the extended family as intimated by Ejizu (n.d.:2) when he said, 'Africans share life intensely in common'. This way of life is observed by Mbiti (1990:106) as he noted '… the individual can only say: I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am'. In a typical Akan, Dagaaba and other northern ethnic groups in Ghana, it is a common sight to see that wives prepare meals and share them according to the age-groups in the family house. Usually, all fathers/husbands, mothers/wives and children eat together in their respective age-groups. As noted by Amedzro (2005:120), 'the lineage shares a common cooking pot (meals), a common farm, craft and trade (budget) and a common house (residence)'. Communal living in the family house takes care of a situation whereby one would say he does not have food to eat on a particular day. Even though it is dying away gradually, it still has some relevance in family unity. This type of communal life does not make room for the western type of class societies in the traditional African society as it pertains in other parts of the world.

The theory will enable the researcher to categorise his respondents into two main groups, which are advantaged and disadvantaged students. This classification will enable the researcher to identify his respondents by the schools they attend. This is prudent because the researcher does not want to label individual students as disadvantaged or advantaged, but the group.

Wealth or riches is said to 'refer to the total assets of an individual or household minus liabilities' (Mooney, et al. 2007: 191). Wealth is described to include qualities like; 'value of a home, investment in real estate, the value of cars, unincorporated business, life insurance, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, trusts, checking and savings accounts, individual retirement accounts (IRAs), and valuable collectibles' (Mooney, et al. 2007: 191). This category of people can afford a decent standard of living without much difficulty all things being equal. They can afford three square meals a day for their families and also provide good health care, education, accommodation and other necessities of life.

On the other hand, poverty is a state of deprivation and lack of money to support a meaningful life. Poverty is defined as the 'lack of resources necessary for material well-being' which includes food, water, housing, land and health care (Mooney, et al., 2007: 185). It is also lack of purchasing power to be able to buy goods and services in the market place. It is in line with this that the report of the World Bank (2004:42) reveals that 'poorer children' do not reap educational benefits and therefore such children continue to experience 'vicious cycle of poverty'.

The studies cited so far point to the fact that there is a relationship between socio-economic status and children's educational achievements. This implies that the theory provides a basis upon which the present study which seeks to investigate how socio-economic status of parents influence students' achievements. All the five research questions or themes which indicate the researcher's interest are derived from the theory, which means that the theory provides a good ground for the present study.

Beside this, the theory provides basis for the researcher to formulate and test hypotheses for the study. It also provides information for the researcher to develop the research instruments for data collection. The above reasons provide sufficient grounds for the researcher's choice of the theory.

The theories on cultural and social capitals give indication that educational success or failure is as a result of socio-economic factors and the class of a group of people. This suggests that socio-cultural and economic environment into which a child is born and educated is of crucial importance to the success of the child's education. The family life-style, resources and exposure given to children have profound influence in their educational achievements. The concepts; cultural and social capitals, SES and class are related in sociology of education. In the next section the concepts of SES and class will be discussed in details.

Conceptual Framework

The term Socio-Economic Status (SES) means the social standing of an individual in society with respect to his or her level of education, income, type of occupation and the general quality of life. It also includes his or her access to goods and services in the market. In the 1940s W. Lloyd Warner and colleagues used factors such as occupation, education, income, and housing quality as the basis to classify people.

The Warner and associates' classification of 'upper class, upper middle class, lower middle class, upper lower class and lower lower class' (Ornstein and Levine, 2006:320) is not a universal standard because other scholars like John Goldthorpe, an English sociologist has a classification which is referred to as Goldthorpe Class Scheme. Ornstein and Levine (2006:320) observed that Warner and associates described people with high standing in 'occupational prestige, amount of education, income, and housing value' as 'high in socio-economic status (SES)'. These groups of people are regarded 'as upper-class persons and are influential and powerful in their communities'. On the other hand, people with low socio-economic statuses are seen 'as low in prestige and power'. Such a criterion may differ from one place to another. Indeed, the factors that determine one's class may vary from one society to another and even within the same society. In one society it may be land, children or the number of wives that one possesses. In another society it may be mansions and luxurious cars.

The Goldthorpe class scheme is a classification system which places people and their families into social classes. The scheme is popular in 'Europe, Australasia, and North America,' especially in the 'study of social mobility and in the analysis of class' (Marshall, 1998:1). It is noted that as a result of 'its complex genealogy' it is differently referred to 'as the Goldthorpe, Erikson-Goldthorpe, EGP (Erikson-Goldthorpe-Portocarero), and

CASMIN (Comparative Study of Social Mobility in Industrial Nations) typology'
(Marshall, 1998:1).

In the case of the 'Oxford Social Mobility Study of England and Wales in the early 1970s',
Goldthorpe designed 'a sevenfold scheme', which was a combination of 'occupational
categories' (Marshall, 1998:1). This categorisation was done on the basis of 'their sources
of income, their degree of economic security and chances of economic advancement' and
their 'location within the systems of authority and control governing the processes of
production in which they are engaged'. This implies that people's 'degree of autonomy in
performing their work-tasks and roles' was crucial in the determination of their authority
in the industry.

However, in their later studies involving other nations which had 'occupational structures
quite different from that found in Britain led Goldthorpe' and his team into the CASMIN
Project to further divide 'some of the original class categories' (Marshall, 1998:1). It is
observed that subsequent revisions to the original 'framework' led to the subdivision of
'routine non-manual employees' into 'clerical (higher) and personal service (lower)
categories'. Small scale businesses or enterprises owned by individuals were separated
into their 'constituent elements of small proprietors with employees, small proprietors
without employees, and farmers and smallholders; and agricultural workers' were
differentiated from other 'rank-and-file semi-skilled and unskilled manual labourers'.
These revisions carried out by Goldthorpe and associates evolved what is now eleven-fold
Goldthorpe class scheme in use in the UK today. This categorisation is presented as
follows:

1. Higher-grade professionals, administrators, and officials; managers in large
    industrial establishments; large proprietors

2. Lower-grade professionals, administrators, and officials, higher-grade technicians;
    managers in small industrial establishments; supervisors of non-manual employees

3. Routine non-manual employees, higher-grade (administration and commerce)

4. Routine non-manual employees, lower-grade (sales and services)

5. Small proprietors, artisans, etc., with employees

6. Small proprietors, artisans, etc., without employees

7. Farmers and smallholders; other self-employed workers in primary production

8. Lower-grade technicians; supervisors of manual workers

9. Skilled manual workers

10. Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers (not in agriculture, etc.)

11. Agricultural and other workers in primary production.

(Marshall, 1998:2)

All these classifications are based on economic considerations, thus, each establishment and its financial strength and how much each employee is paid depends on the individual skills level and the capital invested in the business.

The Great British Class Survey (GBCS)

The debate on social classification and its validation continues to engage sociologists' attention. The most recent and the 'largest survey of social class' carried out in the UK is the BBC's 2011 survey dubbed the Great British Class Survey (GBCS) (Savage, et al., 2013:220). This was a collaborative research between Savage and his associates and the British Broadcasting Corporation's Current Affairs Department using '161,400 web respondents' and 'nationally representative sample'. The focus of this survey was on social, cultural, and economic capital. The group derived seven classes. The efforts made by earlier researchers such as Warner (1940s), Pierre Bourdieu (1984), Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) point to the fact that 'social class is a multi-dimensional construct' which suggests that classes are not just 'economic phenomena' but are also related to 'forms of social reproduction and cultural distinction' (Devine, 2004; Savage, et al., 2005) cited in Savage, et al. (2013:223).

It must be acknowledged that Bourdieu's initial effort in this direction has influenced sociological studies globally (Bennett, et al., 2001, on Australia; Bennett, et al., 2008, on UK; Lamont, 1992, on the US and France) cited in Savage, et al. (2013:223). Before these studies, this method was not popular because sociologists had not used it to collect comprehensive data on cultural and social capitals on national surveys (Savage, et al., 2013). The GBCS included issues on cultural capital that raised questions about people's lifestyle such as 'leisure interests, musical tastes, use of the media, and food preferences' (Savage, et al., 2013:224). Savage, et al. (2013:224) observed that 'many of the questions'

used were similar to questions used by Bennett, et al. (2008) in their survey. This study was described as the 'most sophisticated study of cultural capital ever conducted in Britain, which has influenced numerous other studies across Europe'.

The questions raised on social capital took the form of 'position generator' which was 'developed by the American Sociologist in (2001) to measure the ranges of people's social ties' (Savage, et al., 2013:224). The researchers used this method to generate data about respondents' relationships and social ties with different people. They asked their participants 'whether they knew anyone in 37 different occupations'. This informed the researchers their participants' ability to network with their neighbours. On the economic capital, the questions raised included household income, savings and the 'value of owner-occupied housing'. This approach enabled them to collect 'detailed measures of economic capital' (Savage, et al., 2013:224). This afforded them the opportunity to collect 'extensive information about household composition, education, social mobility and political attitudes' which enabled them to 'contextualise' the measures of cultural, economic and social capital.

The research was started with a launched of the web survey on 26th January 2011 (Savage, et al., 2013). This was given an extensive media publicity both electronic and print. The public received the news with enthusiasm and therefore was keen to participate in the study. The report shows that by July 2011, 161,400 completed surveys had been received. A close examination of the data showed that 'the GBCS web survey suffered from a strong selection bias' (Savage, et al., 2013:224). The reason was that respondents were 'predominantly drawn from the well-educated social groups', which did not give true representation to the study population. To address this shortfall, the BBC decided to 'conduct a separate, nationally representative face-to-face survey using identical questions'. This second survey had 1026 respondents using quota sampling techniques by a popular survey firm called GfK in April 2011.

The two sets of data collected show that 'traditional professions' were 'over-represented in the GBCS compared to the national figures from GfK' (Savage, et al., 2013:225). It was also noted that senior managers as well as modern professionals were 'over-represented' in the GBCS sample while 'all manual workers were 'under-represented'. In view of the unrepresentative nature of the GBCS data it became obvious that it could not be used as

the only data for the study and therefore the need for a second set of data (GfK) in order to 'derive a representative model of class.

Measuring Social, Cultural and Economic Capital

GfK was tasked to assist in the analysis of the data collected by examining the different questions probing key variables such as economic, social and cultural capital so that they could develop the 'most robust summary measures for each' which could be used to develop the new class model (Savage, et al., 2013:225). In measuring social capital, they used the 37 identified occupations to which respondents indicated contact with. They coded these occupations to 'widely validated Cambridge Social Interactional and Stratification (CAMSIS) scale'. This was done so that they 'were able to assess how many of the 37 occupations' respondents reported contacts with. They measured this data by the 'mean status scores of the occupations' of respondents' contacts. The scores recorded ranged from '85.3, the highest, to 4.5, the lowest'.

The data show that the 'average respondent knows socially someone in 13.3 out of the 34' occupations that were asked (Savage, et al., 2013:225). The 'mean status score of their contacts' was calculated to be 40.9 and the 'mean range' was 62.4, which was the difference between the highest and the lowest score. On the basis of these, they summarised the measures of the social capital in these ways:

1. The mean status score of the occupations that respondents know, and

2. The number of social contacts reported.

Savage, et al. (2013:226) acknowledges that the 'analysis of cultural capital' is a 'complex' endeavour and therefore they did not attempt to examine its complexity. Meanwhile, Bourdieu (1984) distinguished between 'high' culture that is 'associated with the arts, and 'popular' culture cited in Savage, et al. (2013:226). However, Savage and associates note that the 'clarity of this distinction' has raised questions in recent studies (Bennett, et al., 2008; Prieur and Savage, 2011; Warde and Gayo-Cal, 2009). It has been observed that 'elite culture has become more liberal and tolerant' the middle and upper classes' have become partakers of 'both highbrow and popular cultural forms' (Savage, et al., 2013:226).

In view of this observation, Savage, et al. (2013:226) carried out an 'inductive analysis of cultural taste' in order to ascertain the trend of cultural practices without any presumptions

that some 'kinds of activities were more 'highbrow' than others'. However, 'in line with other comparable studies' such as Bennett, et al. (2008), Savage and associates carried out, 'a specific multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) on 27 cultural variables on the nationally representative GfK data to assess the structuring of cultural divisions' (Savage, et al., 2013:226). In their analysis they used cultural practices such as leisure, musical, eating and holiday preferences to measure people's likeness or dislike for a particular cultural activity. Two categories of people were identified, that is those 'interested in 'highbrow' cultural forms' and 'those attracted to popular and contemporary music'. In addition, two types of cultural capital were identified; these are that 'associated with highbrow taste' and what they referred to as 'emerging cultural capital' (Savage, et al., 2013:226). They observed that those two categories were different from those that were 'less culturally engaged'. They further observed that 'age distinguishes the middle-aged and elderly 'highbrows' like classical music, visiting museums, art galleries from the more youthful middle classes attracted to emerging cultural capital' such as video games, social network sites among others. This observation was in line with other studies on 'cultural engagement' such as Bennett, et al. (2008) and this stresses the need to note 'two different modes of cultural capital that do not necessarily overlap' (Savage, et al., 2013:227). The summary statistics for cultural capital show that 'high culture score' was 13.2 as against 18.1 mean score in the emerging culture in the case of the GBCS, while the data in the GfK data show that high culture had 10.3 and emerging culture had 13.5 as a mean score.

The economic capital was measured by assessing household income, household savings, and house price ('housing value', as in the case of Warner and associates, 1940s) (Savage, et al., 2013). Household savings and house prices were standardised and these 'standardised variables' used to 'generate an assets variable' (Savgae, et al., 2013:228). The data show that the mean household income was £52,766, the mean property value was £204,562 and savings was £36,432 for the GBCS data, while the data in the GfK data show that the mean household income was £31,856, mean property value was £126,706 and savings was £20,084. It is emphasised that 'these measures are for the household, and that it is possible that some individuals who are not in well-paid jobs' achieve high scores as a result of the high earnings of other members of the household.

A Latent Class Analysis of Social Class
Savage, et al. (2013) sought a careful way of using resources available in placing class boundaries on the basis of economic, social and cultural capitals. By this approach they

used 'a bottom-up, inductive, approach: that is if these variables used are the most appropriate ones. The latent class analysis is the most careful 'way to group people to classes' (Savage, et al., 2013:229). By their definition, 'latent class analysis is based on the idea that some parameters of statistical model differ across unobserved subgroups, which form the categories of a categorical latent variable'. This is different from 'factor analysis, which identifies continuous latent variables'.

In using this method, Savage et al. (2013:229) 'standardised the six variables' employed earlier which included 'mean status scores of contacts, total number of contacts, highbrow cultural capital, emerging cultural capital, income and assets'. In order to handle the 'problem of sample skew', they put the 'cases from the GfK and used the 'original weighting values, and the cases in the GBCS', which were weighted with 'a value of 1/161400 for each case'. The combined data contributed the 'weight of a single case to the overall analysis'. The implication is that the latent analysis is obtained from the 'nationally representative GfK survey' and so the 'results are not distorted by the unrepresentative web survey' (Savage, et al., 2013:229). It must be stressed that the cases from the web survey could be 'classified within the same clusters as the cases from the nationally representative survey' and therefore they were 'able to allocate classes to all the respondents from the web-based GBCS' obtained from 'nationally representative data'.

This complex method of classifying social class from cultural, social and economic capitals produced seven classes. These classes will be analysed one after the other in the next section of this write-up.

The first class, which is referred to as the elite class is the 'most advantaged and privileged group in the UK' (Savage, et al., 2013:233) in every sphere of life. They have the 'highest levels of every form of capital' and have a 'mean household income of £89k', which is 'almost double that of the next highest class', and their 'average house price is £325k'. The average savings of this class is more than twice of that of the other classes. This is an exceptionally 'wealthy class' compared to the 'other six classes on the basis of their economic advantages'.

The elite class has 'close to the highest number of social contacts' even though 'their mean score is not the highest of all the classes, but the second highest' (Savage, et al., 2013: 233). This group has the highest score in economic capital, and also score the highest on

'highbrow' cultural capital although by a less margin compared to economic capital and 'they have moderately high scores on emerging cultural capital'.

The elite class has the 'lowest proportion of ethnic minorities, the highest graduates', and more than half of these graduates come from 'families where the main earner was in senior management or professions' (Savage, et al., 2013:233). This is a small group of people with 'restricted upward mobility into its ranks'. It is observed that there are 'major over-representations of (especially) chief executive officers, IT directors, marketing and sales directors, financial managers and management consultants' among others (Savage, et al., 2013:234). Graduates of this class are usually products of 'elite universities' such as Oxford, City, Kings College London, LSE, Cambridge, Bristol and other universities of such status.

They are residentially located in the 'south east of England and especially in areas close to London in the affluent Home Counties' (Savage, et al., 2013:234). The findings of the study show the 'power of a relatively small, socially and spatially exclusive group' at the top of British society. They are economically wealthier which makes them outstanding among the entire population.

The second class is described as 'established middle class' and they have a 'household income of £47k a year' (Savage, et al., 2013:234). They have a 'relatively expensive house worth £177k' and a 'good savings of £26k'. These are indicators of 'good scores for economic capital' which 'competes with the technical middle class in being the second best well-off class'. This class is larger than the elite class, and has 'a quarter of the population' and can be described as the 'comfortably off bulwark of British society', even though they are not as rich as the elites. They have in their fold what Goldthorpe (1982) and Goldthorpe, et al. (1980) identify as the 'professional and managerial 'service class', and a higher percentage of its 'members working in management and professions than any other class except the elite' (Savage, et al., 2013:234).

The established middle class has more social contacts with a mean score of 17 which is higher than any other group. They are regarded as the 'most gregarious class' when one considers 'high status people' (Erikson, 1996) cited in (Savage, et al., 2013:234). This group is 'highly culturally engaged', both for highbrow and emerging cultural capital. They have 'strong social connections and members of this group are well endowed in social, cultural and economic capitals, but not as the elites.

Educationally, they have high percentage of graduates and most of them 'work in the professions or management' (Savage, et al., 2013:234). They come from 'professional and managerial families' and are often 'more open than the elites'. They live 'outside the south east of England' and 'away from large towns'.

The technical middle class is the third group in the classification of Savage, et al. (2013). The group is sociologically said to be 'much more distinctive and original'. This is probably because, it is small, with a membership of about '6 percent of the national population' (Savage, et al., 2013:236). The technical middle class is a 'relatively prosperous' class, which has a 'good mean household incomes' of £38k, household savings of £66k and housing value of £163k. In terms of economic capital, it has an equal standing with the 'established middle class to be the second most prosperous class'.

This class is however 'much more restricted than the established middle class' socially and culturally (Savage, et al., 2013: 237). It has the 'lowest number of social contacts' among all the classes. In its 'social circle', members of this class appear to be 'much more restricted than other social classes' and seems to socialise with 'other professional experts'. Culturally, it scores 'low for both highbrow and emerging cultural capital and seems to be 'relatively culturally disengaged'.

The data show that it has a lower percentage of 'graduates and employees in the professions and management' (Savage, et al., 2013:237). It is noted, for example, that aircraft pilots are '78 percent more likely to be in this class than in the GBCS'. This is a group that has 'achieved good economic rewards often without distinctive credentials, or through working in established middle-class jobs'. It is observed that it 'has an above-average proportion of women (59%)'. The GBCS data indicate that 'there is an over-representation of those doing research, scientific and technical forms of work'. Graduates in this class are usually from 'established and prestigious universities with strong reputations for science, including Warwick, Cambridge, UCL, Southampton and Imperial'. Their graduates are often in 'science and technology'. They are 'located in south east where technical jobs' are found.

The fourth class is called new affluent workers. They score high 'emerging cultural capital, but scores low on highbrow cultural capital' (Savage, et al., 2013:237). Members of this class appear to 'shun established forms of cultural capital though it is not culturally disengaged'. They have a moderate household income, and its house price is £129k, and

also a 'small amount of savings'. Members of this class are economically secured. In their social relationship they 'score the second highest on the number of social contacts', meanwhile their 'status scores' is 'moderate'. They score 'moderately well on all three capitals' and with a likeness for 'emerging capital'.

This class can be described as 'socially and culturally active' (Savage, et al., 2013:238) group, with 'economic capital higher than all other class apart from the elite or the two middle-class groupings'. They come from 'non-middle-class families' with few university graduates from 'some new universities' like Liverpool Hope, Bolton or the University of West England. They are the most male dominated class 'with 57 percent being men'. The group has high percentage of young people and a good number of 'various white collar and blue collar jobs' in the private sector. It is noted that 'only 5.4 percent of the GBCS are in this class'. They seem to be 'over-represented in old manufacturing centres of the UK' and can be located 'outside south east of England'.

Members of this class have not 'benefitted from conventional routes through education to middle-class positions' but have achieved economic security and are 'relatively socially and culturally engaged' (Savage, et al., 2013:240). They form about 15 percent of the population and cannot be classified 'as either middle or working class'.

The fifth class is referred to as traditional working class. This class is described as 'moderately poor class, with a mean household income of only £13k' (Savage, et al., 2013:240). However, most of its members 'own their homes, with an average house price of £127k', but members have 'only modest savings'. Their mean score of 'social contacts are 'quite restricted at 10 and the 'average status scores are moderate'. They have a moderate score of highbrow cultural capital and low emerging capital. This class 'scores low on nearly every measure of capital', however, it is 'not completely deprived'. They have 'few graduates, and traditional working-class occupations' such as lorry drivers, cleaners and are 'over-represented amongst its number'. The data show that '2 percent of the GBCS' respondents fall into this group. The data further suggest that the 'absolute proportions are low and the occupations' are indicative of that. They are 'predominantly female, more than any other class'. They are usually products of Birkbeck, and the Open University that 'recruit mature, part-time students'. They are mostly located in 'old industrial areas outside the south east of England, especially in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland'.

The sixth class is described as the emergent service workers, who have 'a modest household income of £21k', but members of this class usually rent their accommodations and also have 'limited savings' (Savage, et al., 2013:240). Members of this class have 'significant number of social contacts' and 'moderate in their status scores'. They have higher emerging cultural capital more than any other class. This suggests that members of the group have 'high degree of cultural engagement in youthful musical, sporting and internet activities', but their 'highbrow cultural capital is low'. Members of this class are considered marginal in terms of economic capital.

It is observed that members of this class are 'relatively young, with a mean age of 34' (Savage, et al., 2013:240). They have high percentage of ethnic minorities within its fold and they are usually non-graduates or non-middle-class families. This class is 'very different from the traditional working class' because they are 'more culturally engaged with emerging cultural capital'. They are usually employed in a 'range of relatively insecure occupations' in the service sector such as bar work, customer service among others. The few graduates found among them are products of universities that specialise in arts and humanities such as Goldsmiths, York, Birkbeck and SOAS'. They are often located in 'cheaper locations within large cities, especially in the centre of London and also in university towns'.

The seventh class is called precariat and it is 'economically the poorest class', with a mean household income of £8k (Savage, et al., 2013:243). They have insignificant savings and often rent their accommodations. Socially, they have an 'average of seven contacts whose mean status is the lowest' of all the classes. The mean scores for 'both highbrow and emerging cultural capitals are the lowest and second lowest'. This class is the 'most deprived of the classes', and 'on all measures, and yet they form 15 percent of the population.

Members of this class are normally located in 'old industrial areas' but not within the large urban centres (Savage, et al., 2013:243). They are unlikely to be graduates, and they are usually unemployed, and some of them are van drivers, cleaners, care-workers among others.

This new class model is different from the others in respect of the number of classes, large sample of 162,426 drawn across 37 occupations and the use of web survey in data collection. The basis used by the other proponents such as Warner and associates (1940s),

Bourdieu (1984), Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992), Coleman and Rainwater (1978), and Thompson and Hickey (2005) is the same. All these proponents considered level of one's income, property or capital (cultural, social and economic), education, and occupational prestige.

In the opinion of Marx, class emerged 'where the relations of production involve a differentiated division of labour' which provides an opportunity for the rich to accumulate 'surplus production', which means that there is 'an exploitative relationship to the mass of producers' (Giddens, 2005:36). This suggests that the rich in society cheat their labourers by paying them lower wages from the surplus profit they make from their productions.

Zweig (2000) defines class as a power relationship among the members of a society, rather than as a lifestyle or by income. Hout (2007:3) on the other hand, is of the view that, class is all about 'how people earn their money. He stressed, 'the original idea' of class was about 'social relations of production set in motion historical forces that shaped consciousness and action'. In other words, class concerns itself with people who make their money the same way and taking measures to protect their interest and advance their 'collective welfare' (Hout 2007:3). Class is also described as 'a pervasive social cause' and therefore demands sociologists to study its different aspects for 'many social phenomena' (Wright, 1997) cited in Hout (2007:2).

The concept of social class is a common phenomenon in America, United Kingdom (UK) and other parts of the Western world. The classification differs from one place to the other, however; in the United States of America (USA) it 'consists of three broad classes', namely 'working, middle and upper' (Ornstein and Levine, 1993:364). Social scientists classify population into 'social-class group, which differs in their economic, social, and political interests and characteristics' (Ornstein and Levine, 1993:364).

Studies have revealed that 'racial and ethnic characteristics of the U.S. population are becoming' highly diversified (Mooney, et al., 2007:295). According to Ornstein and Levine (2006:324) 'race identifies groups of people with a common ancestry and physical characteristics. On the other hand, 'ethnicity identifies people who have a shared culture'. Members of an ethnic group normally have a 'common ancestry and share language, religion and other cultural traits'. It is observed that in four states in the U.S. – California, New Mexico, Hawaii, and Texas, the minority population is more than non-Hispanic whites (Mooney, et al., 2007:295). It is known that in these states, Hispanics are the

largest minority group, except for in Hawaii where the largest minority group is Asian Americans' ("National Briefing, 2005) cited in Mooney, et al. (2007:295).

Gender stratification is another form of social classification. This way of classifying people is referred to as 'structural sexism' (Mooney, et al., 2007:339). It is also known as 'institutional sexism', referring to how the 'organisation of society, and specifically its institutions, subordinate individuals and groups based on their sex classification' (Mooney, et al., 2007:339). This phenomenon has resulted in 'significant differences in education and income levels, occupational and political involvement, and civil rights of women and men'. They found that literacy rates worldwide show that women are 'less likely than men to be able to read and write, with millions of women being denied access' to basic education. This situation is very common in Africa and Ghana is no exception.

Concerns shown by sociologists such as Heath and Payne (2000), Goldthorpe (1987) in the study of the social class moved Aldridge to research into the 'distinction between absolute and relative mobility rates' which most sociologists have attached so much importance to (Goldthorpe, 2012:1). By absolute rates he meant the 'actual proportions of individuals of given class origins' who are able to move to other classes, while on the other hand 'relative rates compare the chances of individuals of differing class origins arriving at different class distinctions' which show the degree of 'social fluidity' (Goldthorpe, 2012:1).

Goldthorpe (2012:1) notes that Aldridge research findings pointed out that 'absolute rates of intergenerational class mobility, as measured in percentage terms' seem to be high. Particularly, it was noted that, 'rates of upward mobility' consistently increased in the twentieth century, as a result of 'class structural change' (Goldthorpe, 2012:2). In other words, the increase in 'professional and managerial positions' created more avenues at the top for new entrants.

In the case of 'relative rates of intergenerational class' movement 'measured by odds ratios' remained constant during most period of the twentieth century or showed no particular 'directional change', except 'some recent slight increase in fluidity among women' (Goldthorpe, 2012:2). This suggests that, the degree of relationship between the 'class positions of children and their parents' observed in the 'class structural effects' showed strong indications. However, it seemed increased upward movement might have created wrong impression, because Britain had not become 'fluid or 'open society' as one might have thought (Goldthorpe, 2012:2).

The researcher wants to investigate SES because; he is interested in finding out how it affects students from both the rich and poor backgrounds in educational achievements in the Awutu Senya and Effutu Educational Districts in the Central Region of Ghana.

Empirical Review

The chapter continues with a review of empirical literature in the Ghanaian context, in order to provide a better picture of the research problem. However, literature, especially in the developing countries and the UK, will be critically reviewed with the aim of finding possible similarities and differences in those countries and Ghana. The researcher has noted that there is limited literature on the topic in Ghana. Thus, the review of the developing countries and UK will help to identify the issues of SES and its effects on students' academic achievements in those countries which will help to develop a framework for the study.

Even though literature on the research problem seems to be limited in Ghana, the information gathered so far shows that SES has a relationship with academic achievement (Agyeman, 1993; Antwi, 1992; Addae-Mensah, et al., 1973; Effutu Municipal Education, 2010; Agezo and Christian, 2002 and Ofosu-Kusi, 2007). This agrees with findings on the subject matter in industrialised countries such as UK, US, Canada, Australia, and many others as indicated by empirical studies (Ornestein and Levine, 2006, Nabuka, 1984, Dahl and Lochner, 2005, Kellet and Dar, 2007, Horgan, 2007 and Rothman, 2002; 2003).

The literature review covers five areas. The first section will discuss class and educational achievements. The second section will discuss parents' educational qualifications, jobs and income and its influence on students' academic success. The third section will discuss types of schools that students attend and its influence on students' academic achievement. The literature will further review material on youth transitions from education to work. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary.

However, since the study is a doctoral thesis and is limited the researcher will focus on the key areas as outlined above and will not delve into such aspects as; employment and education, annual or monthly income levels, educational attainment and SES mobility among other related factors that can influence educational achievements. Even though, all these are related they cannot be studied on one doctoral study.

Class and Educational Achievement

Researchers from varied backgrounds support the claim that there is a relationship between SES of students and their educational outcomes all over the world (Addae-Mensah, et al., 1973; Prewitt, 1974; Agyeman, 1993; Coleman, 1966; Karmel 1973; Nwadinigwe, 2006; Dahl, and Lochner, 2005; Nabuka, 1984). Ornstein and Levine (2006:323), observed that 'social class is associated with many educational outcomes in addition to achievement in reading, math, and other subjects'. They noted that generally, 'working-class students not only have lower achievement scores but also are less likely than middle-class students to complete high school or to enrol in and complete college'. The implication is that students from low-income homes, in spite of their low achievement rates have little chance of completing school even if they are able to enrol in school. Such a situation comes about as a result of poverty which renders parents incapable of supporting their wards through their education. Ornstein and Levine reveal that:

> ...only about 25 percent of high-school graduates from the lowest two socioeconomic quartiles enter college and attain a postsecondary degree, compared with more than 80 percent of high-school graduates in the highest quartile.

> (Ornstein and Levine, 2006:323)

This evidence should inform all stakeholders of education that poverty is a bigger barrier to education.

In another study, in the US on international literacy patterns it was observed that:

> inequality is deeply rooted in education system and in the workplace in the United States…. Our nation concentrates on producing and rewarding first-class skills and, as a result, is world class at the top; however, it…

> (Ornstein and Levine, 2006:323).

The import is that no matter the level of wealth of the nation, there are always pockets of disadvantaged classes within. This fact, moved 'a senior researcher at the Educational Testing Service to observe that U.S. has not adequately "recognized the need to eliminate barriers to achievement that arise in the family, and how lack of resources affect achievement" (Ornstein and Levine, 2006:323).

Available information shows that, the 'National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and other agencies that collect achievement information from nationally representative samples of students' show that 'mathematics and reading proficiency scores of groups of students vary directly with social class' (Ornstein and Levine, 2006:321). The information indicates that 'students with well-educated parents score much higher than students whose parents have less education'. A similar study in Africa, especially Kenya conducted by Prewitt (1974) indicates that wealthier educated parents who purchased books and educational toys, who speak English at home, provided initial advantage. The exposure given to such students in the form of educational materials and assistance from parents and siblings provided a conducive atmosphere for learning. The study noted that 'nine-year-olds whose parents had at least some college education had average scores not far below those for thirteen-year-olds whose parents had not completed high school'.

Similarly, there is a vast difference in home environment of students from high socio-economic backgrounds and their counterparts from low socio-economic homes. Studies show that children from low socio-economic homes and communities are slow in their development of academic skills as compared to their counterparts from high socio-economic backgrounds (Kellet and Dar, 2007; Horgan, 2007; Agu and Hamad, 2000; Agyeman, 1993; Antwi, 1992). They found that initial learning skills correlate with the home environment, therefore homes where the level of literacy is low affects children negatively. Educational systems in low socio-economic communities are usually under-resourced affect students' academic performance (Aikens and Barbarin, 2008). Studies of high socio-economic homes reveal that students are more likely to take advantage of their economic situation which provides all the necessary materials such as text books, writing materials and other support put at their disposal (Nwadinigwe, 2006; Aikens and Barbarin, 2008; Adegbenga, 2010).

When students have access to relevant textbooks, equipment, and congenial atmosphere that support learning, it enhances students' success level at school. This is emphasised by the World Bank report, which says 'textbooks provision is a very cost-effective means of improving learning outcomes' (World Bank, 2004:40). This study agrees with a similar study carried out by Nabuka (1984) on the influence of home background variables on achievement of Fijian and Indian students which revealed that distance of the school from students' ..., number of books read, fathers'/guardians' level of education, students' job

aspirations, availability of text books, and the place of students' residences' were very significant factors. These differences in no small way affect the educational success or otherwise of students.

Studies conducted on school outcomes for Latino students show that parental factors like engaging in supportive interactions, being involved in school activities, discussing school issues with youth have a positive association with school success (Garcia, Reid, Peterson, 2005; Marschall, 2006) cited in (Woolley, Kol, Bowen, 2009). Findings from Woolley, Kol, Bowen (2009:65) reveal that 'parent and teacher support is a critical factor associated with Latino student school outcomes'. They further indicate that 'parental support and parental education monitoring directly and indirectly' influence academic outcomes which 'empower Latino families to positively influence students' academic performance by monitoring students' school-related activities such as discussing school work and classes, homework, and teacher-student interactions'. They further indicated that a 'family environment that is actively supportive of education – a central aspect of education – provides foundation for student success'.

Ibis, et al., (2012:324) observed that 'by following the framework developed by Epstein (1995), and testing the three dimensions of parental involvement as separate entities' they were able to differentiate 'one form of involvement (school-based involvement) as more important than others (home-school conferencing and home-based involvement)' in respect of the data collected. Their findings indicate that in 'Cuba, where teacher involvement in the educational lives of students is high, parental help with school work in the home and formal parent-teacher conferencing may not be necessary for the adjustment of school-children'. They further pointed out that 'parents' school-based involvement, on the other hand, may promote student achievement by conveying a message about the importance of education'. They stressed Vygotsky's (1978) opinion that if parents become involved with in-school activities, they may indirectly communicate their own attitudes regarding education to their children in addition to transmitting the value placed on education within Cuba culture.

A study conducted in Ghana by the World Bank (2004:40) found that 'economic growth' has contributed to 'average English scores by 2.2 points'. The implication is that the state of a country's economic standing has a direct influence on the success level of students.

Therefore, parents' level of income also affects their students' educational achievements. Students whose parents are educated are more likely to perform well.

The World Bank (2004) report from Ghana reveals there is a relationship between poverty and educational success. The report indicates that schooling help raise the test scores of students and those students with 'higher test scores as a result of schooling do enjoy higher earnings' (World Bank, 2004:42). This suggests that students who do well in school are more likely to get better jobs than their counterparts who do not perform well in school.

Nguyen (2006) identified poverty as one problem for disadvantaged communities in supporting their local schools. On parental SES, parents' education showed 'consistent strong effects on both children's enrolment and learning outcomes' (Nguyen, 2006:24). However, parents' education did not show 'significant effects in predicting children's school enrolment, but parental education did'. This means that parental education was very crucial in determining how much a child can achieve in his or her education all things being equal.

In sum one can say that SES of parents directly affects the success or otherwise of children's education and therefore government policies must always come handy to assist such disadvantaged groups of people. This is because the wealth of a nation is its people especially the youth.

Parents' Educational Qualifications, Jobs and Income and its Influence on Students' Academic Success

The subject of educational attainment of parents and its influence on their children's academic achievements is widely studied (Nguyen 2006; Jerrim and Micklewright, 2009 and; Muruwei, 2011). Parents as first educators of children play significant roles in their upbringing and education. Parents influence their children education in various ways such as providing inspiration and providing their educational needs.

Muruwei (2011:302) found that the 'level of parent education affects the academic performance' of children in school. He further shares the opinion that parents who are well educated and are professionals with good salaries are able to provide their children with good learning environment to enable them to excel in their education (Muruwei 2011; Michieka, 2011; Antwi, 1992; Agyeman, 1993; Prewitt, 1974; Nguyen, 2006; Jerrim and Micklewright, 2009). He cited Valencia and Renald (1991) who observed that the 'level of parents' education is related to English test of children' (Muruwei, 2011:302). Valencia

and Renald (1991) cited in Muruwei (2011) concluded that parents who have acquired higher level of education are likely to transmit it to the children more culture of the academic acquired over the years to their children than illiterate or semi-literate parents. This suggests that educated parents provide inspiration, good speech models and enhanced learning environment such as provision of newspapers, story books, dictionaries, television among other facilities that boost their English Language acquisition at home.

The hypothesis (There is no significant influence of parents' level of education on the academic performance of students in English Language) of the study was tested by using the independent t-test analysis to determine the influence of parents' educational level on their children's academic performance. This statistical tool was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to compare the mean score of academic performance of students with high and low levels of parental education. It was noted that the 'observed t-value was 2.67. This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical value at 0.05 levels with 248 degree of freedom' (Muruwei, 2011:303). The calculated value was greater than the critical value, and therefore the result was significant.

The study further indicated that educational level of parents 'has a positive influence on academic performance of the children' (Muruwei, 2011:303). Muruwei was of the opinion that, in order to achieve these objectives parents of these children might have provided facilities such as story books, television sets, newspapers and even pay extra fees to teachers to teach their children at home where the parents have no time (Muruwei, 2011, Nguyen, 2006) to teach or assist them.

On pupils' achievement, Nguyen indicated that 'in the models predicting learning outcome, mothers' occupations related to school outcomes' (Nguyen, 2006:22). The study pointed out that 'having more education and a non-farm job would be an indicator of high women's statuses. This means that a mother of this class 'has a better influence on her child's educational outcomes'. The researcher was of the opinion that 'this model supports the hypothesis that parental SES has important effects on learning'. This finding is corroborated by Nyarko (2011) in a study on parental school involvement in Ghana. The study indicated that 'mothers' school involvement was positively and significantly correlated with academic performance' of their children (Nyarko, 2011:380). On the other hand, 'fathers' school involvement' with respect to 'students' academic performance' was not significant. He notes that the 'positive and significant association' found between

mothers' school involvement and students' academic performance agrees with Grolnicks and Slowiaczek (1994) who also found that mothers were more involved than fathers in their children's schooling; specifically, their behaviour, cognitive-intellectual, and personal care. Nyarko suggests that mothers see it as a responsibility to support their children to succeed in their education and therefore 'sacrifice their resources' in terms of money, material, and time (Nyarko, 2011:380). He further stressed that in Ghana, it is common to see 'mothers selling their personal property or even borrowing from the banks or friends' to support their children's education.

On fathers' school involvement, 'it was expected that their school involvement would also positively impact on the academic performance of the students' (Nyarko, 2011:380). However, the reason given by Nord (1998:380) cited in Nyarko (2011) may explain why fathers are not so much involved in their children's education. His explanation is that culturally fathers are the heads of their families and therefore have a responsibility to provide for the needs of the families.

Dahl and Lochner (2005) noted that U.S. Census Bureau (2004) conducted in 2003 found more than one among six children from the total of 12.9 million children in the U.S. who were under age 18 were living in poverty. The situation prompted researchers to study into the 'extent to which income maintenance programmes and family income' (Dahl and Lochner, 2005:1) affect children, since this is not easy to determine. They found that, a number of explanations for which they think 'family income might affect child development' (Dahl and Lochner, 2005:4). One of such explanation is that, 'poverty is associated with increased levels of parental stress, depression, and poor health'. These conditions have the potential to negatively affect 'parents' ability to nurture their children' as expected of them. Another reason is that poor parents usually show signs of 'high level of frustration and aggravation with their children' and such situations have consequences on their children's development such as 'poor verbal development and show 'higher levels of distractibility and hostility in the classroom' (Parker, et al., 1999) cited in Dahl and Lochner (2005:4). Yet, family income may also be of help if parents spent the money for the benefits of the children in such ways as:

> child-centred goods like books, for quality day care or preschool programmes, for better dependent health care, or to move to a better neighbourhood
>
> (Dahl and Lochner, 2005:4).

Otherwise government policy such as Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) may not help and achieve the purpose of the policy. Measures such as these are intended to curb the vicious cycle of poverty that children living in poverty inherit from parents.

However, Dahl and Lochner (2005:4) noted that 'studies linking poverty and income to child outcomes' in school have failed to do away with 'biases caused by the omission of unobserved family and child characteristics'. They were of the view that 'most studies employed regressions of an outcome variable' such as school attainment on family income or education of parents and 'a set of observable family, child, and neighbourhood characteristics'. They realised that even though these studies indicate the 'correlations between income and child outcomes', they fail to tell readers 'a causal relationship' that may exist as other scholars like Mayer (1997) and Duncan and Brooks-Gunn (1997) have done. It is possible that 'children living in poor families may have a worse home environment or other characteristics' (Dahl and Lochner, 2005:4) that the researchers may not take note of, and yet these factors or variables may be responsible for non-performance of children and as a result may affect their development even if income level improves.

New South Wales Department of Education and Training (NSWDT) (2005) reviewed research evidence in relation to SES and schooling in Australia. In their work, the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY) carried out by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was reviewed as part of their research evidence. The ACER research studied 'student achievement scores on tests of reading comprehension and mathematics' from five different researches that examined the 'literacy and numeracy levels of 14 year-olds in Australian schools' between 1975 and 1998 (NSWDT, 2005). This included the 'trends for all students and for smaller groups of students' test scores. As part of their study students' results were collated and discussed 'examining averages, medians and the distributions of results and changes over time'. The final results were reported according to 'socio-economic status (SES), language background, gender and location' (NSWDT, 2005:1). In all, the ACER study found that 'while overall achievement levels of students' seem to be 'stable between 1975 and 1998', there were however, differences between students by 'socio-economic status, both at an individual level and between schools'.

It must be pointed out that, the study employed a limited measure of SES, particularly occupation of students' fathers, in which case students were placed in four family

occupational groups such as 'professional/management, clerical/sales/service, trades and production/labourer' (NSWDT, 2005:2). This scale served the purpose of providing a means of bringing on board participants who are either advantage or disadvantage in terms of their educational levels and probably the type of employment. The findings of the study over the 25-year period show that; between the period 1975 and 1998, 'students whose parents were employed in professional and managerial occupations had the highest average scores' (NSWDT, 2005:2). On the other hand, those whose parents were manual workers had the lowest score. It was noted that the 'gap between the two groups of students narrowed at an individual level' (NSWDT, 2005:2) from the 1975 to 1998. They however, noted that the difference in students' 'scores widened between schools with higher concentrations of professional parents and all other schools'.

At the school level, it was revealed that 'within the same school, a student who comes from a higher socio-economic group will achieve better test' scores than his or her counterpart from a lower socio-economic group' (Rothman, 2003) cited in (NSWDT, 2005:2). In a similar way, students who attend a 'school that has a higher concentration of students from higher socio-economic groups' equally achieve higher results in reading and mathematics than their colleagues who attend schools with 'lower concentration of students from higher socio-economic groups' (NSWDT, 2005:2). The phenomenon of 'school-level influence' is noted to have increased since 1975. This suggests the school environment; that is the quality of the school and the SES of the students contribute in diverse ways to affect students' scores in school. This class of students have high level of quality language and are purposeful in their learning by virtue of their backgrounds and exposures they have the tendency to influence their counterparts who come from lower socio-economic groups.

In the Ghanaian context, it is observed that manual workers far 'outnumber all the other classes of the Ghanaian labour force' (Agyeman, 1993:56). Agyeman notes that farmers, fishermen, labourers form 'more than 57% of the total labour force, while the administrative/ managerial and professionals are less than 5% of the labour force' and the 'clerical, sales and service workers' constitute about 38%' as far back as 1972 (Agyemen, 1993: 56). This implies that about 95% of the labour force at the time was under-privileged and poor while about 5% was of the administrative or managerial and professional class who were better placed to support their children in schools. This

unfavourable situation was highlighted by Margaret Kwakwa as a concerned parent in Agyeman (1993: 57), in the words:

> ...by unintentionally setting up two different classes of schools, our society is now widening the gap between the haves and have-nots, the privileged and the less privileged, ...

This observation indicates that education has been used as a means of 'social mobility' of people from a 'less privileged class' to a privileged class (Agyeman, 1993 and Antwi, 1992). However, since majority of parents were poor and could not afford to send their children to the 'special schools' their children even though may be brilliant could not perform well to merit admission into one of the best secondary schools in the country. It is in the light of this that, it is stressed that the 'setting up of the two different classes of schools' is a deliberate attempt by the 'dominant class to maintain their monopoly over the channel of social mobility' and by so doing deny the 'less privileged' the opportunity to climb the social ladder to the top (Agyeman, 1993:57).

Type of School and Students' Academic Achievements

An analysis of the LSAY data with respect to the factors that influence an 'Equivalent Tertiary Entrance Ranks' showed that the 'most significant influence on year 12' result is a demonstration of a student's 'proficiency in literacy and numeracy in earlier years of schooling' (Ainley, 2003) cited in (NSWDT, 2005:2). This demonstrates that a good educational foundation in terms of literacy and mathematics enhances the students' achievement levels and a poor one retards progress. Ainley also found that the 'particular school a student attends' is an important factor to consider. The type of school notwithstanding, other researchers have found that, school culture or environment, teaching and assessment practices, teacher-student class interactions, student confidence and motivation, school curriculum organisation and resources and teacher quality; in terms of teaching experience (Ainley, 2003; Forsyth and Furlong, 2003; NSWDT, 2005; Fredua-Kwarteng, 2004) that are available in the school may account for the differences in schools scores. The third factor identified to impact on 'tertiary entrance performance' was the 'socio-economic background' variables such as 'parental education, wealth and occupational status' (NSWDT, 2005:2). This view is shared by Antwi (1992) and Agyeman (1993) who observed that in Ghana admission into the top ten secondary schools was dominated by children from the homes of the elite and economically well to do

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families. The data indicated that students whose parents are professionals always achieve better scores that give them advantage over their counterparts whose parents are not.

In Victoria, similar scores reveal that students' performance followed 'clear and consistent trends for children from lower' SES families to have lower scores at 'year 12 and year 5 benchmarking test results' (Teese, 2003) cited in NSWDT (2005:3). A similar relationship was established for 'other measures of student engagement with schooling' like rate of attendance at school.

Antwi (1992:216) observed that differences in education 'quality have appeared as the number of secondary schools has increased'. As a result, schools are ranked based on the 'degree of success which students show in examinations and in the prestige which the school can bestow on its products' that would reflect in their lives after school. Therefore, the desire to enrol in a prestigious school becomes so competitive that it usually favours applicants who mostly come from the homes of the socio-economically advantageous (Antwi, 1992; Agyeman, 1993). This means that the 'top secondary schools have a higher intake of students' who come from 'professionals and well-educated families' than other schools.

In the study area, a similar research has been conducted by Ofosu-Kusi (2007), a senior lecturer of the University of Education, Winneba, in the Central Region of Ghana. The study was conducted on 'inequitable opportunities, same standards: Why some children perform below standard in basic education examination'. The researcher in his disappointment had this to say:

> There is a tragic loss of opportunity and a waste of national and family resources if only 50% of a generation of children can successfully demonstrate learning outcomes after nine years of instruction.

> (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007:182)

The writer is of the opinion that 'children in basic schools are certainly malleable in mind and body', especially during their formative years. This requires that teachers who are competent and capable of educating and guiding them are provided to help develop their talents (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007). The researcher indicated that age was an important quality of teachers that affects their work. He stressed that 'since teachers at this level handle young pupils, 'they need the requisite experience, understanding, empathy and vibrancy to handle

the many problems and challenges that confront them' (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007:185). The data showed that 69% of the teachers were between the ages of 20 and 32 years, 19% were between the ages of 35 and 44 years while 8% were also 55 years or above.

The youthful teachers in the service are not likely to stay in the service because they are at their prime ages and would be looking for better opportunities elsewhere or further their education. As a consequence of the high turn-over, rural schools usually have difficulty of retention of teachers and as a 'result had to be content with 'more unqualified teachers' (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007:182). The researcher notes that,' in spite of the overwhelming need for well-trained and qualified teachers, many of the teachers in the District were untrained'. Available data indicated that there was 266 untrained staff as opposed to 401 trained ones at the JSS (now JHS) level. It means that about 40% of them were untrained teachers. This situation should be a source of worry to any serious educator because the quality of teachers is not good enough to guarantee any quality instruction that can prepare pupils for any good results.

At the primary school level, it is revealed that out of the 842 teachers (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007), 56% of the teachers were untrained, while 44% were trained. The situation at the KG level was worse as only11% of the teachers were trained out of the 307 teachers.

The situation of teacher quality was a concerned that the researcher could not hide but had to express it in these words:

> There is, therefore, a compelling reason for a higher calibre of teachers at all levels as a way of elevating quality and examination performances to a higher level in the District.

> (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007:188)

Another important area that one must consider in quality education is the pupil teacher ratio (PTR). As a result, the government's Education Strategic Plan (ESP) targets a PTR of 35:1 at the primary level and 25:1 at the JSS level. The study showed that, about half of the teachers were of the view that they had the required number of teachers in their schools (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007). Meanwhile, when the PTR was focused on the ratio of trained teachers to pupils showed some significant outcomes emerging in the majority of 56 schools surveyed. For example, evidence from the study revealed that, in schools like Gomoa-Tarkwa Methodist Primary School the ratio was 269:1, in Islamic Primary it was

107:1, while at Kokofu-Mampong Primary it was 131:1. This situation is simply unacceptable and that is why more untrained teachers have been employed to ease the burden of trained teachers.

When the question on the quality of the school environment and teaching /learning materials were raised, the initial impressions were wrong. The reason is that, it was found out that there were very impressive school buildings in some communities, especially the urban and semi-urban ones (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007). It was observed that, the JSS had relatively 'newer structures than the primary schools'. The researcher noted that it was not exactly what he saw and this he summed up in these words:

> …at first glance, the infrastructure of Gomoa-Dominase D/A Primary and JSS were befitting of a small senior secondary school. Yet, a closer inspection of the upper floor of the JSS building showed leaking roofs, broken ceilings and walls…

> (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007:189)

This scenario actually sums up the quality of the classrooms facilities in the study area. They were in deplorable states and also underutilized because of low enrolment, especially in rural schools. The researcher found that 'many schools lacked instructional materials and facilities. On the issue of teaching and learning materials, only 21 or 11% indicated they were satisfied with what they had. However, majority of the teachers were of the opinion that they were not enough teaching and learning materials. Meanwhile, aside the core subjects of English Language, Mathematics and Science, most of the subjects do not have text books. At the primary school level, it was realized that there was stark inadequacy of text books for Environmental Studies, Religious and Moral Education and Ghanaian Language (Fante). The case of JSS was not better, because there was lack of text books in Vocational Skills and Fante.

It was pointed out that pupils depended on their teachers' copies of text books (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007). This really underscores the seriousness of the inadequacy of text books in the schools in the District. The study revealed that when teachers were asked to rank the teaching and learning materials needed in the schools, the following materials were indicated in this order; science kits, reference books for teachers, text books/reading aid for pupils, charts and related items, drawing instruments, sports equipment and audio-visual materials.

It is unbelievable to note that, teachers could teach a practical subject like science without the required tools, equipment, materials and text books. The researcher expressed his disgust about the situation when he indicated that:

> ...unfair that children in such disadvantaged environment will be expected to develop comparable conceptual sophistication in science and other subjects so that they will all be graded through the same basic education examination.

> (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007:191)

On the part of the communities it was revealed that they seemed to be disengaged from school activities. When the assertion as to whether 'the community is not interested in the children's education' was brought up for discussion, it was realized that 73% of the teachers agreed while 23% disagreed, with 4% not being certain (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007). This explains why a teacher indicated earlier that parents do not show concern about school activities in the community. This does not augur well for the development of the schools.

In conclusion, the researcher notes that a number of factors emerged in the study that provided basis for the non-performance of schools in the Gomoa District. The number one of these factors was that, most teachers were unqualified. However, it was found that 'the urban schools were better off than the rural communities' (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007:193). Secondly, it pointed out that school infrastructure and teaching and learning materials were in short supply in many schools, especially the rural communities. The third factor that contributed to the poor school performance was the conflicting demands on children's time. Again, many children engaged in daily activities that were 'time-consuming and energy-sapping activities that are empirically proven to have debilitating effects on children' (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007:193). What made matters worse was parents' irresponsible behaviours and attitudes that deprived children of the needed 'structured informal learning environments that are supposed to complement the formal learning' at the school.

The realization of such a situation makes it looks more serious considering the fact that more children live in the rural areas than in the urban areas. It is in the light of this that the researcher, intimates that the situation can be mitigated through concerted efforts by parents to claim total responsibility for the future of their children, and for the government to live up to its responsibility of providing truly free and quality education.

In a similar study in Ogun State Secondary Schools in Nigeria where the researchers' focus was on teacher quality and resource situation as determinant of students' academic achievement, the analysis of the results of the hypothesis one (The quality of teachers has no significant relationship with the academic performance of students in vocational subjects) showed that the correlation coefficient revealed that there was a significant relationship between the performance of students in the subject and National Certificate of Education (NCE) teachers (Adedeji and Owoeye, 2002). It was found that in this same period (1992) the relationship between B.Sc/M.Sc and vocational teachers and academic performance of the students was not significant. In 1993, the relationship remained significant with NCE and vocational teachers while in the 1994; the relationship remained significant only with NCE teachers and slightly with B.Sc/M.Sc graduates. The researchers' conclusion was to define quality of teachers not in terms of higher qualification but in terms of relevant practical training and experience acquired by the teaching force.

The test result of the second hypothesis (The quality of resources allocated to Ogun State Secondary schools has no significant relationship with the academic performance of students in vocational subjects) also showed that the quantity of resources allocated to Ogun State Secondary Schools has no significant relationship with the academic performance of students in vocational education (Adedeji and Owoeye, 2002). The result indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between the allocation of resources and the academic performance of students. These test results are indicative of the fact that teacher quality and other resources such as classrooms, laboratories, computer laboratories, ICT, reference books among other things are significant contributors to students' academic performance in education irrespective of the level.

Youth Transition from Education to Work
The concept of youth is not easily defined because it is subjective to one's social context and therefore, varied from one society to the other. This difficulty is raised by Pilcher (1998:58) cited in CLMS M2 2H (2003:5) when she stressed that 'youth are viewed, simultaneously, in terms of what they no longer are (children) and what they nearly are (adults)'. In furtherance of this argument, Pilcher (1995) cited Aries (1962) who revealed that in pre-industrial Europe children entered adulthood at about age five. One can speculate that the controversy around youth as a stage might have risen because some

parents used their children as farm hands as early as they were capable of running errands and therefore children were treated as "miniature adults".

However, the trend has changed with the advent of the 'processes of industrialisation and urbanisation' (Pilcher, 1995:64), now, young people 'stay at home with family and left only a short time before setting up their own households'. It is noted that in the course of the 19th Century, young people 'became increasingly subject to parental and other institutional control', as a result of young people non-involvement in the job market and the fact that 'formal education' of the youth was extended (Pilcher, 1995:64). This made young people spent more time in school and therefore, making them dependent rather than self- reliant. However, a more modern concept of youth is:

> one where young people after leaving school remain dependent on their parents for housing, and income until they move away from home into their own homes and until they get their own jobs.

(CLMS M2 2H, 2003:5)

This trend of affairs has not changed much because in the present era as a result of unfavourable economic conditions, some young people continue to live with their parents much longer than before.

Considering the complex trend in modern times where most young people continue to depend on parents or family members even in their mid-twenties. As a result of this, CLMS M2 2H (2003) observes that youth is a stage and/or a period that ranges between sixteen and twenty-six years and even more depending on family background, support system and cultural influence.

Youth transition to the job market has attracted attention of policy-makers, researchers and academics since the early 1960s in the United Kingdom (UK). Norbert Elias, a young Research Fellow in the University of Leicester led a group of researchers to investigate youth transition from school to work. It is noted that most of the studies carried out on youth focused mainly on the transition process (Wilson, 1957; Carter, 1962, 1963, 1969; Douglas, 1964; Watts, 1967) cited in (Goodwin and O'Connor (2001).

The issue of leaving school and entering the job market was described as 'simple, predominant and one step transition from school to work' (Coles, 1995:35) cited in CLMS

M2 2H (2003:7). This situation attracted most young people to leave school early and 'found immediate employment (Kierman, 1992; Roberts, 1995; Unwin and Wellington 2001) cited in (CLMS M2 2H, 2003:7). Considering the high demand for the scarce skilled labour at the time, 'large companies recruited school leavers' and equipped them with the needed skills in order to perform the different tasks in the companies (CLMS M2 2H (2003:7). This situation came to a point that some companies decided to establish arrangement with school in order to provide induction services for school leavers who wanted to enter the job market (CLMS M2 2H, 2003).

However, this situation changed in the 1970s when companies had to stop engaging large numbers of school-leavers and joined government youth training schemes which became the order of the day (Fuller and Unwin, 1998). The seriousness of youth unemployment and the effect of the government training schemes became issues that attracted the attention of researchers (Goodwin and O'Connor, 2001 and CLMS M2 2H, 2003). The issue of youth unemployment and the need to prepare them for the job market attracted a lot of attention from government and researchers (Roberts, 1995 and CLMS M2 2H, 2003). Goodwin and O'Connor (2001) agree with Cohen and Ainley (2000) that the issue of youth transition, preparation and entry into the job market has led government and researchers to over concentrate on it.

Goodwin and O'Connor (2001:3) note that, this trend of over-concentration persisted even after Cohen and Ainley (2000) suggested that attention must be shifted from the 'traditional narrow empiricism of youth transitions' to examine the 'new generation of empirical studies that explore youth as a complex mix of social, psychological, economical, cultural and political processes'. Researchers continued to show interest in 'current' and 'past transitions' or 'generational differences' (Goodwin and O'Connor, 2001:3) in youth transitions.

The importance of historical narratives of the transition is highlighted by Vickerstaff (2001) who argues that a critical look of the transition processes of the past raises questions of the 'orthodoxy of the early accounts' as noted by Goodwin and O'Connor (2001:4). It is noted that by Goodwin and O'Connor (2001:4) that Vickerstaff observed that most of the earlier accounts on youth transitions were accepted on the thinking that 1940s, 1950s and 1960s were 'golden age' where transition was 'simple, linear and single step'. They further observed that Vickerstaff in her effort to establish this fact interviewed

apprentices between 1940 and 1980 and this revealed that it was 'comfortable and unproblematic' (Vickerstaff, 2001:3). However, Vickerstaff (2003:261) was of the opinion that:

> characterisation of the earlier period as a 'golden age' of smooth, unproblematic, one-step transitions from school into the labour market misrepresents the experiences of people in that period.

> (Vickerstaff, 2003:261)

This point to the fact that youth transition from school to work has not been 'smooth' and 'straight forward' in the 1960s and 1970s as it was perceived. The process was more complex than it was thought of.

In a similar way, Fuller and Unwin (2001) through analysis of stories of past apprentices were able to explore the 'role that transition to apprenticeship played in the formation of occupational identity' and further showed its 'implications for community identity in a way the modern Apprenticeship never will' (Goodwin and O'Connor, 2001:4).

Three groups of young workers namely, the careerless, short-term careers and extended careers are identified by researchers (Ashton and Field, 1976 and Goodwin and O'Connor, 2003) which promoted the understanding of the transition process. These three groups of young workers represent the 'difference meanings attached to work by the young workers, reflecting their different experiences and self-image' (Ashton and Field, 1976). The three groups represent different social class groups and the type of schools they attended and how home background influenced their training and self-concept and 'self-image and their choices of jobs. This means that the three groups of workers have different perceptions of their future carrier paths.

Ashton and Field (1976:36) observe that the 'careerless make the transition from the lower streams of state schools into semi-skilled and unskilled work without adjustment problems'. This class of young workers were more concern about the 'immediate present' and not the future, perhaps they believed in the philosophy that the future will take care of itself. They were usually employed in jobs that gave them short-term economic benefits but little opportunity of 'self-development'. They changed jobs as and when there was a better opportunity for them, because the 'boredom threshold and commitment to the job were low' as noted by Goodwin and O'Connor (2001:7). This group was made to

understand that 'they had limited ability at school' and therefore did not consider themselves suitable for any job that demands high intelligence and long training.

On the other hand, the short-term careers were average achievers at school, who were in between the careerless and the extended careers (Ashton and Field, 1976). In the job market, they were found in the skilled manual trades, technical occupations and clerical work. This category of young workers had chance of developing their skills further through training and also guaranteed 'a degree of security' which shows their 'greater concern with the future' (Goodwin and O'Connor, 2001:7). They had the opportunity of undergoing 'a lengthy period of training and/or further education often paid by the employers' at the beginning of the job. As a result of their level of skills acquired they were not immediately concerned with 'immediate economic reward' (Ashton and Field, 1976) when they got jobs they stayed on the jobs for a long time. Ashton and Field (1976) cited in CLMS M2 2H (2003:8) note that they 'chose jobs that provided them with the opportunity to 'make something of themselves'. This group of young workers were more intelligent than their counterparts from the careerless group. They also had some encouragement and inspiration from home to pursue their education further.

The third group of young workers were the 'extended careers' and were described by Ashton and Field (1976:) as having 'middle class backgrounds'. The extended careers were made aware of the 'link between academic success and entry to a good career'. It is possible that, by their home background and the type of school they attended, they were taught and encouraged to focus on their education and achieve the highest they could which would offer them the best job and pay. Like their counterparts, the short-term careers whose pay was low on entering their jobs and whose promotion depended on 'further education and training', the extended careers realised that 'continuity between education and work and often had on-the-job training in addition today release schemes' (Ashton and Field, 1976 cited in CLMS M2 2H, 2003:9).

This category of young workers had a 'positive self-image' as 'intelligent individuals capable of considerable self-development' (Ashton and Field, 1976:). This implies that this class of young workers had positive reinforcement from the home and school, which inspired them to desire for 'careers that required a long period of learning in order to progress and develop the potential skills'. They thought of 'long-term rewards' instead of short-term ones.

Ashton and Field were of the view that the positive and negative images these young workers had about themselves were obtained from within their families and were 'reinforced at school' (Goodwin and O'Connor, 2001:8). They further observed that 'their entry into work and early experience' of work boost their self-images and 'orientation to work generated at home and in school'. Goodwin and O'Connor (2001:8) note that, results from later studies arrived at 'similar conclusions to those of Ashton and Field', emphasising the influence of 'social class background on the school to work transition' (Brown, 1987; Furlong, 1992; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997; Jenkins, 1983; and Willis, 1977) and the ease of managing the transition (Kiernan, 1992 and Bynner, 1998).

In sum, Goodwin and O'Connor (2001) note that Carter (1963) and Ashton and Field (1976) studies highlight a number of themes that are pertinent to young people. First, it is noted that the experiences of school and family life had an influence on the youth's expectations of work. It is also observed that whilst school was often boring it did not 'provide some diversion from the 'greater' boredom of home life' (Goodwin and O'Connor, 2001:8). It also revealed that majority of young people in both studies anticipated leaving school and did not experience transition problems; they never expected work to be what they witnessed. Many young people continued to identify with their childhood roles and leisure time activities. Lastly, these young workers earned money they continued to depend on their parents for money and even how to spend their monies they have earned.

 Summary

This section of the thesis discussed the theoretical, conceptual frameworks and empirical literature of the study. The researcher deemed it appropriate to use Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural and social capitals as the basis of this thesis. He used cultural capital to explain educational disparities in children's attainments from different social backgrounds. Bourdieu (1986) suggests that in addition to economic factors, cultural lifestyles, and values acquired from home account for educational success.

Social capital is a kind of network that provides members of the society with support. This type of network enables members to get access to quality education, high paid jobs and other advantages which their counterparts do not get. The section also discussed the concept of social class and its classifications from the perspectives of Warner and associates, John Goldthorpe and Savage and associates.

The empirical literature that are related to the research questions of the study such as educational qualifications of parents and its influence on students' academic success, parents' job and income and its influence on students' achievement levels, type of schools students attend and its influence on students' academic achievement and youth transition from school to work were reviewed.

Researchers have found sufficient evidence to support the claim that there is a relationship between SES of students and their educational outcomes all over the world. In a similar way, it is observed that social class is associated with many educational outcomes of students. The disadvantaged students are noted to have lower achievement scores as compared to their counterparts.

Children from low socio-economic homes are slow in the development of academic skills as against children from high socio-economic backgrounds (Kellet and Dar, 2007; Horgan, 2007). Students who have access to textbooks, equipment, and congenial atmosphere that support their learning, usually enhance their achievement level. Home cultures were also found to impact on homework performance.

Youth transition from school to work is another area that attracted so much attention in the U.K. in the 1960s. This period marked a time young people could leave school and enter the job market and find jobs without difficulties. This situation enticed so many young people to leave school early and found immediate employment for themselves. However, this situation changed in the 1970s and companies had to stop engaging large school-leavers and instead joined government youth training schemes to equip the youth with skills that were needed on the job market. Studies conducted shows that young people who entered the job market represented different social class groups and the type of schools they attended and home backgrounds influenced their training and self-image and their choice of jobs (Ashton and Field, 1976). The next chapter deals with the analytical framework and methodology of the study.

Chapter 3

Analytical Framework and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes and explains the analytical frameworks and methodological approaches that were adopted in carrying out this study. Some of the methods used in this study were informed by some empirical studies reviewed on SES in chapter two (Kellet and Dar, 2007; Horgan, 2007 and Ofosu-Kusi, 2007). The main highlights of this chapter discussed philosophical and theoretical perspectives in research and their methodological implications.

Ontological and Epistemological Underpinnings

Ontology is concerned with the fact that there is reality or social things or social existence in the world (Mason, 2007; CLMS M1 U2, 2004; Smith and Deemer, 2003; Potter, 2000), either than formulating arguments on what is 'valid knowledge' as in the case of epistemology (CLMS M1 U2, 2004:26). The researcher relied on case studies to obtain the necessary data on SES of parents and how it influences students' achievements through the use of semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires, direct observation and documents which provided pieces of evidence of realism. This approach gave the researcher the opportunity to have enough interactions with his respondents through probing and observation. The term epistemology refers to the study of knowledge or evidence or how to obtain acceptable knowledge (Bryman, 2008; CLMS M1 U2, 2004; Mason, 2007). Sikes (2004:21) posits epistemology as 'what constitutes knowledge and whether it is possible to know and understand and re-present' it. Gray (2004) identifies three epistemological perspectives, namely objectionist, subjectivist and constructivist.

These positions on knowledge creation influenced the researcher's position in the present study. The researcher adopted a pragmatist position in carrying out this study. This approach allowed flexibility in his choice of methods, and frames for analysis and also guide the research designs throughout the process. The pragmatist approach helped the researcher to use methods that worked for this study even though the interpretivist approach dominated in the data analysis.

Research Paradigms

A paradigm is defined as 'a cluster of beliefs and dictates which scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be conducted and how results should be interpreted' (Bryman, 1988a:4) cited in Bryman (2008). The common paradigms in research are the positivist, interpretive/constructivist (Scott and Usher, 1999; Esterberg, 2002; Henn, et al., 2006). The positivists' school of thought is of the view that scientists must conduct their activities like those of natural sciences such as physicists and chemists. This does not mean that social scientist should employ the same methods. The two areas require different methods of study. The social scientists should adopt the natural sciences general principles and understanding of what is regarded as knowledge and the method to knowledge creation (CLMS M1 U2, 2004; Potter, 2000).

Phenomenologists or interpretivists on the other hand, take the position that social sciences should not be modelled on natural sciences because human beings are naturally different from atoms and matter which is the subject matter of natural sciences (CLMS M1U2, 2004; Potter, 2000). For example, it is unethical to subject human beings to experimentations like the natural sciences. The implications of this difference go beyond 'simply determining which methods' can be employed by social researchers (CLMS M1U2, 2004:13). For phenomenologists, this difference has implications for 'what counts as knowledge and how we can obtain it'. To the phenomenologist, it is not possible to repeat an experiment or set of observations on human beings just as we would repeat a natural scientific experiment, the reason is that human beings are unlikely to behave in exactly the same way (CLMS M1U2, 2004; Potter, 2000). This argument raised by the phenomenologists is strong in the sense that human beings behave differently under different situations and time. The main difference between the subject matter of social sciences and that of the natural sciences, is that human beings interpret, understand and interact with their environment in which they live and not driven by external forces (Koul, 2011; Cohen, et al., 2008; CLMS M1U2, 2004).

The phenomenologist is of the opinion that the most valid kind of knowledge is subjective knowledge, and that we get to know of things by viewing the world through the eyes of our respondents we study: through understanding their subjective interpretations of it (Cohen, et al., 2008; Pring, 2005; CLMS M1U2, 2004). The implication is that the researcher makes better interpretation of his or her subject matter s/he studies by first understanding his or her participants. For example, in the present study, the researcher

tries to investigate the phenomena of SES of parents and its influence on students' academic achievements.   The researcher can successfully do this by collecting views of students, school officials, teachers and parents on the issues raised in the study. The opinions collected through interviews are perceptions of respondents whilst facts collected through documents and secondary sources such as students' results and previous studies are interpreted by the researcher in relation to the social context in which the study is conducted.

The positivist researchers 'present and analyse statistical data in a number of ways so as to support a particular theory' (CLMS M1U2, 2004:16). It must however be noted that 'facts do not speak for themselves'; it is the duty of researchers to 'interpret their findings and present them to their audience in ways which support their preconceived hypotheses. In the present study, the hypotheses raised in the first chapter were tested by using multiple regressions in relation to the social context and the existing literature to give meaning to the study.

Research Approach in this Study

Sidhu (2003:245) has defined quantitative research as 'a numerical method of describing observation of materials or characteristics'. When a specified proportion of a material or characteristic is used as a basis for measuring any sample then a 'valid and precise method of data description is provided'.

 Quantitative research can also be understood as a 'research strategy that emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of data' (Bryman, 2008:22). Quantitative research employs 'measurement' as the 'most precise and universally accepted method for assigning quantitative values to the characteristics of objects or events for the purpose of discovering relationships between variables under study' (Koul, 2011:79). Bryman (2008) and Koul (2011) noted that quantitative research has the following qualities:

- Entails a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which the emphasis is placed on the testing of theories;
- Has incorporated the practices and norms of the natural scientific model, and positivism in particular; and
- Embodies a view of social reality as an external, objective reality.

Quantitative research places much emphasis on testing of theories, the use of natural scientific research model and positivism and the use of social reality as knowledge. Quantitative research approaches encompass experimental research study, cross-sectional survey, comparative study, and longitudinal study even though cross-sectional, comparative and longitudinal studies overlap the quantitative-qualitative paradigms (Bryman, 2008). Among these approaches, the cross-sectional study was chosen to explore the quantitative data collection of the SES of parents and its effects on students' academic achievements in the study area. The decision on this approach was informed by the ontological and epistemological positions that underpin knowledge creation. In addition, this approach enabled the researcher to use multiple methods to collect data from students, and teachers in their natural settings. The use of the questionnaire was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researcher to involve 500 respondents in the study.

Qualitative research is a broad term that includes phenomenological study, ethnographic study, historical research, and case study, constructivist, and participant observation (Mason, 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 2003; Best and Kahn, 1995). These approaches may have some common characteristics, but different goals (Gall, et al., 2007; and Grbich, 2007). Qualitative study aims to provide 'rounded and contextual understandings on the basis of rich, nuanced and detailed data' (Mason, 2007:3). According to Bryman (2008:366) qualitative research is a research method that places much emphasis on 'words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data'. The qualitative approach is 'inductivist, constructionist and interpretivist', however, 'research do not' usually subscribe to all three of these features' (Bryman, 2008:366). Bryman (2008) and Koul (2011) agreed on some of the features of qualitative research as:

- emphasizes an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research in which the emphasis is placed on the generation of theories;

- rejection of the practices and norms of natural scientific model and positivism in particular, and

- a view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individuals' creation.

By implication, qualitative research deals with theory building and does not practise the norms of natural scientific model and positivism and believes that social reality can be

used by an individual to create knowledge. Under this approach focus group discussion was also employed to mop up additional information from students. Observation of school facilities and secondary data analysis were used to collect qualitative data to supplement other data collected to ensure that a true account is given on the issues raised in the study.

Cross-Sectional Study Approach

The mixed triangulatory approach using a cross-sectional and case study designs was adopted in this research. A cross-sectional study is a form of quantitative or qualitative research, which is popular among researchers in social sciences. Sidhu (2009:230) observes that cross-sectional approach consists of 'series of parallel case studies, not conducted so much to understand the individual case as to discover common factors among particular levels of children' or respondents. The cross-sectional survey enabled researchers to collect data from different range of respondents and in large numbers to enhance the representativeness of the study (Bryman, 2008 and Sidhu, 2009). The cross-sectional survey enabled the researcher to involve 500 respondents through the use of structured questionnaire compared to the number of respondents that could have been used if the study had relied solely on a case study approach. The reason is that case study design usually uses small number of respondents.

Case Study Approach

According to Sidhu (2009:224) a case study is one of the most 'valuable method known for obtaining a true and comprehensive picture of individuality'. A case study design provides 'intensive investigation on complex factors that contribute to the individuality of a social unit' (Sidhu, 2009:224). He indicates that the purpose of a case study is to 'understand the life cycle or an important part of the life cycle of the unit'.

Bryman (2008:52) defines a case study to entail the 'detailed and intensive analysis of a single case'. In the opinion of Yin (2003:543), a case study design may be considered when:

> (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how and "why" questions: (b) you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context.

A close examination of the definitions shows that researchers place emphasis on the detailed examination of the natural setting of the case under investigation. In line with this observation, Bryman (2008:53) stresses the 'tendency to associate case studies with qualitative research, but such identification is not appropriate'. He observes that practitioners of the case study design usually employ 'qualitative methods, such as participant observation and unstructured interviewing, because these methods' are regarded as 'helpful in the generation of an intensive, detailed examination of a case'.

Sidhu (2009) notes that a case study design relates to other research designs such as experimentation, historical research, documentary research, and survey studies. This was the first reason that informed the choice of a case study design for the present study because the researcher needed to collect detailed information through structured observation in the case of data collection on the status of school infrastructure and facilities and documents. Case studies also collect quantitative data depending on what the researcher wants to study. The present study also used both descriptive and inferential statistics to present the data since the study used both research questions and hypotheses.

It can be deduced that researchers can use multiple cases or a single case in a research study (Yin, 2003). Researches that use more cases referred to as multiple case studies while some studies concentrate on a single case of a phenomenon (Yin, 2003; Denscombe, 2003; Punch, 2005; and Bryman, 2008). Bryman (2008:60) notes that 'cases were selected on the basis that they represented extreme types - namely successful and unsuccessful' schools or companies and their work in certain areas. The present study made use of a multi-site case study to enable the researcher collect data from two categories of schools (advantaged and disadvantaged schools) in order to compare their achievement levels. The multi-site case study enabled the researcher to do an in-depth study of the selected SHS through the gathering of qualitative data with the help of semi-structured interviews, documentation and observations. This approach also enhanced the representativeness of the study. Bryman (2008:60) observes that with this type of case selection approach, the 'findings that are common to the cases can be just as interesting and important as those that differentiate them'.

However, a multiple-case study approach is not without criticisms. Dyer and Wilkins (1991) cited in Bryman (2008:61) argue that:

First, a multiple-case study research suggests that the 'researcher pays less attention to the specific context' and rather focuses more on the 'ways in which the cases can be contrasted'.

Second, they suggest that, the desire to make 'comparisons tend to mean that the researcher needs to develop an explicit focus' at the beginning of the research process. However, 'it may be advantageous to adopt a more open-ended approach in many instances' than focusing on a specific issue.

The use of the case study approach has a number of advantages and some of them are as follows:

In the first place, case study design is able to explore the complexity of a given phenomenon for the purposes of ensuring a better understanding of the issues under study (Verma and Mallick, 1999; Denscombe, 2003; Sidhu, 2009). Secondly, case study strategy requires the use of many methods in data and thereby providing opportunity for triangulation (Denscombe, 2003; and Yin, 2003). In spite of these advantages, case study approach has been criticised for its unrepresentative nature as a result of its small number of respondents and its inability to generalise its findings to a wider population.

Case Selection

Parents' SES determines the extent to which a student can make progress in his or her educational pursuit in the developing world in which case Ghana is no exception and therefore, it would have been appropriate if the present study had covered the entire country. However, it was not feasible to involve all parents, students, teachers and school officials in Ghana in this type of study, because of time and financial constraints. In this respect, it became necessary to conduct a small scale study in one geographical location. Awutu Senya and Effutu Educational Districts in the Central Region of Ghana were selected for the present study.

The present case was selected because it was a typical case, in that it had both advantaged and disadvantaged SHS which made it a good case for this study. Denscombe (2003:33) argues that 'most common justification' usually 'offered for the selection of a particular case' is its typicality.

Again, the decision was informed by the low SES of most parents and low academic achievements among most students in the area. With the exception of public workers and

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few businessmen in the study area who were socio-economically better off, most of the indigenes were fishermen, fishmongers, subsistent farmers and petty traders. This is underscored by the fact that brilliant but needy students could not get admission into SHS (Effutu Municipal Education Directorate, 2010). Lastly, proximity and convenience were also considered in the selection of the case of the present study.

Selection of Schools

The Awutu Senya District and Effutu Municipality shared some common characteristics with other municipalities and districts in the country. Educationally, both had similar educational structures and operated both public and private schools, some of which were mission schools. The Awutu Educational District which is a new directorate was carved out of the Awutu-Effutu-Senya District. The district had one public SHS, Senya Senior High School, in Senya and a number of private SHS located at Awutu, which includes Insaaniyya Senior High School, Datus Senior High School, Great Lamptey Mills Senior High School, Action Progressive Senior High School among others.

The Effutu Educational District also had one public SHS, which is Winneba Senior High School and two mission SHS, namely African Methodist Episcopal Zion School and Triumph Business School and three private SHS; which included Uncle Rich Senior High School, Winneba School of Business and Nananom Senior High School, all located in Winneba.

Two advantaged SHS were selected, one from each educational district and likewise two disadvantaged SHS were selected, one from each district. Two public schools; Winneba Senior High School and Senya Senior High School were included in the study. The private schools were; Winneba School of Business and Inssaaniyya Senior High School.

Access Issues

The researcher was introduced to the two directors of education in Awutu Senya and Effutu by his director, at the Centre for Educational Policy Studies, University of Education, Winneba through an official letter. The letter of introduction stated the purpose of the study and the need for data collection. Upon delivery of the introductory letters on the 3rd December, 2012 to the directors of education in both directorates, written permissions were given to conduct this study in the two districts on the 10th December 2012 (see Appendices A1 and A2).

The researcher sent copies of the letter to each of the heads of the participating SHS for their consent and cooperation in the study. Cohen and Minion (1994) are of the opinion that data collection is made easy if the people concerned are given prior notice about their involvement in the study. The researcher used the opportunity to explain the nature of the study to heads and also informed them about the impending data collection that involved structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The heads in turn asked their assistants to take the researcher to the Staff Common Room to interact with teachers and explain the purpose and nature of the study to them.

However, access into the private SHS was not without difficulties. Some of the respondents were not cooperative and therefore made data collection difficult. For example, there was a case of an accountant of one of the private schools who kept on changing the time agreed on for the interview session. There were cases where some teachers did not understand why the researcher wants to use them for his research and therefore each time they saw him they were angry. In spite of these challenges the researcher was able to collect the data for the study. Meanwhile, the researcher assured them of confidentiality, anonymity and promised to carry out the study at students' free time.

Population

The population of the study consisted of all headmasters, teachers, accountants, SHS students and parents in the Awutu Senya District and Effutu Municipality. The target population were the Form three and four students of the selected four SHS for the study. The total enrolment of these students obtained from the four schools was 2,032 students. The total number of teachers and bursars in the four selected schools was 193. The researcher included forms three and four students because they were more matured (aged between 17 and 20) and could respond to issues on the effects of parents' SES on their educational outcomes. The breakdown of the target population of the selected schools is presented in Table 1 (see Appendix E).

Sample

The sample for the quantitative data was 500 respondents which included both teachers and students. The researcher selected 311 students to participate in the study on the basis of proportion. This was worked out by finding the ratio of the number of students in a

particular school to the total number of students of the four selected schools and then multiplied by the students' sample (311). The formulae used is:

$$\frac{N \ x \ Students' \ Sample}{Grand \ Total \ of \ Students}$$

$$For \ example, Winneba \ Senior \ High \ School = \frac{841 \ x \ 311}{2032} = 129$$

This formula was used to calculate the other three schools to obtain the number of students who represented the various schools in the study. In addition to the number of students, 189 teachers in the selected schools took part in answering the questionnaires. On the question of a sample size (Best and Kahn, 1995:19) argue that 'the ideal sample size' must be 'large enough' to be representative of the population, from which 'the researcher wishes to generalize and small enough to be selected economically'. The breakdown of the student participants from the various schools are shown in Table 2 (see Appendix E).

Prior to the administration of the questionnaires the researcher had collected data with regard to the number of teachers and students in the selected schools. This enabled the researcher to calculate the number of students to be sampled from each school before going to administer the questionnaires. This made the sampling procedure simple since he knew the number of students to be sampled from each school.

Sampling Techniques and Procedures of Questionnaire Respondents

In selecting the respondents of the study the researcher adopted scientific sampling techniques. The quota sampling technique was used to decide the number of students to be selected from each school. Bryman (2008:185) is of the view that the quota sampling is used to provide 'a sample that reflects a population in terms of the relative proportion of the people in different categories'. However, the simple random sampling technique was used to select all the individual students who participated in the study in their various schools. This is a process whereby 'individuals are chosen in such a way that each has an equal chance of being selected, and each choice is independent of any other choice' (Best and Kahn, 1995:14). The essence of random sampling is that each member of the target population has an equal chance of being selected to be part of the study (Tuckman, 1994; Best and Kahn, 1995; and Bryman, 2008). However, Bryman (2008:172) describes the process as somewhat tortuous' and 'may be replaced in some circumstances by using a

systematic sampling procedure' and therefore recommend the use of computer to generate random numbers.

In each school the researcher went to Form three and four classes to explain the purpose and nature of the research to them. Those interested in participating were asked to gather in a particular class for the sampling. The researcher did this because not all students were qualified. The criterion for selection was that a participant must be at least 18 years to participate.

The sampling process was done by writing Yes or NO on pieces of papers which were folded. The number of pieces of paper with Yes written on them was equal to the number of students to be sampled from each school. Then, more pieces of papers with No written on them so that when the Yes and No were added it equalled the number of students who were ready to participate in the exercise. This created a fair chance for every participant to take part in the study. The pieces of papers were put in a box and mixed up thoroughly and students were asked to pick in turns without replacement. After each pick, the researcher stirred the pieces of papers to ensure they were properly mixed up. This process was followed to ensure that all students had their turns and those who picked Yes were given questionnaires to answer. This procedure was employed in all the four schools to select students to participate in the study.

However, in the case of the teachers, 189 teaching staff were all purposively selected to participate in the study because they dealt directly with students and parents. Beside, some of them were parents and were in a better position to present the issues.

Sampling of Interviewees

The researcher selected 32 respondents for the semi-structured interviews. The number of interviewees was not based on any formula, perhaps the only reason was that it was manageable since collection of qualitative data takes time. Creswell (2005:207) observes that 'collecting qualitative data and analysing it takes considerable time...'. He further argues that large number of interviewees usually 'results in superficial perspectives...the overall ability of research to provide an in-depth picture diminishes with the addition of each new individual or site'. The breakdowns of the participants are shown in Table 3 (see Appendix E).

The first segment of the respondents was selected purposively from the four selected schools. In purposive sampling, 'the researcher does not seek to sample research participants on a random basis. The aim of purposive sampling is to select 'participants in a strategic way', because of their experience and knowledge 'relevant to the research questions' that are posed (Bryman, 2008:415). This category of respondents was selected because they dealt with students and parents and as a result had much information about the issues the researcher investigated. They knew the nature of parents' financial challenges and how this affected their payment of school fees and general support for their wards.

The sampling of the second segment of respondents was done based on household sampling, it was important to select a sample that would enable the researcher to study the phenomenon for better understanding of the issues. Therefore, the researcher included people of all social classes in order to make the study more representative. Creswell (2005:204) stressed that 'a purposive sampling strategy in which the researcher samples individuals that differ on some characteristics or trait...' in order to satisfy all section of the target population.

The sampling procedure comprised of the selection of households within the communities. This was done based on two identified common settlement categories observed by the researcher. These were advantaged and disadvantaged communities. The researcher made effort to select households to reflect each of these two settlements. Steps were taken to purposively select 10 parents from advantaged communities in the study area which included settlements like new townships, university communities and communities where most public servants lived. For example, in the advantaged communities people like lecturers, police officers, nurses, medical doctors and teachers among others were selected. In a similar way, 10 parents were purposively selected from disadvantaged communities such as fishing, farming and Zongo communities in the two educational districts. People selected in this category included fishermen, fish mongers, subsistent farmers, petty traders, and cleaners among others.

In all, 10 conjugal households were purposively selected from the communities for household interviews. Couples willingness to participate in the study was the criteria used in selecting households for the study. The researcher felt 10 households were adequate for

this present study because other respondents like the school officials equally had good knowledge about the effects of SES of parents on students' achievements in schools.

Methods for Data Collection

Based on the case study and cross-sectional designs, the researcher identified methods that enabled him to collect the necessary data for the present study. In order to achieve this objective, the researcher must ensure that methods employed are in line with theoretical framework and philosophical arguments that are in consonant with standard research.

This implies that, researchers must be flexible and employ methods that would ensure that they collect the right data to enable them answer their research questions. For example, in answering questions on students' achievements the researcher may need primary and secondary data in the form of perceptions and documentary evidence to make a strong case. It is in this respect that structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and secondary data are used for the present study. These methods ensured the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data.

Structured Questionnaire

Questionnaires were designed by the researcher to collect data for the quantitative aspect of the study. Questionnaire is made up of a list of questions, statements or opinions that indicate the objectives of a study, the hunches and research themes or questions that are under study, which respondents are expected to answer by writing (Cohen and Manion, 1994). This study employed both open-ended and close-ended questionnaires.

The researcher chose questionnaire because it was easy to administer and good for survey because of the large number of people involved compared to interview schedule. This was necessary considering the sample size of 500 respondents for the questionnaire. Questionnaire has a number of advantages over interview schedule because it gives the 'person administering the instrument' a chance to 'establish rapport' with respondents and explain the aim of the research and the 'meaning of items' that are not easily understood (Best and Kahn, 1995:230). It is also cheaper to administer questionnaire when one is dealing with a sample that is widely scattered over a given geographical area (Bryman, 2008:217). In spite of these advantages of questionnaire, Bryman (2008) observed that it does not offer researchers the opportunity to prompt and probe respondents and has lower return rate compared to interview schedules.

Two sections of the questionnaire, namely section A and B were constructed for teachers and students to answer. The questionnaires were made up of the bio-data, and the five main themes that provided the basis for the questionnaire items.

In constructing the questionnaire these themes guided the researcher in asking questions that enabled him gather the needed data to answer the main questions of the study. The inclusion of teachers in the study was crucial by virtue of their roles as educators and parents. Their experiences and insights of SES and its attendant effects enabled them to provide the needed information as could be found in Appendix B1.

Students were central in the study and therefore their inclusion was vital, because their views on how parents' SES affects them enriched the study. The pieces of information sought from them could be found in Appendix B2.

The questionnaire consists of close-ended items such as a five point Likert Scale items and open-ended questions. The Likert Scale items required respondents to choose from a range of responses such as strongly agreed =5, agreed=4, neither agreed nor disagreed =3, disagreed =2 and strongly disagreed =1, while the open-ended required respondents to supply short answers (see appendices B1 and B2). The Likert-type questions 'takes much less time to construct, it offers an interesting possibility for the student of opinion research' (Best and Kahn, 1995:246). Best and Kahn (1995:231) observes the 'open form or unrestricted questionnaire calls for a free response in the respondent's own words'. Ranking was part of the questionnaire for respondents to rate some issues that the researcher was interested to know. For example, the researcher wanted to know the category of work force that had the highest students in SHS and beyond in the study area. There were 37 questionnaire items for teachers, whilst students had 53 items to answer. These questionnaire items provided the researcher with the much needed data for the study.

Questionnaire Administration

Each of the questionnaires had a covering letter to explain the purpose of the study and assured respondents of confidentiality of the information provided. After the interactions with teachers and students, the researcher handed over the questionnaire to a member of staff selected by the school head to assist in its administration to the teachers. This method improved the anonymity of participants. During these encounter participants were informed that the data were meant purposefully for a doctoral research. The researcher also

booked appointment with the interviewees such as the headmaster, bursars, and senior house masters. The researcher went back a week later to collect the teachers' questionnaires.

However, the researcher personally administered the students' questionnaire with the assistance of some of the teachers in the various schools on the same day. The students were taken through the questionnaire as to how to answer them. Questionnaires were answered in 20 to 25 minutes and were collected back. The return rate of the questionnaire of both teachers and students was 90.60%. This was good and showed the interest of participants in the study.

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

The semi-structured interview schedule was used in gathering data for the qualitative aspect of the study. This type of interview has been defined in different ways by different authors. O'Leary argues that:

> Semi-structured interviews are neither fully fixed nor fully free and are perhaps best seen as flexible. Interviews generally start with some defined questioning plan, but pursue a more conversational style.

> (O'Leary, 2005:164)

CLMS M1U4 (2003:30) also observes that 'semi-structured interviews of this ilk would tend to be conducted with fairly open framework, allowing for focused, conversational, two-way communication'. Bryman (2008:439) also argues that there is flexibility in semi-structured interviews; he cites (Beardsworth and Keil, 1992:261-262) in the words:

> guided by an inventory of issues which were to be covered in each session. As the interview programme progressed, interviewees themselves raised additional or complementary issues.

It can be deduced from the explanations that semi-structured interview is usually used to gather information from people who are knowledgeable on a given subject of study. The level of respondents' knowledge is measured by his/her ability to provide copious and detailed information relevant to the issues under study. Some advantages of semi-structured interview schedules are

- It is less intrusive to those being interviewed than a more structured interview as the semi-structured interview encourages two-way communication.

- It confirms what is already known but also provides the opportunity for learning.

(CLMS M1U4, 2003:31)

However, these do not suggest that semi-structured interviews are without challenges. CLMS M1U4 (2003:31) notes that 'interviewers need some skills' and the 'most common problem with interviewers is asking leading questions'. Other problems are: failure to listen closely and failure to probe; failure to judge the answers; and asking vague or insensitive questions.

Developing the Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

In developing the semi-structured interview schedule the researcher's previous experience in designing the questionnaire guided him on the issues to focus on in developing specific questions. The main issues from questionnaire data were in relation to how SES of parents affects students' academic achievements in schools. The themes that guided the development of the semi-structured interview were same used for the questionnaire.

These issues were investigated further in the interview sessions to gain much insight into the superficial data collected through the questionnaires. Three separate but related semi-structured interview schedules were prepared for headmasters and senior house masters, bursars, and parents (see appendices B3, B4 and B5). Each of the schedules had different number of questions which covered all the themes or research questions except the bursars' questions which focused only on students' ability or arrangements used to pay their fees. There were main questions followed by sub-questions, while others were followed by probing questions.

Organising and Conducting Semi-Structure Interviews

After establishing the validity and reliability of the questions for the interviews and having already arranged and agreed on dates of the interviews with the school officials the researcher set out to interview the headmasters on the 21st February 2013 in the Effutu Municipality. Earlier, the researcher had collected their mobile phone numbers in order to communicate with them to ensure their availability on the agreed dates and times. This

helped to reduce cost of travelling up and down and time wastage in the data collection process. Each school the researcher visited, he tried to secure the 'confidence and cooperation' of interviewees (Best and Kahn, 1995:252-253) by initiating a conversation on the issue of SES and its effects on students' academic achievements. He refreshes their minds of the issue under study, the purpose and assured them of confidentiality of the information to be provided (Tuckman, 1994). This approach helped the researcher to establish rapport with his interviewees (Best and Kahn, 1995). After this, interviewees were also asked to read and append their signatures to the consent forms prepared by the researcher.   Each interviewee's consent was sought before tape-recording the conversation. The face-to-face approach was used because it made the interview sessions more conversational and afforded the researcher the opportunity to tape-record and at the same time wrote down the main ideas of the conversation. This was done to ensure that in the event of loss of the tape, the researcher would have the hand written one to use. The face-to-face method enabled the researcher to observe non-verbal communications of his respondents in the course of the interview process. Bryman (2008:192) notes that, in a social research interview situation, the aim of the interviewer is to 'elicit from the interviewee or respondent..., all manner of information: interviewees' own behaviour or that of others; attitudes; norms; beliefs and values'.

All the interviews were carried out in the interviewees' offices which guaranteed convenience and avoided unnecessary interruptions. Each interview session lasted for thirty to forty minutes. In order to ensure flow and consistency in the interview exercise the researcher was guided by the interview schedules developed (Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2005 and Bryman, 2008). After each interaction, the researcher thanked each interviewee for his or her cooperation, patience and time and also promised to give them feedback in the form of the findings of the study. The interview exercise lasted for one month and the entire data collection took four months.

Focus Group Discussions
Focus group is a collective rather than an individualistic research method that focuses on the group's view, attitudes, experiences and beliefs (Cohen, et al., 2008; Madriz, 2003). Focus group discussion is a form of group interview in which case more than one person is interviewed, at least four persons (Bryman, 2008; Cohen, et al., 2008). In this type of interview there are many participants led by a moderator who directs the discussion. This type of discussion places emphasis on the questioning on a defined topic, and the stress is

upon the interaction within the group so that opinions of the participants emerge in a joint construction of meaning (Bryman, 2008; Cohen, et al., 2008). The reason behind focus group is that it allows access to respondents who may not be comfortable with the interview session because of its one-on-one interactions with the researcher (Morgan, 1988; Wilkinson, 1998). The focus group has two methods, which include, 'the group interview', in which a number of participants deliberate on a number of issues. However, in the case of focus interview, 'interviewees are selected because they 'are known to have been involved in a particular situation' (Merton, et al., 1956:3) cited in Bryman (2008:274). These selected people are asked to discuss 'that involvement' in a group.

So, in a focus group discussion, the moderators are interested in the experience being shared in a discussion rather than getting this same information from individuals like an interview situation. The group discussion encourages discussants to speak more sincerely to the issues under discussion than if it were in an interview with an individual.

Some advantages of focus group discussions according to Bryman (2008), Madriz (2003) and Morgan (1988) are:

- It gives people who were known to have had certain experiences the opportunity to be interviewed in a relatively unstructured way about that experience.

- It provides insights into a theme that might not be obtained in an interview session.

- Focus group offers the researcher the opportunity to study the ways in which individuals collectively make sense of a phenomenon and construct meanings around it.

Bryman points out that focus group discussion also has some disadvantages and some of them are:

- The researcher probably has less control over proceedings than with the individual interviewer.

- The data are difficult to analyse, since a large amount of data can quickly be generated.

(Bryman, 2008:488)

Another disadvantage is that sometimes it takes place 'outside of the settings where social interaction typically occurs' (Madriz, 2003:365).

This means that researchers using focus group discussion need some skills in collecting data with this technique in a research situation. In the present study, the researcher used the main themes of the study in organising the focus group discussion (see Appendix B7).

In each school visited, the researcher asked that the first four students who finished answering their questionnaire to constitute one of the two groups that were needed in each school to participate in the focus group discussion. This was done in turns to ensure that both group discussions were effective. However, in each case, more than four students came out to participate in the group discussions. This was encouraging because it showed that the students had certain experiences that they wanted to share. After organising each group of students and explaining the purpose of the exercise, the moderator presented the issues one after the other for discussion. Participants were allowed five minutes to discuss each theme presented without interfering with the interactions except to probe further when the need arose. The moderator listened carefully and jolted down the salient points that came out of the discussions. The moderator used twenty-five minutes in each group. This process was followed in each school he visited.

Structured Observation

The researcher employed structured observation technique to collect data on the state of the schools' infrastructure and facilities and how these affected students' academic achievements in school. This type of observation required direct observation to gather the required data. According to Best and Kahn (1995:222) ... 'direct observation may also make an important contribution to descriptive research. Certain type of information can best be obtained through direct examination by the researcher'.

A structured observation is very systematic and enables the researcher to generate numerical data from the observation (Cohen, et al., 2008). Structured or systematic observation is a 'technique in which the researcher employs explicitly formulated rules for the observation and recording of behaviour' (Bryman, 2008:257). In the view of Koul (1996:172) 'structured observations are much too formal and they are designed to provide systematic description to test casual hypotheses'. He observes that 'there is much less choice with respect to the content of observation the researcher sets up in advance categories of behaviours in terms of which he wishes to analyse the problem'. Similarly,

Bryman (2008:257) notes that the 'rules inform observers about what they should look for and how they should record behaviour'. These rules are designed or presented as 'an observation schedule', just like 'structured interview schedule with closed questions'. The rules or instructions on observation schedule are clear and specific to aid observers to collect the right information. The data collected through the use of observation schedule 'resemble questionnaire data', because the 'procedure generates information on different aspects of behaviour that can be treated as variables' (Bryman, 2008:257). Bryman stresses that any research study using structured observation is 'underpinned by a cross-sectional design'. In this study, the researcher identified school facilities such as classroom space, furniture, computer laboratories, and science laboratories among other things that have the potential to affect teaching and learning and students' achievement levels. The researcher selected these facilities and rated them using ratings like excellent, very good, good, fair and poor (see Appendix B6).

With the aid of the observation schedule the researcher was able to identify and assess the state of these facilities and their functions in the schools. The researcher observed and rated all the listed facilities on his schedule and made remarks where necessary. These remarks guided the researchers to make good description of the state of affairs pertaining to the facilities in the schools studied.

Secondary Data Analysis

As the name implies, it is analysis of a data set collected by a researcher and the same data or part of that data accessed by a second researcher who uses the data to support his research without taking part in the initial data collection. Secondary data analysis is an 'analysis of data by researchers who will probably not have been involved in the collection of those data' at its initial collection and had no intention of using such data in the future (Bryman, 2008:296).

Secondary data analysis may be done either in quantitative or qualitative data. Secondary data analysis is recommended as a good source of data for researchers and students' project (Bryman, 2008; Best and Kahn, 1995).

The use of this type of data is not popular in social research because, it has research implications that relates to 'epistemological, ethical, and conceptual problems' (Dale, et al., 1988; Heaton, 1998; Corti, et al., 1995; and Hammersley 1997) cited in (CLMS M1U4, 2003:77). Another challenge that users of the secondary data face is the ability of the user

to re-use 'without first-hand knowledge of the context of the interview' (Dale, et al, 1988:15) cited in (CLMS M1U4, 2003:77).

In spite of these criticisms that secondary data analysts face, Bryman (2008) and Best and Kahn (1995) identified some advantages of secondary analysis of data and these are

- Users of secondary data do not incur cost and spend much time in collecting the data for analysis.
- Many of the data sets that are used often for secondary analysis are of high quality.
- It provides an opportunity for longitudinal analysis.

This suggests secondary data provides ready-made data for researchers to use to support their research instead of going to generate entirely new data which may not be reliable in the first place.

The present study made use of students' results compiled by WAEC and analysed by the individual schools where the study was conducted. The researcher collected students' results in four subjects, namely English Language, Mathematics, Integrated Science and Social Studies, which covered a period of five years (2007, 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2012). Readers should note that 2010 was not included because that year there was no examination for SHS. The researcher went to the schools with already prepared table chart to collect the data (see Appendix B8).

Documentary Sources

In the view of Best and Kahn (1995:191) documents serve as 'important source of data in many areas of investigation', and that the 'methods of analysis are similar to those used by historians'. They note that the main 'difference between this type of research and historical research is that, while historical research often uses document analysis', it uses only pasts events. It is noted that when documentary analysis is used as part of descriptive research, 'current documents and issues are the foci'. Usually documentary sources just like secondary analysis of data are used to support or explain a prevailing situation of some events or phenomenon at a given time (Best and Kahn, 1995 and Bryman, 2008).

This type of data includes records, reports, printed forms, letters, autobiographies, diaries, minutes, magazines and court decisions among other things (Tuckman, 1994; Best and Kahn, 1995 and Bryman, 2008).   Users of documentary sources are cautioned that 'data appearing in print are not necessarily trustworthy' and that 'document used in descriptive

research must be subjected to same careful types of criticisms employed by the historian' (Best and Kahn, 1995:191).

Best and Kahn (1995:191) argues that documentary analysis 'describes prevailing practices or conditions' and 'discovers the relative importance of, or interest in certain topics or problems'. In this regard Scott (1990:6) cited in Bryman (2008:516) suggests four criteria for assessing the quality of documents. These are:

- Authenticity. Is the evidence genuine and of unquestionable origin?
- Credibility. Is the evidence free from error and distortion?
- Representativeness. Is the evidence typical of its kind, and, if not, is the extent of its untypicality known? and
- Meaning. Is the evidence clear and comprehensive?

The study made use of documentary sources in the selected schools to support its investigations on SES of parents and its effects on students' achievements. The researcher asked questions pertaining to parents' payment of school fees and such a question requires documentary investigation to establish the truth. However, considering the sensitive nature of financial matters and records, the documents were not given to the researcher but were referred to by the bursars whenever such questions were asked. Beside this, journals, reports, books among other documents' content were analysed to support the research findings.

Face and Content Validity of the Instruments

In order to establish the face validity of the content, the questionnaires were first given out to colleague Research Fellows at the Centre for Educational Policy Studies for their comments on the items. Nabie (2011) in citing Yin (2003:79) reported that questionnaires are pre-tested for the purposes of 'conceptual clarifications', and for a formal dress rehearsal' to remove ambiguities in the items. As a result, a separate sheet of paper was attached to the questionnaires to enable respondents make their comments and suggestions on the appropriateness of the items. The questionnaires were also given to the supervisors of the thesis to give their expert advice on the items. The supervisors advised that student respondents were given an opportunity to express their opinions by providing more open-ended questions where necessary. This was done and eventually increased the items for students.

Pre-testing of the Instruments

The research instruments were pre-tested in order to revise the questionnaire items based on the results of the test. The pre-testing of the questionnaire was to ensure that all flaws in the research design and in the data gathering process is corrected. The exercise also enabled the researcher to establish the reliability of the questionnaire for the study. The questionnaires were pre-tested in December 2012 in Apam Senior High School, in the Gomoa West District in the Central Region. Apam Senior High School was chosen because it lies in the same geographical location as the study area and therefore had similar characteristics. Apam Senior High School was chosen because of its proximity.

The responses gathered through the pre-testing assisted the researcher to improve the quality of the items by removing some ambiguous items and reframing some statements to read better and clearer. For example, respondents were asked to rank workers according to those who were capable of supporting their students to SHS and beyond, it was noted that some students were using the same number to rank more than one item. This prompted the researcher to add to the instruction, use a number just once in the ranking. This observation helped to avoid a situation where a number of the respondents would have done the wrong thing.

The reliability of the questionnaire was established by the use of the test-retest reliability. According to Tuckman (1994:180) 'one way to measure reliability is to give the same people the same test on more than one occasion and then compare each person's performance on the different testings'. He indicates that the results 'obtained by each person' on the first and second administration of the 'test to provide a reliability coefficient'. He suggests that the 'coefficient can vary from 0 (no relationship) to 1.00 (perfect relationship).

The questionnaire was given to students of Apam Senior High School to answer for the first time on 4th December 2012 and the second test was given on the 18th December 2012. Both tests were subjected to Cronbach's coefficient alpha to determine the internal consistency of the items and these yielded high reliability coefficients of .858 in each case (see appendices C, Test 1 and Test 2). This result was good enough as Tuckman (1994:180) stresses that 'reasonably high coefficients are' indications of high quality. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha was deemed appropriate because the items in the questionnaires were multiple-scored like the Likert-type scale. This is in agreement with

Ary, et al.'s (1990) observation that Cronbach alpha is used when measures are multiple scored items like attitudinal scales.

In conducting interviews to gather data, the researcher has the tendency to influence the data through his own perceptions of the phenomenon under study. Cohen and Minion (1994:282) are of the view that using interview in gathering data can bias findings from the researcher since 'misconceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the respondent is saying and misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what is being asked'. However, Goodwin and Horowitz (2002:10) argue that there is a way to reduce researcher's bias and its effects on research outcome. They advise researchers to 'be self-reflexive during the data collection processes'. They suggest that 'researchers must always ask why they are getting the answers they are, or seeing what they see'. They note that 'researchers' bias can sometimes be mitigated 'through internal comparisons. For example, adopting multiple role' to 'check on what the observer sees is critical, as he is talking to people in different positions within the setting'.

The interview schedules were also tried in Apam using the assistant headmaster, senior housemaster and the bursar. This helped checked the clarity of the questions and the time taken to engage each interviewer. During the exercise, it was realised that, all the respondents were providing similar answers to the questions of the schedules. This means that, the questions convened the same meaning to the respondents. The outcome gave the researcher the assurance that the semi-structured questions were good and therefore the researcher used them in his data collection.

Power-Relations

The relationship between the researcher and the participants is very important and must be well established to ensure cooperation and reliable data collection. The type of relationship that exists has a potential to influence the research process and the outcome. Before the data collection, the participants and the researcher have never known each other officially even though some of them might have seen and known him as a lecturer in the University. In this regard, the researcher's relationship with some of them was that of power, and therefore, he had to know how to present himself to them so as not to look like the schools he was studying were extensions of the University community and therefore they were under some obligation to respond or participate in the research. This was crucial

because the way a researcher presents himself in an interview situation to participants has ethical implications.

With this in mind the researcher went to his respondents as someone who has come to learn from them and not to teach them or as a scholar who has come to collect data for his research (Herod, 1999). This posture of the researcher before the participants earned him the needed cooperation and understanding from the interviewees. This relationship with the participants made them feel so special because a lecturer has come to seek their opinions on issues on how parents' SES influences students' academic achievements.

Data Presentation and Analysis Framework

The data collected with questionnaires were organized according to the research questions coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Service Solutions (SPSS) Soft-Ware Version 15. The use of the SPSS Soft-Ware enabled the researcher to generate descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, percentages, cross-tabulation, means and standard deviations. On the other hand, the soft-ware was used to analyse the data using inferential statistics such as correlations and multiple regressions. These statistics were used in presenting the findings of the quantitative data. In addition, the Microsoft Excel 2010 for Windows was also used to derive figures such as pie charts and graphs to give visual representation of some data collected.

According to Williman (2005) the analytical frame chosen for a particular study depends on the theoretical and philosophical perspective which informed the study. Other factors include the goal of the study, the research questions to be answered and the methodology used. The present study was informed by the ontological position that knowledge acquired, was subjective in nature and was as a result of human cognition (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; and Sikes, 2004). This analytical approach was further informed by the interpretive paradigm which suggests that knowledge was constructed or created through the interaction and between the researcher and the people being studied (Bryman, 2008).

Qualitative data collected during interviews and observations were analysed by reducing them to patterns and themes and interpreted to give insights into how SES of parents affect students' educational achievements. The researcher analysed the qualitative data manually based on the themes used in analysing the quantitative data. The researcher adopted the sequential analysis approach in which case he presented and analysed the quantitative data

and followed it up with the qualitative data. This approach enhanced the analysis and the discussion of the findings. The researcher used verbatim quotations that relate to the themes to discuss and analyse how it influences students' academic achievements in SHS.

The verbatim quotations were given identification numbers that correspond to their respective interviewees. For example, school officials were given the code "SO" and their identification numbers started from 1 to 11, so the first respondent was coded as SO 1, and it followed in that order up to SO 11. Parent respondents were also coded PR and therefore the coding continued from PR 12 to PR 31. These identification numbers enable readers to know the extent of participation of the interviewees in the study.

Apart from the questionnaire data that were analysed using SPSS-Soft-Ware, the rest of the data presentation and analysis were done manually by the researcher for a couple of reasons: in the first place, the researcher did not have much computer skills about qualitative computer soft-wares; besides, the amount of qualitative data collected was manageable and thereby making it easy to read and identify relevant text passages. More importantly, the researcher wanted to interact and have good knowledge of the data collected (Creswell, 2005). However, the challenge of analysing data manually was that it was time consuming, cumbersome and required repetitive reading in order to locate the appropriate text passages to support the quantitative data.

After coding and processing the answered questionnaire using the SPSS Soft-Ware, the data obtained on each item gave an idea as to what the findings were. Presentations of both quantitative and qualitative data were made based on the same themes as indicated earlier. The processed data obtained from the questionnaires were used to present the findings and these were analysed by quoting the text passages from the semi-structured interviews verbatim to affirm or debunk some of the findings from the questionnaire by way of triangulation. In this way, the perspectives of the four categories of respondents were presented, analysed and compared.

In preparing the interview data, the researcher had to organise them into the various themes as in organising the quantitative data. The audio-tape recordings were then transcribed by writing down exactly what were recorded from interviewees. This process involved listening carefully to each interview session repeatedly in order to get familiarised with the stories. After the transcription exercise, the data were categorised

into five themes according to the research questions. This enabled the researcher to effectively manage and compared the two categories of data.

In order to better familiarise oneself with the data, the researcher engaged in intensive and repeated reading of the data with the sole objective of immersing himself in the data. The purpose of this exercise was to identify themes or analytical categories (Schmidt, 2004 and Creswell, 2005) base on the researcher's judgement of the data.

Having determined the themes, the researcher started the process of coding. The codes were made up of phrases that were reoccurring in interviewees' transcripts. However, some of the codes were created by the researcher himself based on the quotations. The codes were used as labels against each group of text passages put together on a separate sheet of paper. In the end, related codes were put under the main themes to provide a framework. For example, some of the codes assigned to the interview data were low socio-economic, high socio-economic, payment by instalments and outright payment.

After determining the themes, steps were taken to provide detailed description of each of the themes. In building the themes the researcher analysed some of the questionnaire items that came directly under them. This was done from the perspective of the various respondents in the study. So under each of the themes, all the respondents' viewpoints were analysed and discussed. This gave the study various shades of opinions and some complexity built into the study (Creswell, 2005). Some data were also summarised using diagrams such as tables, pie charts, and bar charts.

The data analysis and discussion of both quantitative and qualitative data were done alongside the presentation of the data and findings. This brought about coherence and simplicity in the study since findings of both quantitative and qualitative data agreed, showed evidence and where there were disagreements the evidence was equally handy to show. The simplicity stems from the fact that because the discussions were done at the same time the researcher avoided repeating the findings of the study if the discussion section was separated from the presentation of findings and analysis. Also, in the course of the discussion the researcher compared and contrasted issues and ideas that emerged from the study with existing literature. This approach of analysis and discussion also helped to ascertain the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses in the study.

Trustworthiness

The measures for assessing the strictness in both qualitative and quantitative research are usually internal and external validity, and reliability and objectivity (Bryman, 2008). Esterby-Smith, et al. (1994) is of the opinion that these concepts were popular with positivist research and as a result interpretive researchers were not willing to consider them in their practice because it would imply acceptance of positivism and its believes. However, Bryman (2008:34) observes that 'some writers have sought to apply the concepts of reliability and validity to the practice of qualitative research'. He further notes that, others suggest that the 'grounding of these ideas in quantitative research renders them inapplicable to or inappropriate for qualitative research'.

It is worth noting that 'writers like Kirk and Miller (1986) have used 'concepts of validity and reliability to qualitative research but have changed the sense' (Bryman, 2008:34) in which the concepts were used a little from the original usage. Bryman (2008:34) notes that, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that other 'terms and ways' of assessment of qualitative studies are needed. They therefore suggested trustworthiness as an alternative 'criterion of how good a qualitative study is' (Bryman, 2008:34). It is observed that 'each aspect of trustworthiness' has the following characteristics as 'a parallel with previous quantitative research criteria' (Bryman, 2008:34):

- Credibility, which parallels internal validity, that is how believable are the findings?

- Transferability, which equivalent is the external validity, that is, do the findings apply to other contexts?

- Dependability, which relates to reliability, that is, are the findings likely to apply at other times?

- Confirmability, which also tallies with objectivity, that is, has the investigator allowed his or her values to interfere with the results to a high degree?

In this study, the first strategy employed to ensure credibility was triangulation (Cohen, et al., 1994; CLMS M1U2, 2003; Silverman, 2005; Gall, et al., 2007; and Bryman, 2008). In this approach, researchers use more than one method of data collection in a study in order to cross-check or establish the veracity of their findings (CLMS M1U2, 2003 and Bryman,

2008) which is referred to as triangulation. The essence of using this strategy is to enable researchers to overcome the shortcomings identified with one method in data collection (Creswell, 2003 and Punch, 2005). The use of the approach would be discussed in more details in the next section.

Aside, triangulation, peer examination was employed by the researcher to establish credibility of this study (Merriam, et al., 2002 and Gall, et al., 2007). A colleague, who was a holder of Doctor of Philosophy at the Centre for Educational Policy Studies, was asked to review and make comments on the initial findings in respect of the raw data. The comments made assured me that the findings were the true reflections of what participants expressed.

Transferability of findings, as a quality of qualitative research, is similar to generalisability of findings in quantitative research (Bryman, 2008). The question of generalisability in qualitative research is opposed by positivists (CLMS M1U2, 2004). The opponents of the qualitative research are of the view that, the findings are not easy to generalise because such studies focus on a single study or few studies (Vema and Mallick, 1999, Denscombe, 2003; Punch, 2005). However, generalisability in interpretive or qualitative research is possible (Malcom, 2000, and Denscombe, 2003). Malcom (2000:3) was quick to indicate that 'there are limits to its generalising possibilities'. Denscombe (2003) argues that the ability to generalise findings to a large extent depends on how similar the other study areas are compared to the setting of the study. The present study may be similar to other studies carried out in Ghana, the researcher never thought of generalising findings of the study but to provide additional information on the issues in order to deepen readers' understanding and knowledge of how SES of parents' influence students' academic achievement in school in the Awutu-Senya and Effutu Educational Directorates.

Considering the fact that, this study was a mixed of qualitative and quantitative research, it became a little difficult for the researcher to obtain objective results. The researcher as a social actor who finds himself in the setting of the study was pre-occupied by his prejudices, values, biases and beliefs which could affect the outcome of the study to some extent. However, for some researchers, at the 'highly qualitative research' level, 'this is not an issue' to consider (CLMS M1U2, 2003:29). The researcher tried to ensure that the meanings of the study were not influenced by his knowledge and experiences. As a result,

the researcher tried to ensure that the outcome of the present study is the objective views of the respondents as evidenced in the data collected.

The last feature of trustworthiness is dependability or consistency of qualitative research findings is equivalent to reliability of findings in quantitative studies (Merriam, et al., 2002). The researcher achieved this by ensuring that questions asked during the interview sessions were straight forward and clear which in turn generated the needed data. Again, to draw valid conclusions, the researcher used triangulation, safeguarded against his personal biases and subjectivity during data collection, peer examination and unbiased explanation of the data collected and research process and findings helped in achieving this objective (Schwandt and Halpen, 1988).

Triangulation

One of the approaches that have been adopted to deal with methodological approaches in research is triangulation. Triangulation as a method involves the use of three methods, 'hence the term triangulation' (CLMS M1U2, 2004:23). Triangulation is a research approach where more than one method of data collection is usually used in a study in order to cross-check or establish the truth of their findings (Bazeley, 2002; CLMS M1U2, 2004 and Bryman, 2008). The essence of triangulation is that 'through the cross-checking of findings from these different methods, it might be possible' to identify the 'distortion caused by each of the methods employed' (CLMS M1U2, 2004:23). Aside this, 'through a further process of conscious reflection, researchers can make attempts to check and resolve, perhaps eliminate', the differences created by methodological choices.

The term triangulation is often used 'loosely as a synonym for mixed methods without regard to either of the conditions inherent in the original concept' and as a result 'lost the power of its original meaning' (Bazeley, 2002:4). In line with this, it been emphasised that 'triangulation does not assist validation as each source must be understood on its own terms' (Fielding and Fielding, 1986; and Flick, 1992) cited in (Bazeley, 2002). It must be pointed out that the 'original model of triangulation' represents a 'single reality and ignores the symbolic interactionist foundation of much qualitative work' which suggests that various use by researchers may 'view or construe the object of the research in different ways (Bazeley, 2002:4).

There are two types of triangulations, which includes method and respondent triangulation. This study used these types to enhance the level of authenticity of the findings. The

method triangulation makes use of multiple instruments to gather data for a study (Merriam, et al., 2002). This measure enables researchers to ensure that data collected from the different methods can be compared to establish the study's validity and findings in respect of the findings obtained from different instruments. This was done in the present study through the use of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group and direct observation.

On the other hand, 'respondent triangulation' requires the researcher using the same instruments to gather data from different categories of respondents (Bush, 2002). Respondent triangulation is in line with Mcfee's (1992:216) concept of 'within triangulation which states that '...reality of a situation is not to be apprehended from a single viewpoint', but could be obtained from other relevant sources as well.

In collecting the data, the researcher used questionnaire to gather data from teachers and students, while semi-structured interview questions were used to collect data from school officials and parents. This approach is in line with 'respondent triangulation'. This way of collecting data enabled the researcher to identify similarities and differences in the opinions of the respondents.

However, researchers are cautioned that, this type of research approach proves to be more difficult than it might initially appear. For example, it could have been a big challenge if data collected had produced contradictions in respect of respondents' views. This implies that triangulation as a method must be used with utmost care in order to derive the best data from a study.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has presented detailed research design to explain the research process, methodological choices, and to show the direction of this study. The approaches to data analysis have also been discussed by the researcher. The researcher has also discussed the trustworthiness of the data collected. The next chapter presents the data collected from the different categories of respondents with the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group, observation and documents.

Chapter 4

Home Related Factors

Introduction

The presentation of data and analysis of the findings of the study were done sequentially based on the research approaches as indicated in the methodology in the previous chapter. That is, the researcher presented the quantitative data and findings and followed it up with the qualitative data on each issue. Descriptive and inferential statistics, pie charts and graphs were used in presenting the data. The data from the questionnaires were presented in two parts. The part one is the background information on gender, length of service, educational qualifications, occupations of respondents etc. and the part two covered the main issues in the study.

Themes were derived from the research questions to guide the presentations. Under each research question, the researcher presented the perspectives of the various categories of respondents (school officials, teachers, students and parents) on the effects of SES on students' achievements. This approach enabled the researcher to build stronger analyses and discussions on the issues and also ensured coherence in the presentations. This enhanced the flow of the story on the SES of parents and its influence on students' educational achievements in the study area. In line with this objective, chapter 4 discussed the background information and research questions 1 and 2.

The presentation of data and findings on the main issues were juxtaposed with existing literature in the form of discussions to establish the extent of agreement or disagreement between the present study and the existing literature on the influence of parents' SES on their children's educational achievements.

Bio-data of Respondents

Respondents of questionnaire items in the study were students and teachers of the selected SHS. The details of the distribution are shown in Table 4 (see Appendix E). The data indicate students selected from advantaged SHS were 175 as against 136 from disadvantaged SHS. The difference in terms of representation was that female representation in disadvantaged SHS was lower compared to that in the advantaged SHS. This was as a result of the minimum age limit of 18 years required of respondents to participate in the study. Apart from this reason, there were others who were not prepared

to participate even though they made the minimum age limit. In the case of the teachers, it was noted that 142 participants were involved in the study, which was made up of 96 males and 46 females. The low representation of the female teachers was due to the low number of female teachers in the SHS in Ghana.

At the SHS level, teachers are required to possess at least a bachelor's degree to qualify to teach. There are, however, a few cases where some teachers teach at this level with diploma. This is as a result of scarcity of teachers in those subject areas, for example, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and Music. The data in Figure 1 shows that 114 (80%) teachers had Bachelor's degrees, 20 (14%) had Master's, while 8(6%) had diploma.
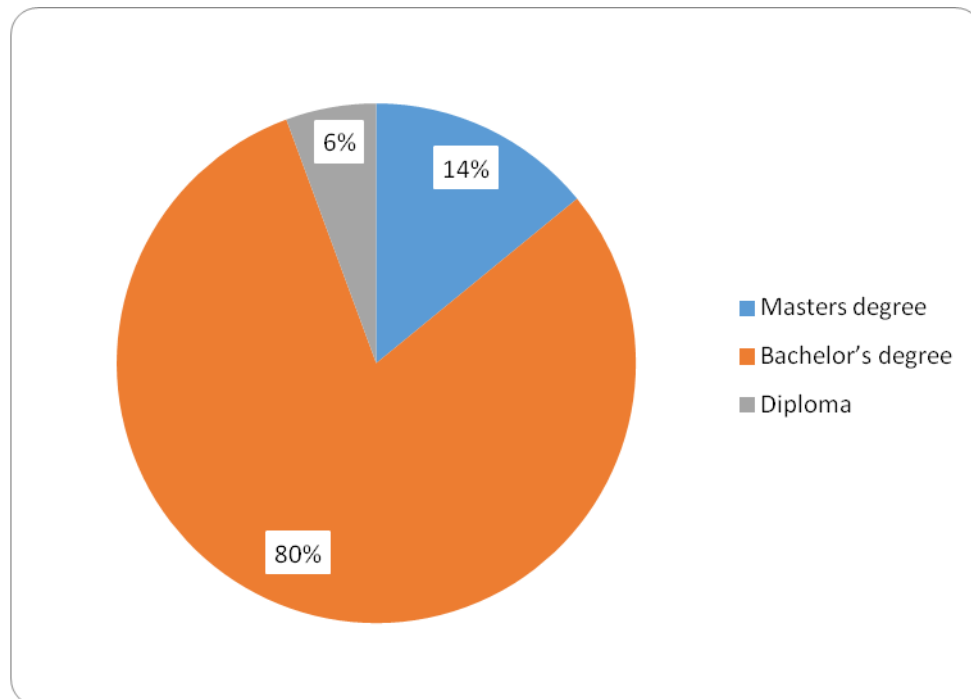
Figure 1: Highest Qualification of Teachers

The longer one practises a particular job or skill, the better his or her knowledge or skills, all things being equal. The information from Figure 3 reveal that 39 (27%) teachers have had a minimum of 4 years of teaching experience, while 22 (16%) of them had taught for more than 20 years. The data from Figure 3 reveal that teachers who took part in the study have had teaching experience that enhanced the quality of their contribution to the study.
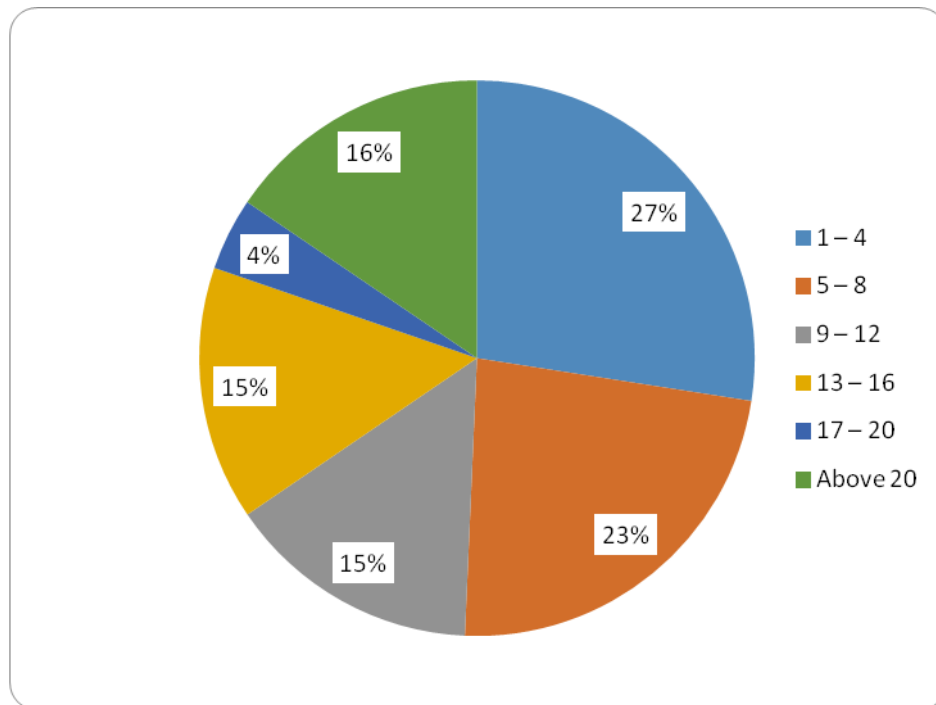
Figure 2: Teaching Experience (n =142)

According to the data presented in Table 5 (see Appendix E), 4(2.30%) Form 3 students participated in the study from the advantaged SHS as against 16(11.80%) Form 3 students from disadvantaged SHS. However, 171(97.70%) and 120(88.20%) Form 4 students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively participated in the study. The total students' representation was 311which is a hundred percent return rate.

The type of home environment or social climate that promotes learning in a particular home to a large extent depends on the level of education of the parents and senior siblings in that home, all things being equal. This highlights the issue of cultural and social capitals and its associated influence on children academic achievements.

The information in Table 6 (see Appendix E) collected in respect of fathers' level of education show that 21(12.0%) fathers of students from advantaged SHS had no formal education compared to 10(7.4%) fathers of students from disadvantaged SHS. This data is confirmed by some of the fathers interviewed. One man said:

> *I have never been to school before, not even nursery or primary one. My parents were fishing for a living. My siblings and I were not encouraged to go to school but rather engaged in selling fish to help our parents.* **PR18**

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Another said:

> *I had no formal education. My parents did not see the need to send me to school.*
> **PR16**

The implication is that some fathers never attended school because their parents could not afford the cost involved or did not see the need at all to send them to school. Such parents rather encouraged their children to learn their trades instead. Sometime ago, some parents saw their children as a source of labour and, therefore, if they send them to school they would lose their services. This is evidenced in the words of one of the parents:

> *I schooled up to class 3 and my parents asked me to stop schooling and sell due to economic difficulties at home*. **PR15**

These decisions were made out of ignorance even though they may be genuine reasons such as economic difficulties parents might have encountered in their bid to educate their children.

The data further indicate that 40(22.9%) fathers of students from advantaged SHS and 21(15.4%) fathers of students from disadvantaged SHS had education to SHS 3. The interview data reveal that some fathers had some level of education which was not good enough. Some of such parents had this to say:

> *I went to school up to Form two, at the basic school level. I did not continue because I was not interested in going to school even though, my parents could have afforded it. I was interested in fishing which my father was doing.* **PR13**

> *I went to school up to Form four (Basic school) but I did not write my final external examination because my parents could not get money for my registration.* **PR20**

The information from fathers is indicative that parents were willing to send their children to school; they were, however, constrained by financial difficulties. This was because most parents did not have regular source of income. The type of jobs some of them did could only put food on table for their children.   There were, however, another category of parents who had the means to support their children but the children themselves were not interested in education. This type of attitude towards education if found in a family has the tendency to influence other children to have such negative attitude towards education and

has the potential to be a cycle in the family. Sometime ago when we were school children some of our mates left school on their own to engage in petty trading because they regarded schooling as a waste of time.

It was found that 19(10.9%) fathers of students from advantaged SHS had bachelor's degrees as against 6(4.4%) fathers of students from disadvantaged SHS. It could be deduced from this data that, a good number of students at the SHS level who obtained admission into advantaged SHS came from higher socio-economic homes. The information obtained from the interview data is indicative of this. A public officer had this to say:

> *I had good education up to the bachelors' degree level. I could have gone further because my parents were well to do and were ready to support me but I wanted to settle down. However, I regret it now because I wished I had gone further with my education, at least to the Master's degree level.* **PR14**

Another said:

> *My education was uninterrupted because I was hard-working and there was support from my dad. He knew the essence of education and therefore all of us were well- educated. I had the least of education because of my desire to travel outside the country.* **PR19**

Most educated parents have well paid jobs which guaranteed regular source of income to support children's educational needs. Fathers who have high educational qualifications appreciate the essence of education better than those that are uneducated and therefore provide the best for their children. This category of fathers had good education and therefore knew the importance of education and did everything possible within their means to provide support for their children's education. The information gathered through the interview support the claim that there is a relationship between SES of students and their educational outcomes all over the world (Addae-Mensah, et al., 1973; Prewitt, 1974; Agyeman, 1993; Nwadinigwe, 2006; Dahl, and Lochner, 2005; Nabuka, 1984). This discussion supports the present study on SES of parents and its influence on children's educational achievements.

In the case of mothers' education, it was noted that 32(18.3%) and 12(8.8%) mothers of students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively had no formal education.

The possible interpretation of this data could be that these 44 students whose mothers did not have any formal education were naturally endowed academically or had fathers who had some education. The data from the students' questionnaires is supported by interview data from some mothers. One of them said:

> *I have never been to school. My parents did not send any of my three siblings to school due to financial difficulties.* **PR21**

Another parent said:

> *I did not go to school. I was interested in schooling but my mother did not allow me to go to school but rather asked me to help her in her fish-smoking business.* **PR30**

This situation might have risen because in Ghana some parents do not place premium on female education. They would rather ask their daughter(s) to learn a trade that would equip her with some skills for marriage life. Some parents have a notion that the best place for a woman is the kitchen and not schooling. This category of women has never heard the famous saying of Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey, that 'if you educate a man you educate one person but if you educate a woman you educate a family' (Kwegyir, n.d.:1). Women as caretakers of the home are very influential in the up-bringing of children at home. Therefore, educated mothers easily bring this influence and training to bear on their children at home.

A close examination of Table 7 (see Appendix E) shows that 42(24.0%) mothers of students from advantaged SHS had education up to SHS 3 compared to 22(16.25) mothers of students from disadvantaged SHS. In the interview session, one woman who had her education up to the secondary school level pointed out that '*education is good and children must be encouraged by their parents to pursue it. I could not go far with my education but I work hard to ensure that my children go further than I did*' **PR25**. This may suggest that some mothers' education has possible influence on children's educational attainments.

Another way of assessing the SES of a person is by knowing the quality of housing that s/he enjoys. This is in agreement with Warner and associates (1940s), when they noted that people with high standing in 'occupational prestige, amount of education, income, and housing value' are said to be 'high in socio-economic status (SES)' (Ornstein and Levine,

2006:320). The researcher tried to investigate the type of housing the students enjoy at their various homes. The details of the information are provided in Figure 3.

The data indicate that 153(87.4%) and 102(75.0%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively lived in block and cement houses with iron sheets or tile roofings. This means that a good number of students from both advantaged and disadvantaged SHS enjoyed relatively quality housing.
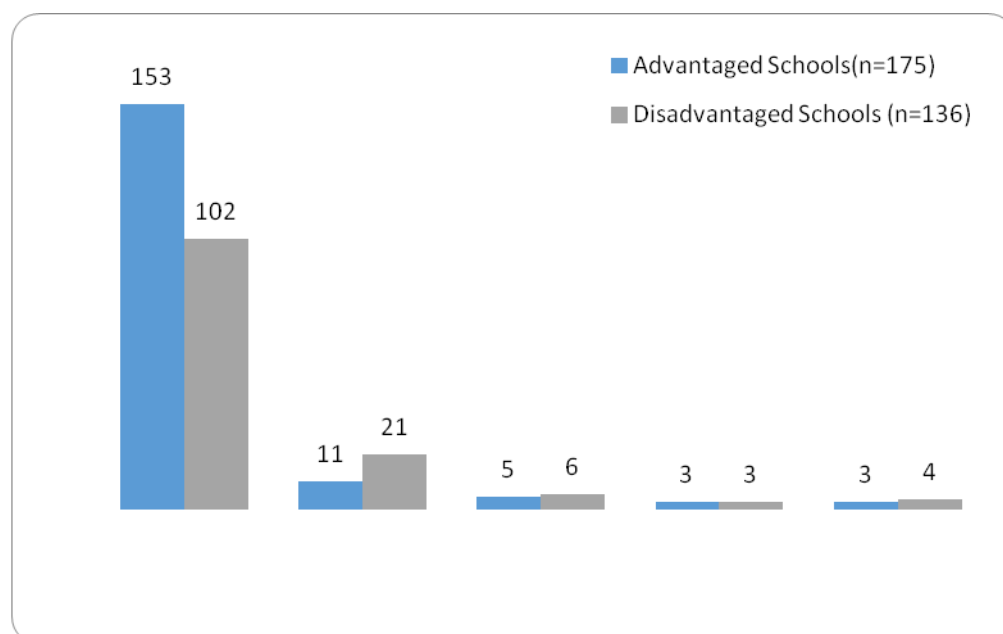
Figure 3: Type of Housing of Student Respondents

A further probe showed that 119(68.05) students from advantaged SHS indicated that these houses were owed by their parents while 56(32.0%) said they were rented. When the same question was posed to the students from the disadvantaged SHS, 75(55.0%) said their houses were owed by their parents while the remaining 61(45.0%) indicated they were hired. Further investigation through an interview session showed that some parents had houses of their own and others lived in family houses. Some parents indicated:

> *I live in my personal house.* **PR31**
> *I live in my father's house built with cement blocks and I have been living there since my childhood.* **PR22**
> *I live in my family house built with cement blocks.* **PR29**
> *I live in a mud house.* **PR24**

The interview data indicate that some parents build their own houses from their businesses, such as fishing. Other parents live in family or parents' homes because they

could not afford to build their own. The type of house indicates the status of the occupants.   In Ghana, people who live in block houses are better off socio-economically compared to those who live in bricks or mud houses. This notion is therefore in agreement with Warner, et al. (1940s) and Savage, et al. (2013), who used the value of houses as one of the criteria to classify people.

In Ghana, a good number of people live in family house. In such family houses the rooms are shared among family members and therefore each member of the family has a room in the house. This category of people lives in crowded rooms because they share one room.

Yet another category of students said they lived in rented houses. This is confirmed by some of their parents in the interview sessions as follows:

> *I live in a rented house built with cement blocks*, **PR15** and
> *Where I live now is a rented house*. **PR27**

Some parents live in rented houses and this may have an extra demand on their incomes. It means that they may not have enough rooms or space to themselves and therefore some children would not have sleeping places let alone to talk of a conducive place for learning. This situation sometimes leads some children to look for accommodation from their friends and end up falling into bad companies.

Even though these indicators are not enough to establish whether a person is socio-economically higher or not, it however, gives the reader some basic idea about the housing quality and the economic standing of the participants. It is not fair for anybody to conclude on a person or group of persons' SES based on few information collected on him. Such an attempt will amount to wrong labelling and this is one of the reasons the researcher tried to examine the issue of SES from the angle of the type of school they attend (advantaged and disadvantaged SHS) instead of, from the individual students.

Parents' Financial Circumstances and its Effects on Children's Academic Achievements

Parents' financial status determines the support a parent can give to his or her children in school. The better the finances, the stronger the support provided by parents to children, all things being equal. The survey examined this assertion in the study from the perspectives of teachers, students from both advantaged and disadvantaged schools, school officials and parents. The data is presented in Table 8.

The data in Table 8 show a weighted mean of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 1.13. This implies that teachers agreed on the view that parents' financial status determines the type of school their children attend. The implication is that students who perform well and yet do not have the needed financial support to afford the fees of the prestigious schools will have to be content with a second rate school. The present study affirms the finding that the desire to enrol in a prestigious school becomes so competitive that it favours applicants who come from the home of the socio-economically advantageous (Antwi, 1992; Agyeman, 1993). These findings support the main research question which investigates SES of parents and its influence on children's educational success.

Table 8: Teachers' views on Parents' Financial Circumstances and how it Affects Children's Academic Achievement (n =142)

Views	WM	Std	I
Parents' financial status determines the type of School their children attend	4.11	1.13	A
Parents' ability to support students' education influence their confidence level, and attitudes towards learning	4. 15	0.89	A
Parents' financial status determines the ease with which students' fees and other levies are paid.	4.62	3.42	A
Parents' financial status determines the level of provision made for learning and writing materials	4.12	0.94	A
Parents' financial status determines how regular a student is given money for lunch and transport for school.	4.40	3.51	A
Parents' financial status influences how regular Students attend school.	3.42	1.16	N
Mean of means = 4.14		**Standard deviation = 1.84**	

Key to the Table

SD = Strongly disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neither agree nor disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly agree, WM = Weighted mean, Std = Standard deviation, I = Interpretations

Interpretations

5 = Strongly agree, 4.0 – 4.9 = Agree, 3.0 – 3.9 = Neither agree nor disagree,
2.0 – 2.9 = Disagree, 1.0 – 1.9 = Strongly disagree

Data in Table 8 reveal that respondents agreed that parents' financial status determines the ease with which children's fees and other levies were paid. This is evidenced in the data which shows a weighted mean of 4.62 and a standard deviation of 3.42. In a follow up question: do you pay your children's school fees early in a term? The responses obtained support the finding from the teachers' questionnaires. Some of the responses are:

> *I do not pay my children's school fees outright; I pay them by instalments. During the period that I was not working but doing my own little things, paying my wards' school fees was a big problem. But when I started working, I have been paying the fees and sometimes I take a loan to settle the debt.* **PR15**
> *Their father is jobless, so I, the mother always bears their school expenses. As a result, I usually pay late and plead with the school authority to allow me pay by instalments. Sometimes when my financial situation improves I pay it outright.* **PR21**

The data reveal parents' admission that they are unable to pay all the fees of their children outright in a term. This implies that some parents have difficulty with their finances and as a result they pay their children's fees by instalments. At least, parents who are low salary earners are better off than the under-employed parents who engage in their own small businesses. The former is able to raise loan from the bank to support the children's education whereas the latter cannot do same. Ornstein and Levine (2006:323) observed that 'social class is associated with many educational outcomes... They noted that generally, 'working-class students not only have lower achievement scores but also are less likely than middle-class students to complete high school or to enrol in and complete college'.

Aside these interview data from parents, some school officials have also affirmed parents' concerns expressed with respect to the difficulties they encounter in paying their children's fees. Some said:

> *... so many of them, because at the end of the term we sack about 70% to go for their fees. As the term is coming to an end now, we will drive them away to go and collect their school fees. So payment of fees in this school is very difficult.* **SO5**

> *Yes, some parents have difficulty paying their school fees, and providing the educational needs of their wards.* **SO10**

Apart from those who are on bursary and few others who are assisted by some
agencies, the greater majority have a lot of difficulty paying their fees. Even in this
case, the agencies only pay the boarding fees leaving the others. In that situation,
you cannot do whatever you are expected to do. I can tell you, someone is owing to
the tune of one thousand four hundred Cedis. **SO1**

These interview data confirm that some parents have challenges paying their children's
fees. In most cases, parents are not gainfully employed; they are petty traders, small scale
business owners, etc. and therefore are unable to make ends meet. As a result, they make
sacrifices to pay their children's fees in a term. Nyarko (2011) noted that some mothers
sell their clothes and other property to enable them pay school fees and provide other
educational needs of their children. The data indicate about 70% of students are sacked
from class to collect their fees from time to time. This was unpleasant but was a necessary
action taken by school officials to collect school fees arrears from parents. The
seriousness of the situation is underscored by the fact that some students could owe fees to
the tune of over one thousand cedis. In the light of these findings, the researcher tried to
ascertain if the experiences some of the students encounter by way of having to be driven
away from school have any effects on the students. The responses from some of the
school officials are that:

Yes, yes, if a student is financially handicapped and is unable to pay the fees and
we sack him, it affects the student psychologically and academically. **SO2**

Psychologically the child is always disturbed whenever s/he sees the task force in
charge of checking payment of school fees. **SO6**

Sometimes the embarrassment associated with non-payment of fees causes students
to stop schooling altogether. Some drop out of school and engage themselves in
petty trading. SO8

The data gathered from respondents affirm that some parents have challenges paying their
wards' fees. This situation leaves school officials with no other options than to drive them
away to collect their fees. Such an action makes students lose some lessons and this
affects them academically and psychologically since they become embarrassed when
driven away. It is also observed that students who miss class always have arrears of
learning tasks (Gyimah, 2014). That aside, the psychological disturbance that interferes

with their learning does not enhance success in school. Such a situation may arise because the student may get discouraged by the fact that his or her parents are unable to pay his or her school fees and meet his or her educational needs. These discussions support the assumption that parents' SES influences their ability to support their children which affects their academic achievements.

 However, when the researcher tried to investigate if parents' financial status influences how regular students attend school, the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to the assumption. This is supported by a weighted mean of 3.42 and a standard deviation of 1.16. This means that, the teachers think that parents' inability to pay their children's fees to some extent result in irregular attendance. This is in agreement with Gyimah's (2014) observation that respondents were of the view that parents' inability to pay school fees may result in the student becoming truant. Perhaps, the teachers' neutral position is based on an earlier submission made by one of the school officials that, students who have such challenges are given ample time to pay their fees.

The data show a weighted mean of 4.15 and a standard deviation of .89, which suggests that respondents were of the opinion that parents' ability to support their children in school influences their confidence level, and attitudes towards learning. Studies show that children from low socio-economic homes and communities are slow in their development of academic skills as compared to their counterparts from high socio-economic backgrounds (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier and Maczuga, 2009; Kellet and Dar, 2007; Horgan, 2007; Agu and Hamad, 2000; Agyeman, 1993; Antwi, 1992). Parents' interest and support for their children's education motivate them to put in extra effort in their learning. In the open-ended questionnaire, students raised some concerns that they face and if parents are unable to provide the desire support it affects them psychologically and academically. Students cannot be effective in school without the needed textbooks and other materials. Such a situation makes teaching difficult for teachers because students without these materials are unable to participate fully in class activities. Apart from learning materials students need pocket money to enable them buy food and other things. Parents who are unable to provide children's needs may ask children to stay home while they try to look for some money. Financial difficulties students face can sometimes discourage them from going to school because they cannot afford to be so helpless and miserable in the eyes of their colleagues. Studies of high socio-economic homes reveal that students are more likely to take advantage of their economic situation which provides

all the necessary materials such as text books, writing materials and other support put at their disposal (Nwadinigwe, 2006; Aikens and Barbarin, 2008; Adegbenga, 2010). This finding is in agreement with the main research question of the present study.

Over all, teacher respondents agreed that parents' financial circumstances affect students' academic achievements. This is indicated in the mean of means presented in Table 9 (mean of means = 4.14 and a standard deviation = 1.84).

In the interview session, when the headmasters were asked to share their opinions on whether they have observed any differences in terms of achievements between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged students in their schools, they said:

> *Yes, some of the students who come from socio-economically advantaged homes are a little higher academically than those who are coming from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The reason is that those students from socio-economically advantaged homes are given proper supervision and care at home by their parents.* **SO1**

> *parents of some students from socio-economically disadvantaged homes do not have control over their children because they are unable to provide their needs.* **SO4**

> *... one of them is that students from broken homes where the parents are not together having serious problems in paying their fees. The reason is that sometimes the father or mother is not ready to pay the fees.* **SO3**

Teachers admitted that parents' financial situations have either positive or negative effects on their children's' academic pursuits. This relates to payment of fees, provision of learning materials, money for lunch, transport and other students' needs. It is noted that some parents do not care about their children's education and therefore do little to support them. Students from high socio-economic homes are better equipped and exposed to educational materials and the necessary cultural capital that promotes education. This gives them an upper hand over their counterparts from low socio-economic backgrounds. In addition, they are able to provide proper supervision at home. Sometimes some parents hire the services of teachers to teach their children at home. The economic situation sometimes make parents lose parental control over their children and unable to provide any proper supervision at home which leads to children having their own way at home and

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therefore leave and come home at any time they please. This present finding affirms Ofosu-Kusi (2007:191) observation that some 'parents are unconcerned. They shirk their responsibilities towards the children and show total disregard for their educational needs.

When these same issues were examined from the advantaged SHS students' point of view, it was found that students agreed with teachers on the issue that parents' financial status determines the ease with which students' fees and other levies are paid (weighted mean = 4.14), and the level of provision made for learning and writing materials (weighted mean = 4.04). They however, neither agreed nor disagreed on the issues such as the type of school students attend, confidence level and attitudes towards learning, how regular a student is given money for school and how regular a student attends school.

In general, students from advantaged SHS neither agreed nor disagreed on the issue as to whether parents' financial circumstances affect students' academic achievements. The present finding is in line with Ornstein and Levine (2006:323), who observed that 'social class is associated with many educational outcomes in addition to achievement in reading, math, and other subjects'. This finding supports the main research question of the study.

 A close examination of the views of students from the disadvantaged SHS show that they neither agreed nor disagreed on all the issues raised in respect of how parents' financial circumstances affect students' academic achievements in school as shown in Table 10. This means that this category of students did not even agree with their counterparts from advantaged SHS on their opinion that parents financial status determine the ease with which students' fees and other levies are paid and the level of provisions made for learning and writing materials as found in Table 9.

The data indicate a weighted mean of 3.99 and a standard deviation of 1.17 which means that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed on the opinion that parents' ability to support students' education influences their confidence level, and attitudes towards learning. All things being equal, when students are given the needed financial, moral and material support, they are better positioned to concentrate on their studies and perform better than those who are not given such support.

Table 9: Advantaged Students' Views on Parents' Financial Circumstances and how it Affects Children's Academic Achievements (n = 175)

Views	WM	Std	I
Parents' financial status determines the type of School their children attend	3.83	1.28	N
Parents' ability to support students' education influences their confidence level, and attitudes towards learning.	3.99	1.17	N
Parents' financial status determines the ease with which student's fees and other levies are paid	4.14	1.09	A
Parents' financial status determines the level of provision made for learning and writing materials.	4.04	1.07	A
Parents' financial status determines how regular a student is given money for lunch and transport to school.	3.97	1.09	N
Parents' financial status influences how regular Students attend school	3.27	1.47	N

Mean of means= 3.87   **Standard deviation = 1.20**

Studies show that children from low socio-economic homes and communities are slow in their development of academic skills compared to their counterparts from high socio-economic backgrounds (Morgan, et al., 2009; Kellet and Dar, 2007; Horgan, 2007; Agu and Hamad, 2000; Agyeman, 1993; Antwi, 1992). They found that initial learning skills correlate with the home environment, therefore, homes where the level of literacy is low affects children negatively. This discussion supports the main research question which assumes that parents' SES influences their children's academic achievements.

The study further reveals that advantaged SHS neither agreed nor disagreed on the view that parents' financial status determines how regular a student is given money for lunch and transport to school. This finding is evidenced by a weighted mean of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 1.09. Students concentrate better in class when they have eaten well. However, Ofosu-Kusi (2007) noted that some children in the study area go to school without pocket money. Students who go to school hungry are unable to concentrate well during lessons. When students are not given money for transport to school and have to walk long distance to school; they get to school tired and are unable to pay attention in class. Students expressed these concerns when they were given the opportunity to present their challenges in the open-ended questionnaire.

The data provided by the students show that they face financial challenges that affect their academic performance in various ways. Some of the challenges relate to their feeding at school or money for transportation to school. Students concentrate better in class when they are provided with their needs that are more pressing such as text books and other equipment, pocket money for meals and transport to school. These are the immediate needs of students even before parents think about school fees for the term. The present finding agrees with Agyeman (1993:28) who notes that poverty affects a child's 'chances of successes in school. These findings support the present research question on SES of parents and its influence on children's achievement levels.

When the same issues were given to the disadvantaged SHS to respond to them they did not agree with any of the assumptions presented in Table 9. Unlike their counterparts who agreed with their teachers on at least two assumptions (that is parents' financial status determines the ease with which children's fees and other levies are paid and the level of provision made for learning and writing materials).

The data from Table 10 show a weighted mean of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 1.25, which indicates that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the view that parents' financial status determines the type of school their children attend. This opinion is shared by the advantaged SHS counterparts. To some extent parents' financial status determines the type of school their children attend. The reason is that sometimes a student may pass to merit a first class school; however, the parents may not be able to pay for the fees and other levies charged by the school and therefore the student may not be able to attend his first choice school and has to go for a less endowed school. The present finding seems to agree with Kimelberg (2014: 209) who notes that scholars have observed the 'ways in which the movement of the middle class into urban public schools might reproduce or exacerbate existing class-based pattern of inequality'. The disadvantaged SHS like their counterparts also neither agreed nor disagreed on the assumption that parents' financial status influences how regular students attend school. This is supported by a weighted mean of 3.39 and a standard deviation of 1.42.

Students are expected to attend school regularly to ensure that they benefit from all the lessons taught in school. It is observed that some students are unable to attend school because of financial difficulties they face at home. Ofosu-Kusi (2007:191) found that there was high level of 'negligence, lateness to school, absenteeism and high drop-out

rates' among children in the study area as a result of poverty. Parents' inability to pay for their school fees and provide for the educational materials they need sometimes cause them to be sacked from school by school officials which deprive them of instructions.

Table 10: Disadvantaged Students' Views on Parents' Financial Circumstances and how it Affects Students' Academic Achievement (n = 136)

Views	WM	Std	I
Parents' financial status determines the type of School their children attend.	3.86	1.25	N
Parents' ability to support students' education influences their confidence level, and attitudes towards learning.	3.84	1.13	N
Parents' financial status determines the ease with which student's fees and other levies are paid.	3.93	1.08	N
Parents' financial status determines the level of provision made for learning and writing materials.	3.89	1.18	N
Parents' financial status determines how regular a student is given money for lunch and transport for school.	3.89	1.14	N
Parents' financial status influences how regular students attend school.	3.39	1.42	N

Mean of means= 3.80   **Standard deviation = 1.20**

When students were given the opportunity to express their opinions on how parents' financial status influences their school attendance, the following concerns was expressed in an open-ended questionnaire. These concerns from students give evidence that some students fail to go to school because of financial challenges their parents face.

Students are reluctant to go to school because they have not paid their fees. A situation where parents postpone students' date of going to school is not helpful and creates unnecessary tension for students.

The information gathered show that some students have to go and sell early in the morning before they could get money to go to school. This is a common practice in some homes, especially among single-parent families. The children are made to sell to support the family income in the morning and in the evening after school. The practice makes students go to school late and tired and unable to concentrate on their lessons. This affects

the general performance of students. This is in agreement with Ornstein and Levine (2006:323) when they indicated that 'U.S. has not adequately "recognized the need to eliminate barriers to achievement that arise in the family and how lack of resources affects achievement".

The data further indicate that students who owe fees are haunted by the fear that they may be sacked from class any moment at all. It means that students' financial hardship interferes with their studies and this can lead to poor performance in school.

Aside this, some students go to school on empty stomach and are unable to concentrate on the lessons in the classroom. Studies have found that children are unable to concentrate on their lessons when they do not eat before going to school (Agyeman, 1993 and Ofosu-Kusi, 2007). This can lead to health complications such as stomach ulcer and low blood pressure which retards the students' development and progress. However, some students are of the view that their parents' financial circumstances do not really affect them because they know the problem and therefore are able to manage it. They understand their parents' situation and do not allow it to disturb their studies. However, they try to rely on their friends for some of their educational needs. At least this practice helps them not to worry so much about a problem they cannot solve themselves.

Over all, both categories of students were unanimous that they neither agreed nor disagreed on how parents' financial circumstances affect students' academic achievements in schools in the study area. This is supported by the mean of means of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 1.20 and 3.80 and a standard deviation of 1.20 respectively from Tables 9 and 10. This finding points to the fact that to some extent parents' financial situations affect their children's education in different ways. This present finding supports the research question that parents' SES affect children's educational achievement either positively or negatively.

In order to gather more information on the financial situation of parents, the researcher asked further questions to ensure that the extent to which parents pay their children's fees is established from the students' own perspectives. The first of such questions was to investigate whether parents pay their children's fees by instalments. The answer was that, 70(40.0%) students from advantaged SHS indicated that parents pay their school fees by instalments, while 105(60.0%) students said 'no' to the question posed. On the other hand, 90(66.20%) students from the disadvantaged SHS were of the view that parents paid their

fees by instalments, as against 46(33.8%) students whose parents did not pay their fees by instalments. The data show that more disadvantaged students (66.2%) pay their fees by instalments as against their advantaged counterparts (40%).

The second question was to investigate the number of instalments parents paid their fees. The breakdown of the data is presented in Figure 4.
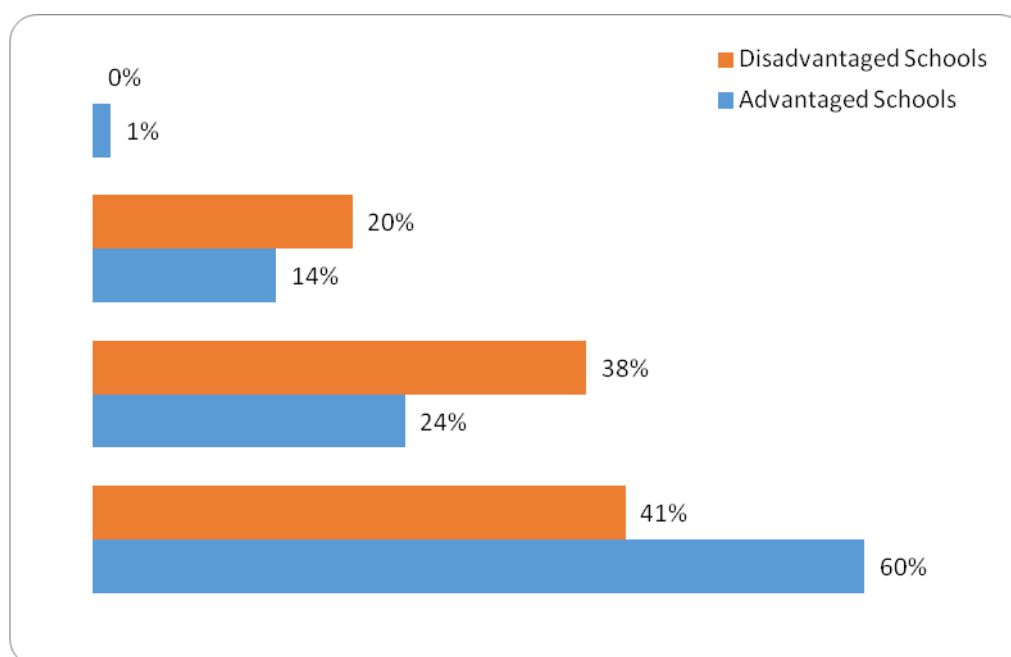
Figure 4: Number of Instalments (n = 311)

The data reveal that 60.0% students from advantaged SHS confirmed the previous data that they paid their fees in two instalments whereas 41% students from disadvantaged SHS indicated that they also pay their fees in two instalments. However, more disadvantaged students paid their fees in three or four instalments. This finding was confirmed by school officials who were interviewed and these are some of the responses:

> *Some of them pay by instalments in a term, they pay three to four instalments. Only few students pay in full.* **SO9**

> *The students mostly pay their fees by instalments.* **SO11**

> *In this school, all students pay their fees by instalments. About 50% of the students owe arrears from last year.* **SO10**

These interview extracts give a true picture about how parents pay their children's fees. Most parents are unable to make outright payments and so they pay when they have money

because their earnings are low. Parents who engage in low income work go to school officials to negotiate for this method of payment which is more convenient for them. The fact that about 50% of students owe fees in arrears shows that parents have difficulty in paying students' fees. Sometimes some of the financial difficulties arise as a result of wrong priorities some parents make. Ofosu-Kusi (2007) found that some parents spent good sums of money on funeral and marriage ceremonies and blame their inability to pay children's school fees on poverty.

Further probing revealed that 28(16.0%) and 38(27.9%) students from both advantaged and disadvantaged SHS have arrears in fees, while 147(84.0%) and 98(72.1%) did not owe arrears in fees in advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively. The information gathered through interview of school officials reveal that most students owe fees in arrears from last year. This is supported by these interview data from respondents:

> *Only a small percentage is able to pay all their fees in a term. The greater majority owe fees in arrears. Some students have accumulated their fees to the tune of two thousand Ghana Cedis. Sometimes, we force them to pay by threatening to sack them from the examination halls but they repeat it the following year.* **SO9**

Another observed that:

> *Only few students pay outright. So most of them owe fees in arrears and these are the Form four students, those who are about to write their final examination. Whenever they are told to pay, they say, they will pay when they come back for their results.* **SO11**

The data reveal that majority of students owe fees in arrears to the extent that some students' fees have accumulated over two years. This makes school officials threaten to drive students who owe fees away from examination halls to go and collect them. School officials also suspect that some of the final year students spend their fees and try to play tricks on them. A situation like this disturbs students who genuinely are poor and who cannot pay even when they are driven away from the examination hall.

This piece of information means that even though some parents were not able to make outright payment of their children's fees they did well to ensure that part of fees owed were paid. This is reflected in the fact that a good number of students from both advantaged and disadvantaged SHS did owe fees in arrears according to the students' data.

However, further probing revealed that some students refuse to pay their fees when the money is given to them by their parents. One of the school officials pointed this out in an interview session. He indicated that '*some students spend their fees because their parents do not have time to follow up to check on them in school'* **SO10**. This category of students is unlikely to indicate in the questionnaire that they have arrears from last year. This would not give a true picture of the students who owe fees from last year.

In an open-ended questionnaire when students were asked to indicate why their parents pay their fees by instalments they gave some reasons. The information gathered from the open ended responses corroborated with that collected when the researcher engaged students in a focus group discussion to investigate further the underlying reasons parents had challenges paying their children's fees and providing for their educational needs. In both cases students outlined the following as some of the reasons that were responsible for the financial difficulties.

Single parenting came up again as a serious issue in the area since some parents had their children when they were not prepared to have them or as a result of broken homes. Gyimah (2014) also notes that single-parenthood is a cause of truancy. Ofosu-Kusi (2007:191) found that 'many of the children who were interviewed had single mothers, most of whom were farmers and/or petty traders'. All these have contributed to parents' inability to pay for their children's fees.

Another major reason was as a result of low or lack of education on the part of some parents. Some parents still lack knowledge and understanding of the importance of education and therefore do not see the need to invest in their children's education. Parents in this category place so much value on the returns that they expect from education and since education is a long term investment, they would rather prefer to invest their money in other ventures where they would get immediate returns on their investments. This means that the long gestation period of education discourages some parents from enrolling their children in secondary schools but rather ask them to learn trades such as carpentry, dress making among others.

Other factors like large family size and parents' inability to cater for them, unemployment and low salaries among other factors are challenges that parents have to face in their attempt to finance their children's education. The issue becomes compounded when one

considers the fact that low income earners such as fishermen, subsistent farmers, low salary earners have large family size as have been observed in the study area.

The researcher in his quest to find out how school authorities handle students who have difficulty in paying their fees, gathered these pieces of information from school officials. The following are some interview extracts:

> *We have Government scholarship for brilliant but needy students so we apply for them. In addition, some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) like Plan Ghana, and MIHA Educational Fund supports some of these students. We also have concerned teachers who sometimes assist some of these students.* **SO10**

> *We used to give scholarships to brilliant but needy students but we are unable to continue the scheme because of financial difficulty. I have to sponsor one of these students who was very brilliant but whose parents could not support him.* **SO3**

The number of students who benefit from these scholarships and bursaries are few and the greater majority continue to struggle with payments of fees. Government scholarships meant for brilliant but needy students are sometimes given to students whose parents can afford to pay the fees. Students whose parents have good social capital are able to contact their school mates and friends to offer their children government scholarships at the expense of the disadvantaged students. A study by Addae-Mensah, et al. (1973) as cited in Antwi (1992) and Agyeman (1993) shows that the top ten secondary schools in Ghana between the period 1968 and 1970 admitted 43.5 % of students from high-income families, 27.3% from middle and low income families. However, a smaller number of students of 14.4% were admitted from families of farmers, fishermen, and labourers. This finding supports the present study that there is a relationship between the type of work parents do and the progress of students' education. Private scholarship schemes offer limited help to students because of limited funds. So operators of such scholarship schemes offer few students the opportunity in a year. Private schools in Ghana cannot give scholarships to needy students because they are profit oriented institutions and they only do that with the intention of enticing more students to their schools. It is heart-warming to note that some teachers sometimes sacrifice to pay some needy students' fees. Besides, when these NGOs and churches pay fees for students, they pay only the boarding fees, leaving the other fees unpaid. So the problem is reduced but not solved. The NGOs and churches that assist

students to pay their fees are few and therefore students' fees payment continues to be a problem that may need government intervention.

This means school authorities sometimes have to give such cases a human face by empathising with students and their parents. However, this can be done when parents show commitment in their effort to pay children's fees.

Additional information gathered showed that 34(19.4%) and 40(29.4%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively care for themselves. Ofosu-Kusi (2007) in an interview session found that 92% of the teachers indicated that parents in the District were unresponsive to the educational needs of their children. This situation led many pupils to cater for themselves thereby making it difficult to acquire quality education. It is possible that these students were part of students who owe fees in arrears. In an open-ended questionnaire some students gave reasons why they pay for their own education.

The reasons assigned by students for taking care of their own education are true reflections of what is happening in the study area. Some students have the potential but do not have parents with the needed financial support to enable them achieve their ambitions. Some parents shirk their responsibilities towards their children's education as indicated by one of them in the words 'my mother is the only one caring for us'. This implies that the father has shirked his responsibility towards the children. Ofosu-Kusi (2007:191) observed that, while many showed concern and responsibility towards their children's education, 'others appear to view it as a detestable chore'. He noted that this attitude reflected in how children dress to school in 'tattered school uniforms, bare-footed and lack of pocket money for food at break time'. Some parents genuinely do not have money to support their children's education because they are either jobless or under-employed. As a result, some of the students forego classes to work for money to enable them pay for the fees, buy educational materials and even feed themselves. The present finding agrees with Agezo and Christian (2002) who found that because of economic reasons some school children sometimes go to the beach to assist fishermen instead of attending school. These findings support the present investigation that SES of parents influences students' achievements.

The next question was 'what do you do to get money to take care of yourself and your education'? The students outlined some of the jobs or activities they engage themselves in to enable them get money to take care of their education.

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Students engage themselves in constructional work, pulling fishing nets and being drivers' mates in order to get money. Selling in the market place is tedious and this leads students to over stay in the night to sell and so they are unable to wake up early to prepare for school. All these have consequences on their studies and on their health conditions. Some of these activities have lured many good students from the classrooms and they have ended up dropping out of school. During our school days sometimes we engaged ourselves in such activities but we were cautious we did not spend our school time on them. However, students of today spend most of their time working to get money instead of learning. This leaves them with little time for their studies and this leads to low academic achievement. This present finding is in agreement with Ofosu-Kusi (2007:192) who found that students engaged themselves in 'more strenuous activities on rice and vegetable farms, especially in the Okyereko searching for firewood (Gomoa-Techiman); and portering at lorry stations, especially at Apam and Kasoa on Tuesdays and Fridays'. These findings support the present study.

Learning Environment Provided by Parents at Home and its Influence on Academic Achievement of Students

This study examines some of the home related factors that influence students' academic achievements from the perspectives of teachers, students, school officials and parents. Some of the factors are presented in Table 11.

The data in Table 11 show that, teachers agreed that provision of light, lantern, text books, and quiet atmosphere help create an enabling home environment that enhances achievement of students. This is supported by a weighted mean of 4.36 and a standard deviation of .86. This finding agrees with a similar study carried out by 'a senior researcher at the Education Testing Service who observed that U.S. has not adequately "recognized the need to eliminate barriers to achievement that arise in the family, and how lack of resources affect achievement" (Ornstein and Levine, 2006:323).

Table 11: Teachers' Views on Learning Environment Provided by Parents at Home and how it Determines the Academic Achievements of Students? (n = 142)

Views	WM	Std	I
Provision of learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere helps in academic achievements of students.	4.36	0.86	A
Home environment determines what students know before enrolling at school.	3.73	1.17	N
Parents' interest in their children education affects their academic attainment.	4.23	3.52	A
Parental supervision of children learning activities affect their achievement levels.	4.06	0.92	A
Parents and siblings speech models affect Children's academic achievement levels.	4.21	5.58	A
Mean of means= 4.12			**Standard deviation = 2.41**

The data show a weighted mean of 4.06 and a standard deviation of .92, which means that respondents agreed that parental supervision of students learning activities affects their achievement levels. Parents have a responsibility to complement teachers' effort at home by supervising their children and ensuring that, at least, they do their homework and utilise their time at home well. Woolley, Kol, Bowen (2009:65) reveal that 'parent and teacher support is a critical factor associated with Latino student school outcomes'. They further indicate that 'parental support and parental education monitoring are directly and indirectly' influence academic outcomes.... At school, the sheer numbers of students do not enable teachers to offer them individual attention as ought to be.

Data in Table 11 further reveal that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed on the assumption that home environment determines what students know before enrolling at school. This is supported by a weighted mean of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 1.17. It is believed that education of the child begins from the child's home. The existing home environment influences the child's acquisition of basic skills in literacy and numeracy at home even before the child enrols in school. The home is regarded as a place a child is prepared to take up the challenges of schooling before enrolling in school (Simmons, and Alexander, 1978, and Mbilinyia, 1972) cited in Agu and Hamad (2000).

However, the mean of means of 4.12 and a standard deviation of 2.41 show that teachers agreed that the learning environment provided by parents at home determines the academic achievements of students.   In this regard, the researcher tried to investigate the type of home environment created by parents to ensure effective learning at home. Some of the pieces of information gathered from parents through semi-structured interviews are as follows:

> *There is light at home. I have tables and chairs at home where they can sit and learn, even though, the environment is not conducive for learning. The reason is that, we live very close to one another in the neighbourhood and as a result there are a lot of children around who are not in school and therefore they always play and make noise. So the only time they can learn is dawn.* **PR15**

> *My son who is in the SHS usually learns in the church he attends which is very close to the house. His pastor is aware and he is among those who sweep and tidy up the church so that is where he does his studies.* **PR20**

> *I have provided them with light, tables and chairs in their room. I was however, unable to provide their request for a computer because I could not afford it.* **PR16**

The interview extracts sum up the situation in some of the homes of some students. These are clear cases of disadvantaged students from low socio-economic backgrounds who live in slums. Parents seem to know their children's needs, however; they are constrained by their financial challenges, even though they make some efforts in providing those they could afford.   Again, parents are aware that their community environment does not promote their children's education; however, they have no choice since that is the only place their financial situation can afford. The present finding agrees with Nabuka (1984) who investigated on home background variables on achievements which revealed that distance of the school from students' ..., number of books read, fathers'/guardians' level of education, students' job aspirations, availability of text books, and the place of students' residences' were very significant factors. So, it means that the home related factors affect students' achievements negatively among the disadvantaged students. These findings support the present study.

Some of the school officials also made these observations in the interview:

Some of the students try to sell; they don't have time to learn at home at all. Because of poverty, some children do whatever they like because their parents have no control over them. You see them in town roaming about aimlessly. **SO2**

Students from broken homes are not given the right training at home because they lack affection and this can affect their behaviour in school which in turn affect their general performance. **SO5**

Some students don't have good places to learn when they go home. Other students have to go and assist their parents or go to the beach to work before they are able to raise money for whatever they need. **SO6**

This scenario is very common among children in the fishing and farming communities where parents are unable to provide for children's needs. Some of these children care for themselves and are ready to do anything to keep body and soul together. Some students out of desperation resort to selling on the streets after school in the evening to support themselves. In a similar study conducted in the study area, it was found that 'the social relations place many school children in the category of active contributors to the family economy' (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007:192). Children performed various activities that 'affect their ability to access education and focus on their studies'. This finding supports the main research question of the study.

This type of situation that children in the study area find themselves in is not helpful to their health and educational progress. The implication is that if a student finds himself in such a difficult circumstance it means that no matter how good s/he may be; s/he cannot perform up to his potential. It is therefore not surprising to note that the annual review report of the study area indicated that 'one JHS repeatedly scored zero percent (0%) in the 2008 and 2009 BECE' (Effutu Municipal Directorate of Education, 2010:17). This finding supports the main research question of the present study which investigates SES of parents and its influence on children's academic achievements.

This situation does not give this category of students the needed concentration to study at home and even in school. These disadvantaged students are always tired and think about other things rather than their studies. It is also observed that children from broken homes have low self-esteem and lack confidence in whatever they do and this affects their socialisation in school and their academic performance. Some of these students do not

have any quiet and conducive places at home to learn as indicated earlier and this poses a challenge to their educational progress. Students who live in slum areas have to share a single room with parents and other siblings amidst the noise and other distractions. An environment like this does not promote student learning. The experience of these students in the study area is similar to what Kellet and Dar (2007:33) also observed from children of Valley School. They experienced distractions such as 'smoking, banging, swearing, loud music and TV' whenever they were working on their homework. However, children from Riverside did their homework in their bedroom or garden.'

Different studies have shown that children from low socio-economic homes and communities are slow in their development of academic skills as compared to their counterparts from high socio-economic backgrounds (Morgan, et al., 2009; Kellet and Dar, 2007; Horgan, 2007; Agu and Hamad, 2000). They found that initial learning skills correlate with the home environment, therefore homes where the level of literacy is low affects children negatively. This finding supports the present research question of the study.

Another group of parents who have higher socio-economic status presented a different picture from the earlier information from the fishing community. Some of their responses are as follows:

> *I have bought them all kinds of books that will enable them learn at home. We have a study room where all of us study without any disturbance. Also, I'm making an effort to get them a desktop computer in the house.* **PR14**

> *There is a home library that is well equipped which caters for their learning needs. I try to update it from time to time. My father was an academician and he bequeathed to us a lot of books and the culture of keeping home libraries.* **PR19**

> *We provide light, rechargeable lamps, tables and chairs. They also have radio and TAVY. sets at their disposal.* **PR31**

These interview data portray that parents of this category of students are people of high SES who know the essence of education and are prepared to pay for it through the purchase of books, dictionaries, T.V., radio sets etc. They try to create an enabling environment for their children's learning by reserving a room purposively for studies. The culture of keeping home library is not a common practice among the average Ghanaian.

They do this because they know it is their responsibility to provide an enabling environment for their children at home. Students who come from these homes have high potentials of achieving their educational dreams with little efforts. This study is in agreement with a similar one conducted in Kenya by Prewitt which reveals that 'wealthier educated parents who purchase books and educational toys, who speak English in the home...' created the needed congenial atmosphere for children's educational success (Prewitt, 1974:206). In a similar study, facilities that had the potential to stimulate students' 'intellectual interest' were identified as newspapers, textbooks, television and radio programmes as noted by (Agu and Hamad, 2000:77). These findings are in agreement with the central research question which investigates SES of parents and its influence on children's educational achievements. This is the grounds on which Bourdieu's theory on cultural capital which explains the 'unequal scholastic achievement of children' arises as a result of their diverse 'social classes' that influence their 'academic success' (Bourdieu, 1986:3).

When the issue on parents' provision of learning environment at home was cross tabulated against students' academic performance the results are as presented in Table 12 (see Appendix E). The data show that 127(90.8%) respondents agreed that provision of an enabling learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere for studies helps in academic achievements of students compared to 13(9.2%) respondents who disagreed with this idea. Students who have the necessary facilities that support their learning at home are more likely to do better in their studies which may in turn reflect in their general academic performance in school. A World Bank report found that 'textbooks provision is a very cost-effective means of improving learning outcomes' (World Bank, 2004:40). These findings are supportive of the main research question of the present study on SES of parents and its influence on children's academic achievements.

Data from the cross tabulation show that 115(82.8%) teachers agreed that parental supervision of students' learning activities affects their achievement level in school which reflects in general academic performance, whilst 24(17.2%) teachers disagreed with this opinion. The type of supervision given at home depends on the home environment. Students from high socio-economic and educated homes are more likely to get some supervision from either their parents or siblings and family members. However, students from low socio-economic and uneducated homes may not have this opportunity of being supervised and therefore they may end up wasting their time. Studies of high socio-

economic homes reveal that students take advantage of their economic situation which provides all the necessary materials such as text books, writing materials and other support put at their disposal (Nwadinigwe, 2006; Aikens and Barbarin, 2008; Adegbenga, 2010). This finding agrees with the presents study.

The data further show that 108(77.2%) respondents as against 32(22.8%) agreed that parents' interest in their children's education affects their academic attainments. Students' general academic performance sometimes depends on the home environment with respect to parents' attitude towards students' education. Students who have adults who are interested in their education and make the effort to encourage them and discuss some of their challenges with them have the likelihood to perform better than those who do not have such people who show interest in their education. This agrees with a similar study carried out by Nabuka (1984) on the influence of home background variables on achievement of Fijian and Indian students which revealed that ..., number of books read, fathers'/guardians' level of education, students' job aspirations, availability of text books, and the place of students' residences' were very significant factors. This finding supports the main research question of the present study on SES of parents and its influence on children's academic success.

When the same issue is examined from the students' perspective, it is noted that both advantaged and disadvantaged SHS seem to share a common opinion with their teachers on the first factor. Thus, provision of an enabling learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere helps in academic achievements of students. This finding is based on the data from Tables 13 and 14 which show that a weighted mean of 4.41 and a standard deviation of .94 and a weighted mean of 4.38 and a standard deviation of 1.33 respectively for both advantaged and disadvantaged students. This is in agreement with Kellet and Dar (2007:15) who indicated that children were of the opinion that 'ideal homework conditions that might inspire them' include 'distraction-free environments' and 'having adults around to bounce ideas off'. The implication is that both categories of students agreed that provision of the right learning environment at home promotes students' success in school.

Table 13: Advantaged Students' Views on Learning Environment Provided by Parents at Home and its Effects on the Academic Achievements of Students (n = 175)

Views	WM	Std	I
Provision of learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere helps in academic achievements of students.	4.41	0.94	A
Home environment determines what students know before enrolling at school.	3.27	3.27	A
Parents' interest in their students' education affects their academic attainment.	3.82	1.28	N
Parental supervision of students' learning activities affects their achievement levels.	3.68	1.46	N
Parents and siblings speech models affect students' academic achievement levels.	3.66	1.21	N

Mean of means= 3.77   **Standard deviation = 1.24**

The data further show that both categories of students neither agreed nor disagreed on the remaining four factors. This further implies that students hold a common view with their teachers on the second factor, which is home environment determines what students know before enrolling in school. The quality of home environment influences children's concept formation, language development, literacy and numeracy even before they start schooling. Woolley, Kol, Bowen (2009:65) observed that a 'family environment that is actively supportive of education – a central aspect of education – provides foundation for student success'. This supports the main research question.

When the issues were examined from the disadvantaged SHS perspective, the picture was not different from their advantaged counterparts. This means that the students share similar views on the issue of how home environment affects students' achievement level. The detail of this is presented in Table 14.

Table 14: Disadvantaged Students' Views on Learning Environment Provided by Parents at Home and how it Determines the Academic Achievements of Students (n = 136)

Views	WM	Std	I
Provision of learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere helps in academic achievements of students.	4.38	0.94	A
Home environment determines what students know before enrolling at school.	3.25	1.41	N
Parents' interest in their students' education affects their academic attainment.	3.48	1.41	N
Parental supervision of students' learning activities affect their achievement levels.	3.46	1.47	N
Parents and siblings speech models affect students' academic achievement levels.	3.47	1.40	N

Mean of means = 3.61   **Standard deviation = 1.33**

The data show a weighted mean of 3.25 and a standard deviation of 1.41, which means that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed on the view that home environment determines what students know before enrolling in school. Home environment contributes in different ways to determine the child's level of knowledge even before s/he enrols at any level of education. Students who live with educated family where parents and senior siblings are all well-educated, the student is usually inspired by these educated people around him to work harder to achieve a similar feat or greater than what is found in the family.

The data further indicate that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that parental supervision of students' learning activities affects their achievement levels. This is underscored by the weighted mean of 3.46 and a standard deviation of 1.47. The culture of parents supervising their children's work is not common in the Ghanaian context. Agu and Hamad (2000) observed that some parents spend time to help their children in their studies at home, while other parents may not. Parents who do supervise their children's home work usually supervise those at the primary school level and not those at the SHS level.

Table 14 shows a weighted mean of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 1.41, which means that disadvantaged SHS neither agreed nor disagreed that parents' interest in their

students' education affects their academic attainments. Students whose parents follow their education with keen interest are better motivated to work harder than those whose parents do not follow the progress of their education.

Over all, it could be seen from Tables 13 and 14 that students neither agreed nor disagreed on the issue that learning environment provided by parents at home determines the academic achievements of students in schools. This is premised on the data from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS which show a mean of means of 3.77 and a standard deviation of 1.24 and a mean of means of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 1.33 respectively. The interview extract from the 6-year-old girl from Riverside School shows that, she had the right environment at her disposal and could consult adults for help and could as well consult available books (Kellet and Dar, 2007). This means that the right learning environment has been created at home which supports children's literacy efforts in Riverside. On the contrary, children from Valley School do not have such opportunities as those in the Riverside Schools who are supposedly from affluent homes. This implies parents have a responsibility to provide the right home environment that will enable children to explore and develop their intellectual ability to the fullest. This discussion supports the main research question of the present study on SES of parents and its influence on children's educational achievements.

The researcher in trying to investigate further, asked students to tick from a list of facilities to indicate which were available to them at home. The information provided give an idea about the type of home environment students enjoy in relation to their studies at home. The details of the information are presented in Table 15 (see Appendix E).

The data in Table 15 indicate that 123(70.3%) and 90(66.2%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively had bedrooms or at least a quiet place for studies at home. This implies that a number of students did not have bedrooms or a quiet place for their studies at home. In a related study, the researchers found that 'the availability of skilled adult help' as well as 'favourable study environments' have been noted to be the two 'most critical' factors for 'literacy success' (Kellet and Dar, 2007:32). However, the study revealed that distraction caused by TV was one of the reasons given by 'about half of the children' from Valley School who attended homework club. These findings are in line with the main research question of the present study.

The study further noted that 154(88.0%) of students from advantaged SHS had textbooks just as 119(87.5%) of their counterparts in the disadvantaged SHS. This piece of information indicates that some parents did their best to ensure that they provided the needed textbooks for their students.

Further information reveal that 5(28.6%) and 44(32.4%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively had lanterns for their evening studies. This information may suggest that these groups of students who had lanterns may represent a good number of students who did not have electricity in their homes. This would further mean that the remaining majority of students from both divide was not provided with lanterns by their parents as standby sources of light since electricity is not reliable in Ghana.

In an interview session with some of the school officials, they indicated that, they have observed that '*students from socio-economically advantaged homes are better academically than their other counterparts*' **SO4.** The reason given on probing further was that parents who are 'socio-economically disadvantaged are unable to control their children because of their inability to provide their needs'. The interview further revealed that:

> Students from literate homes are academically better than students from illiterate homes. Generally, literate homes have basic essential educational materials that help students to improve on their studies. Educated parents are abler to provide students' educational needs than uneducated parents. **SO1**

The interview data show that educated parents have cultural capital which creates the enabling learning environment for their children at home. The provision of relevant textbooks, equipment, and congenial atmosphere that support learning enhances students' success levels at school. This is emphasised by research reports which indicate that 'textbooks provision is a cost-effective' way of 'improving learning outcomes' (World Bank, 2004:40 and Nabuka, 1984). Agu and Hamad (2000:78) identified the radio as an 'important source of intellectual stimulation' and was a common facility to most students in their study area. These pieces of information gathered from the literature supports the present study on SES of parents and its influence on children's educational success.

In order to establish whether the facilities were provided by parents, the study sought to identify the providers of these facilities and therefore students were asked to indicate their

benefactors. The reason is that some of the students are sponsored by other family members or philanthropists. Figure 5 presents the details.
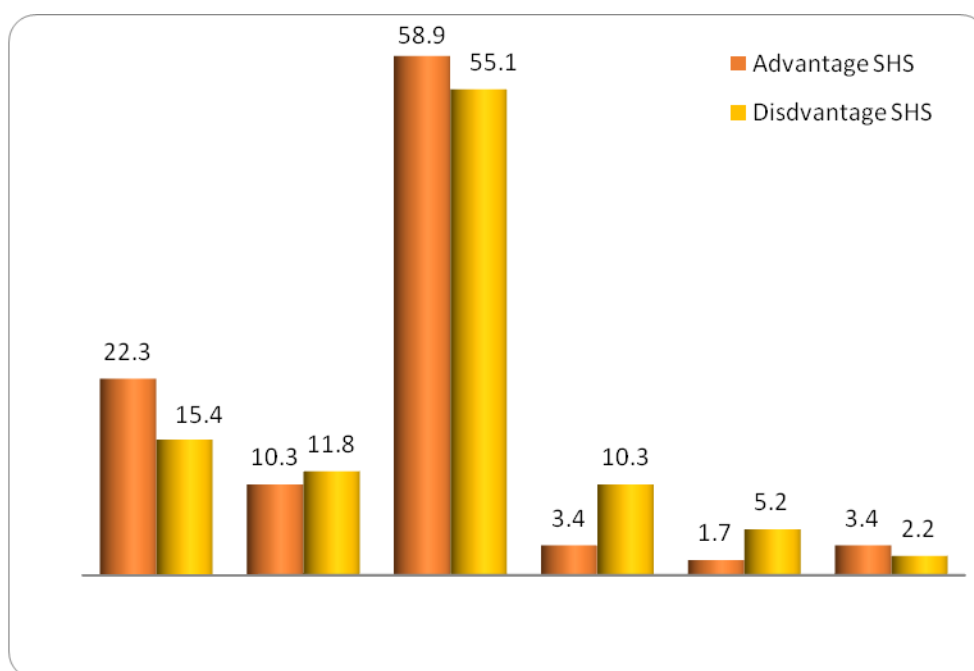
Figure 5: Provider of the Learning Facilities (n = 311)

The data show that 39(22.3%) students from advantaged SHS as against 21(15.4%) of their counterparts indicated that the facilities were provided by their fathers. This suggests that a good number of fathers were not living up to expectation or some of the students did not have fathers. On fathers' school involvement, Nyarko (2011:380), in his study observed that 'fathers' school involvement' with respect to 'students' academic performance' was not significant. He notes that the 'positive and significant association' found between mothers' school involvement and students' academic performance agree with Grolnicks and Slowiaczek (1994) who also found that mothers were more involved than fathers in their children's schooling.

Meanwhile, the study found that 103(58.9%) and 75(55.1%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively indicated that both parents were the providers of the facilities they had at home. The implication is that a significant percentage of couples team-up to support their children's education. Further investigation through interview found that parents make efforts to provide the educational needs of their children as presented in the interview extracts from school officials:

> *Some of them have difficulties in paying their children's fees and providing their educational needs*. **SO4**

Single parenthood is a major reason for parents' inability to pay school fees and provide educational materials for their students. I have about 40% of my students who have single parents. **SO7**

Some parents who are economically okay turn to invest in their children's education and so it positively impacts on the education of the students. On the other hand, those who are not financially well endowed are unable to pay fees and provide their educational needs as expected. **SO5**

Generally, students have difficulty in paying their fees and purchasing the needed educational materials because parents cannot afford them. Students of low income parents in particular face serious financial difficulties in financing their education. Another category of students who have financial difficulty in financing their education is children of single-parents. The phenomenon of single-parenting is a real problem in the study area and this is as a result of high rate of teen-age pregnancies in the area. These single-parents do not have any good source of income and therefore are unable to provide their children's school needs. However, parents who are financially sound are able to provide for their children's educational needs and this impact positively in the achievements in school and the reverse is also true.

These pieces of information imply that parents are aware of their parental responsibilities towards their children in school, however; their financial situations do not enable them to provide the support that they need to offer their children in school. NSWDT (2005:2) note that students of parents who were production or manual workers or labourers had the lowest score. This finding is in agreement with the present study.

Yet, 6 (3.4%) and 3(2.2%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively pointed out that they provided the facilities themselves. This may represent the category of students who care for themselves in school.

In a similar way, the researcher investigated to ascertain whether students have mathematical set, scientific calculator and prescribed text books to use in school. It is observed that some students go to school without the necessary materials and equipment to use in school. The information in Table 16 (see Appendix E) gives details of the state of affairs.

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The data in Table 16 show that 114(65.1%) students of advantaged SHS had all the three basic materials or items the researcher listed, while 70(51.5%) students of disadvantaged SHS also had all the three materials. This means that at least more than half of the students had all the three materials listed. The acquisition of these materials enhances students' active participation in class activities and understanding of the lesson taught by teachers. This finding confirms that of Adedeji and Owoeye (2002) who indicated that teacher quality and other resources such as classrooms, laboratories, computer laboratories, ICT, reference books among other things are significant contributors to students' academic performance. This finding agrees with the main research question of the present study.

The information also reveals that 17(9.7%) and 16(11.8%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively had mathematical sets only. The study further found that 8(4.7%) and 9(6.6%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively had none of the materials listed. The data show that some students could not afford to buy these basic materials to use in school. When students go to school without the materials they need to work with it becomes very difficult for them to take active part in the lessons and therefore make understanding of the lesson difficult. Parents have the responsibility to ensure that they provide all the educational needs of the children in order to promote effective learning in school. Agu and Hamad (2000:77) found in a similar study that materials and facilities that have the potential to stimulate students' 'intellectual interest' include newspapers, textbooks, television and radio'.

The study sought to find out why some students did not have some of the materials. The responses collated from the open-ended questionnaire point to the fact that students did not have the needed finance to purchase the materials and equipment they need for their learning activities in school. However, Adedeji Owoeye (2002) found that there was a significant positive relationship between the allocation of resources and academic performance of students. Parents do not have the needed financial capacity to enable them provide their children's educational needs and so they encourage their children to manage what they have and lend from their friends those they do not have. This is a common practice in Ghana and for that matter Africa. It is believed that no one person is capable of providing all that s/he needs in life. We live in a world of interdependence.

In probing further, the study sought to investigate whether parents made any arrangement for extra-teaching at home or vacation classes for their children. This could take the form

of parents hiring the services of teachers to engage their children at home in the evenings or during vacations or parents providing some extra-teaching themselves at home. Figure 6 presents the details.

The findings reveal that out of the 175 students from advantaged SHS, 78(44.6%) of them had the opportunity of benefiting from extra-teaching. On the other hand, 48(35.3%) out of 136 students from the disadvantaged SHS also had extra-teaching. The data reveal that most parents could not afford to provide extra-teaching for their students. This is further confirmed in the open-ended questionnaire responses provided by students.
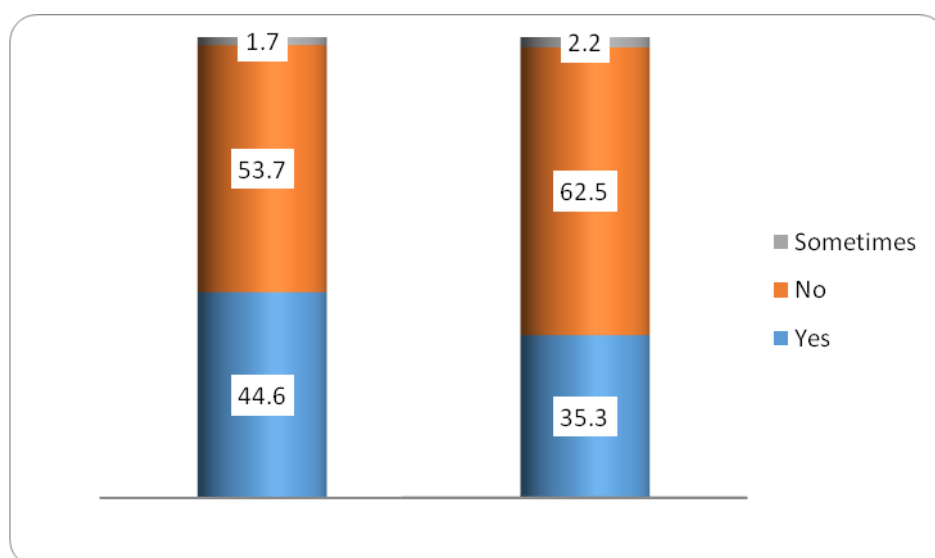
Figure 6: Parents' Arrangements for Extra-Teaching at Home or Vacation (n = 311)

Many students could not afford it and those who could afford it may not need it because they are academically good students. Other students who need the extra-classes do not get it either because their parents could not afford it or the students have to assist their parents in their work during the vacation period so that they can pay the school fees for the next term. In a similar study, Agu and Hamad, (2000:81) found that some parents were 'more willing to pay for the boys than for the girls to participate in extra classes organised in the evenings'.

Further investigation found that some students fail to go to school because of financial difficulties they face. The data collected indicate that 45(25.7%) students of advantaged SHS as against 73(54%) students of the disadvantaged SHS fail to go to school because they face financial challenges. This difficulty may include pocket money for school,

inability to buy prescribed text books or other school materials or non-payment of school fees.

In the researcher's effort to gather more information on home related factors and students' academic achievements in school, he engaged students in a focus group discussion to enable him identify the challenges at home. The data reveal that one of the challenges of students at home is their engagement in household chores which takes much of the learning time. A study carried out by Agu and Hamad (2000:74) observed that household chores performed by girls before school hours included 'cleaning the house and surroundings, preparation of breakfast and washing of all the utensils used for supper' in the morning before leaving for school. These household chores have serious consequences on students' education because they spend so much time on household chores leaving very little time for their studies at home. Besides, students who engage in such activities before going to school get to school late and tired and therefore are unable to concentrate in class.

Another challenge, that students face is attraction to electronic gadgets such as television, computer games, videos etc. These devices and their accompanying entertainments are irresistible to some youth and therefore if parents do not regulate their children's attachment to these devices, it becomes a problem to their education. It is common sight in some communities to see children gather around to play games instead of learning their books. The present finding agrees with Kellet and Dar's observation (2007:34) that 'large groups of Valley Primary children watch TV programmes that were shown 'after the watershed', especially 'Big Brother'. Apart from this, about half the Valley school children liked to watch TV rather than do any form of literacy activity. However, children from Riverside were regulated by parents and so did not have the luxury of viewing TV at late night. They could 'watch certain programmes that were scheduled before the watershed, such as EastEnders' (Kellet and Dar, 2007:35).

The data indicate that misunderstanding and tension between parents at home is one of the challenges students encounter which affect their state of mind and concentration at home. Whenever there is tension between parents, the children are the sufferers because out of anger one of the parents may shirk his or her responsibility of providing the needed support for the children at home and this affects them.

Summary

The first part of the analysis is focused on the background information of respondents and the first two research questions, which dealt with issues on parents' financial circumstances and type of home environment. The data provided by the respondents of the questionnaire and the interviews have been discussed in relation to the literature reviewed in chapter two. The chapter also discussed the findings on issues and concerns raised by school officials, teachers, students, and parents in the study setting together with the factors that account for such issues as spelt out in the research questions. The financial situation of parents is an important factor that contributes immensely to children's educational success. Research findings support the fact that children from high income families are more likely to succeed in their education than their counterparts from low income families. The reason is that high income families are more capable of providing educational support for their children than low income families do. The state of the home environment and related factors facilitate socialisation that is crucial to enhance children's success level in school. In order to create equal opportunity for children in their education government decision to provide free SHS education is good news. The next chapter will analyse parents' educational qualifications, work and type of school children attend.

Chapter 5

Parents' Education, Work and Type of School Children Attend

Introduction

This chapter is a continuation of the previous one. The presentation of the data and the analysis of the findings follow the same pattern as in the previous chapter. The quantitative data were presented using descriptive and inferential statistics, while the qualitative data were presented based on the issues. In this section research questions 3, 4 and 5 were presented.

Educational Qualifications of Parents and it Influence on Students' Academic Success

Students' educational achievements are said to be influenced by their parents' educational attainments, all things being equal. This is because children are often inspired by their parents' achievements and some parents serve as role models for their children. A similar study has indicated that the 'level of parents' education affects the academic performance' of children in school (Muruwei, 2011:302). The researcher tried to examine this issue from the perspectives of teachers, school officials, students and parents to determine the extent to which educational qualifications of parents' influence children's educational achievements as presented in Table 17.

The data in Table 17 show a weighted mean of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 2.57, which means that respondents, agreed that parents' educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities. Ornstein and Levine (2006:321) found that 'students with well-educated parents score much higher than students whose parents have less education'. Educated parents are better informed to know and provide students with their educational needs and support to re-inforce their efforts in school. Educated parents know what should be provided to create the needed environment at home to promote learning of their children. This finding agrees with the main research question.

However, the teachers neither agreed nor disagreed on the fact that parents' academic qualifications influence children's educational achievements in school. This is evidenced in the data which show a weighted mean of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 1.12. This suggests respondents do not totally agree on the view that parents' academic qualification influences children's educational achievements in school. There are instances where

uneducated parents' children equally achieve high or better results than children of educated parents. However, children of educated parents to some extent are better endowed to achieve higher results than children of uneducated parents. Muruwei (2011:304) notes that to some extent the 'more educated parents are', the likelihood for their 'children to perform well in their education' is always higher. The reason is that 'educated parents always show interest in their children's academic performance and their choice of career while in school'. The findings support the main research question of the present study on SES of parents and its influence on children educational achievements.

Table 17: Teachers' views on Educational Qualifications of Parents and its Influence on Students' Academic Successes

Views	WM	Std	I
Parents' academic qualifications influence children's educational achievements in school.	3.73	1.12	N
Parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of assistance children receive at home.	3.79	1.15	N
Parents' educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities.	4.20	2.57	A
Parents' educational attainments provide Inspirations for students.	4.17	0.81	A
Parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of supervision given to students' learning at home.	3.63	1.07	N
Parents' educational qualifications influence the interest they attach to their children's education.	3.77	1.07	N
Parents' vocational or professional qualifications influence students' level of achievements.	3.80	3.54	N
Type of school parents attended influences students' achievement level.	2.82	1.18	D

Mean of means = 3.74   **Standard deviation = 1.56**

In an effort to investigate the issues further, the researcher interviewed some school officials who shared their opinions as follows:

> *Those whose parents have good educational backgrounds are capable of paying their students' fees and buying their educational needs. On the other hand, parents*

who have low educational background are usually unable to provide supplementary books because they cannot afford them. **SO2**

We have parents who are illiterates but who have experienced what education has done to them and therefore are ready to support their students. We equally have parents who are literates yet show very little interest in their students' education because they hardly attend PTA meetings or visit their students in school. **SO3**

When parents come for admission and you interview them you realise that some of them are fishermen, farmers and traders, so their educational background is not good and it affects the students as well. More so, the grades that they bring are not encouraging and if care is not taken they will go back almost the same, because supervision at home is not good and students do whatever they like. Parents don't have control over their own children. **SO4**

The data also indicated that the educational levels and occupations of parents have influence on their academic progress. This means that parents who are well educated and also have good income could provide for their children and also have the needed cultural capital at home that creates the enabling environment necessary for students' learning. Prewitt (1974) notes that wealthier educated parents who purchased books and educational toys, who speak English at home, provided initial advantage for their children. The availability of these essential educational materials and quality interactions at home enhance the progress of their education and achievements in school. This supports the present study.

The data highlights the influence parents' education has on children's educational achievements. It is noted that there are some illiterate parents who are supportive of their children's education because they know the importance of education. Some illiterate parents can do whatever it takes to ensure that their children are given the support to see them through their education. There are instances where some parents had sold their personal belongings to enable them provide for their children in school (Nyarko, 2011). These findings support the present study which investigates the influence of SES of parents on children's academic achievements.

The present study further shows that low income earners like farmers and fishermen may not be able to provide for the needs of their children in school because they do not have

regular income. As a result, some students have to look for their own means to support their education. This finding confirms Ofosu-Kusi (2007) that school children engaged in more strenuous activities on rice and vegetable farms, especially in the Okyereko and Ayensuadza areas, in fishing expeditions. A situation like this makes parents lose control over their children because they are unable to provide their needs and such students resort to all kinds of ways like trading, engaging in casual labour from time to time in order to get money for their educational needs.

Data from Table 17 indicate a weighted mean of 4.17 and a standard deviation of .81, which means that respondents agreed that parents' educational attainments provide inspiration for students in their schooling. This corroborates with students' responses from an open ended questionnaire where they indicated among others that parents' educational attainments encourage them to learn hard and that it guarantees better jobs for parents which enables them to finance their education. In a similar study, it was found that 'students from educated homes also study and concentrate in the class' better than their counterparts (Ogunlade, 1995) cited in (Muruwei, 2011:302). This point stresses the importance of role modelling in the training and up-bringing of children in our societies. This finding supports the current study on SES of parents and its influence on children's achievements. Some of the parents indicated in the interview session that:

> *I always encourage my children to go to school so that they can also become doctors, teachers, lawyers etc. I tell my children if I had attended school, I could have done better in terms of my social and economic life. Also, I advise my children to stay away from bad friends and concentrate on their studies so that they can be well respected in society.* **PR31**

> *For them to aspire to greater heights, I also encourage them to learn hard, because when you put in a lot it helps you to become great in future.* **PR19**

The data presented are pieces of advice and encouragements parents give to their children. This is good for educational progress. Parental guidance is essential in developing countries where guidance and counselling is lacking in our education. If parents can complement this role by sharing their experiences with their children it will be good for our educational system. Woolley, Kol, Bowen (2009:65) reveal that 'parent and teacher support is a critical factor associated with Latino student school outcomes'. They indicate that 'parental support and parental education monitoring are directly and indirectly'

influence academic outcomes which 'empower Latino families to positively influence students' academic performance by monitoring students' school-related activities such as discussing school work and classes, homework, and teacher-student interactions'. These findings are in line with the main research question of the present study.

Parents' encouragement to students to take their education serious and work hard to achieve their dreams is the right motivation to give to students. Hard work is the key to success. Parents, both literates and illiterates emphasised the need for students to take their education serious and pledge their desire to support them achieve their dreams in life.

It is also encouraging to note that some parents take interest in what their children learn at school even though they may not be able to assist them. Parents who have the means pay teachers to assist their children at home in the evenings or do assist them themselves. The data portray that parents see education as a means of moving from a low SES to high SES and therefore children should take advantage of the opportunity offered them. This finding agrees with Horgan's (2007:1) observation that education provides 'a route out of poverty'.

The study further shows that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed on the view that parents' educational qualifications influence the interest they attach to their children's education. This is supported by a weighted mean of 3.77 and a standard deviation of 1.07. Muruwei (2011:303) notes that some researchers have 'argued that students' academic performance in most cases do not necessarily depend on parental enlightenment or professional occupation, nor on educational attainment'. In related studies, it is found that, parents' educational achievements do not affect children's academic performance (Watson, 1986 and Hawkes, 1995) cited in Muruwei (2011). Under normal circumstance it is expected that educated parents show interest in their children's education more than uneducated parents. This is expressed by one headmaster in an interview session in the words:

> *Parents who are educated take more interest in their wards' education, so they cooperate. In effect, the more educated a parent is the more interest he takes in the child's education and this impacts positively on their education.* SO1

Some parents try to monitor their children's progress by paying regular visits to the schools to ask teachers about how they are faring in school. This is supported by the

finding that some educated parents show interest in their 'children's academic performance' in various ways such as choosing subjects, meeting and collaborating with 'administrators of higher institutions' in order to ensure that the children are serious in their studies (Good and Brophy, 1997) cited in (Muruwei, 2011:303). Educated people have more social contacts especially with their children's teachers which help them to obtain the needed information to guide their children. These findings are in line with the main research question of the present study

Parents also do this through inspiration they give students through pep talks to encourage them. However, some educated parents are so much pre-occupied by their jobs that they do not have the time to assist and even supervise the students at home. They may not even attend PTA meetings let alone to visit their students in school. This behaviour sometimes influences some students to become truants or dishonest with parents and the school because they believe that parents may not find out because of their busy schedules.

On the other hand, some parents who were uneducated had these to say about their interest in their children's education:

> *I have been asking my son in the secondary school about his progress in school. Also, I go to the school at least once in a term to interact with the teachers in order to know how my son conducts himself in school.* **PR13**

> *I do not usually engage my son to discuss the progress of his education. I am ignorant about that but I am beginning to see its importance, so I will start doing that.* **PR18**

The data reveal that some uneducated parents show interest in their children's education in different ways. Some parents spend time with their children to discuss the progress and challenges in their studies in school. Others pay surprise visits to their children in school and to interact with their teachers and find out their conduct in school. Discipline is a key to success as a result parents are concerned about their children's conduct in school.

There is another category of parents who do not take the trouble to discuss the progress of their children's academic work either because of ignorance or lack of time. Some parents are so busy with their work to the extent that they hardly spend quality time with the family. This does not augur well for the children's education, since the children can easily be influenced by their peers, which may lead to poor academic performance, absenteeism,

truancy and drop-out from school. In a similar study in Western Nigeria, it was found that children of illiterate parental backgrounds exhibit poor academic performance compare to their colleagues from educated homes (Ogunlade, 1995) cited in Muruwei (2011). This might be as a result of poor home environment which does not promote learning. The implication is that children from illiterate homes are disadvantaged in terms of exposure to speech models, basic skills of reading and studying and educational materials compared to their counterparts in affluent homes. This finding is in agreement with the present study on SES of parents and its influence on children's academic achievements in school.

When parents stay aloof and do not show interest in their children's education, the children tend to think their parents do not care about whatever happens and, therefore, may not take their education serious. In an interview session with some educated parents on parents' interests in the education of their children, different views were captured and some of these are presented as follows:

> *I often visit them at school to find out from their teachers how they are faring and when they come home I usually sit down with them and discuss how they should go about with their studies.* **PR19**

> *Anytime they come back home I try to discuss with them some of their challenges in their academic endeavours and how to overcome such challenges.* **PR14**

> *Most of the time, at the end of the term when the reports cards are brought, I use the opportunity to go through them and encourage them to work harder in subjects that they did not do so well.* **PR22**

The data presented show that some educated parents show interest in their wards' education as found earlier. Some parents find time to visit their students at school and to interact with their teachers to know how the children are coping with their studies. A situation like this will offer both parties the opportunity to discuss issues pertaining to the progress of the students in school.

Besides, some parents also spend quality time with their children at home to discuss their report cards at the end of every term and the progress and challenges they encounter and encourage them. Such interactions offer students an opportunity to present their educational needs and share their aspirations with parents for the needed encouragement or

guidance. This finding is in line with a World Bank's report (2004) that shows that students whose parents are educated are more likely to perform well.

The study further tried to investigate whether parents take steps to ensure that their children use their time well at home by doing their homework. The information gathered on this question is presented in the following quotations:

> *I have employed a teacher to help them in their studies at home in the evenings. I always make sure that they do their homework. That one I'm very particular about it.* **PR25**

> *Their academic work is important to me and I make sure that when they come home I give them some time to do their homework before they attend to household chores.* **PR16**

> *Even though, I never attended school, I ensure that my children learn and do whatever assignment given to them at home. The oldest among my children had already completed secondary school and always assists them in doing their homework.* **PR21**

The interview extracts highlight some steps parents take to ensure that their children make the best use of their time at home. Parents may not have the time and knowledge to assist in the work itself but they can remind their children to do their homework all the time. This will make children see the seriousness their parents attach to their education. This is one way of supervising children's studies at home. When this is done regularly, the children become conscious that their parents are observing them and therefore would not waste their time. Some parents can employ teachers or look for someone who is capable of assisting the children if there is the need.

Generally, respondents were of the opinion that they neither agreed nor disagreed on the issue that educational qualifications of parents' influence students' achievements in school. This is supported by a mean of means of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 1.56. This finding is further supported by a school official who also stressed that:

> *We have parents who are illiterates but who have experienced what education has done to them and therefore are ready to support their students. We equally have*

parents who are literates yet show very little interest in their students' education because they hardly attend PTA meetings or visit their students in school. **SO3**

This piece of information means that educational qualifications matter depending on the people in a given context. The data point to the fact that some illiterate parents have benefited from education as a result they know the essence of education and therefore will do whatever to support their children in their education. On the other hand, some educated parents who have what it takes to influence their children's education positively do not have time to assist, supervise and encourage them. Some educated parents do not have time to visit their children and attend PTA meetings. These findings support the present study that SES of parents' influence children's academic achievements.

Again, when parents' academic qualifications were cross tabulated against students' academic performance the findings are as presented on Table 18 (see Appendix E). In a study conducted by Smart (1992) cited in Muruwei (2011), it revealed that parents' educational levels correlate positively with the academic performance of their children. These findings are supportive of the present study that parents' SES influences their children's academic achievements in school.

The data indicate that 122(88.5%) respondents agreed that parents' educational attainments provide inspiration for students which in turn enhance students' academic performance compared to 16(11.5%) who disagreed on this assertion. This suggests that students from educated homes draw inspiration from their parents and this serves as motivation for them to work harder to achieve similar qualifications. A World Bank's report (2004) shows that students whose parents are educated are more likely to perform well. This supports the present study.

The data also show that 118(84.2%) respondents agreed that parents' educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities which result in high performance, while 22(15.8%) disagreed on this position. The implication is that educated parents are better able to provide educational materials at home because they know the essence of these materials in their children's education. The provision of educational toys, televisions, radio sets, dictionaries, among others often referred to as cultural capital has immense contribution to students' educational achievements. In a related study (Nguyen, 2006:24) found that parents' education showed 'consistent strong effects on both children's enrolment and learning outcomes'

The data in Table 18 indicate that 99(70.7%) teachers agreed that parents' academic qualifications influence children's educational achievements in school which reflects in their general academic performance, while 41(29.3%) disagreed on this position. This suggests that respondents share the opinion that parents academic qualifications in one way or the other has an influence on students' academic achievements. The general knowledge is that the more educated parents are the better the support they give to their students. Muruwei (2011:302) has indicated in a study that the 'level of parent education affects the academic performance' of children in school. This is in agreement with the present study which investigates SES of parents and its influence on children's educational achievements.

Table 19: Advantaged Students' views on Educational Qualifications of Parents and its Influence on Children's Academic Successes.

Views	WM	Std	I
Parents' academic qualifications influence children's educational achievements in school	3.21	1.41	N
Parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of assistance children receive at home.	3.64	1.34	N
Parents' educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities	3.81	1.05	N
Parents' educational attainments provide inspirations for students.	3.78	1.25	N
Parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of supervision given to students' learning at home.	3.65	1.25	N
Parents' educational qualifications influence the Interest they attach to their children's education	3.74	1.16	N
Parents' vocational or professional qualifications influence students' level of achievements.	3.52	1.88	N
Type of school parents attended influences students' achievement level.	2.82	1.18	D

Mean of means = 3.52   **Standard deviation = 1.88**

When the same issue is examined from the advantaged students' perspectives in Table 20 a different picture is presented. The advantaged students neither agreed nor disagreed on all

the views except in the last view (Type of school parents attended influences students' achievement level) where they also disagreed just as their teacher- respondents did.

The data show that advantaged students neither agreed nor disagreed on the view that parents' educational qualification determines the kind of assistance children receive at home. This is supported by a weighted mean of 3.64 and a standard deviation of 1.34, which means to some extent this view may be true or not, depending on the parents in question. The reason is that some educated parents who should know better do not even have time to discuss issues on their students' educational progress.

The data reveal a weighted mean of 3.81 and a standard deviation of 1.05, which means that students neither agreed nor disagreed on the opinion that parents' educational qualification enhances home environment for students' learning activities.

Table 20: Disadvantaged Students' views on Educational Qualifications of Parents and its Influence on Children's Academic Successes

Views	WM	Std	I
Parents' academic qualifications influence children's educational achievements in school.	3.56	1.41	N
Parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of assistance children receive at home	3.87	1.13	N
Parents' educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities.	3.93	1.09	N
Parents' educational attainments provide inspirations for students.	3.96	1.15	N
Parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of supervision given to students' learning at home.	4.06	1.06	A
Parents' educational qualifications influence the interest they attach to their children's Education.	3.76	1.22	N
Parents' vocational or professional qualifications influence students' level of achievements.	2.14	1.46	N
Type of school parents attended influences Students' achievement level.	2.88	1.69	D

Mean of means = 3.52   **Standard deviation = 1.88**

All things being equal, educated parents are better positioned to create an enabling home environment for their children. This is underscored by the fact that by virtue of their education they have acquired some cultural and social capitals which promote their children's education. Apart from parents' ability to afford secondary education, they also have established networks that could facilitate the chances of getting admission in secondary schools for their children compared to a subsistent farmer who may not have such social capital as Bourdieu (1977) observed. This finding supports the central research question on the SES of parents and its influence on children's educational success.

However, the disadvantaged students agreed on the view that parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of supervision given to students' learning at home. The evidence for this finding is represented by a weighted mean of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 1.06. Parents' educational attainment determines the type of supervision they give to their children at home. On the other hand, parents with low qualifications may not be able to assist their students and also may not see the need to provide any supervision at home themselves. Nguyen (2006:18) seems to agree with this finding that 'better-educated parents are more motivated to encourage their children to study and are more likely to support children's learning at home'. This discussion supports the main research question that parents' SES influences children's educational achievements in various ways.

A close examination shows that disadvantaged students did not share the same opinion with their teachers who agreed on the issue "parents' educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities" (weighted mean = 4.20 and standard deviation = 2.57) and "parents' educational attainments provide inspirations for students" (weighted mean = 4.17 and standard deviation = .81). They however, like their counterparts neither agreed nor disagreed on these two opinions shared by their teachers. This indicates that teachers perceive the issues differently from students. The difference arises because students do not experience this at home. Most parents are pre-occupied with their work and do not care about their children's education, as a result they do little to support their children at home. Muruwei (2011:303) notes that other researchers have 'argued that students' academic performance in most cases do not necessarily depend on parental enlightenment or professional occupation, nor on educational attainment'. This agrees with the present finding.

However, when the students were given the opportunity in the focus group discussion they examined the issue in two ways. These focus group discussions corroborated with the open ended responses provided by students on how their parents' education benefit them. First, they acknowledged that some educated parents play crucial roles in their education. They indicated some of the educated parents are supportive and source of inspiration to their children. The data show that educated parents have the needed experience and insight in matters bothering on education and what their children go through and therefore are better informed than their uneducated counterparts. Educated parents are more capable of providing the needed guidance to children when the need arise. Apart from that they are abler to establish social contact with teachers who equip them better to guide their children to work harder. Educated parents who could not go far in their education encourage their children to do better by ensuring that they provide the necessary support.

These findings support the finding by Muruwei (2011:304) which stresses that the 'more educated parents are', the likelihood for their 'children to perform well in their education' is always higher. The reason is that the available cultural capital provides the students the needed incentive to motivate them to work harder to achieve high academic laurels. This finding agrees with the main research question which investigates SES of parents and its influence on children's educational achievements.

Meanwhile, the students also observed in their discussion that parents who are uneducated had their own challenges which affect their children in diverse ways. The information from students indicates that most uneducated parents do not know how to motivate their children because of their low educational backgrounds. They are sometimes reluctant to respond favourably to their demands they make and this affects them in their studies. Besides that, their low education does not afford them good jobs and therefore most uneducated or low educated parents are low income earners which affect their ability to provide for their children's educational needs in school. It is further observed that most uneducated parents do not plan their families and usually have large family sizes which they are incapable of supporting. A study carried out has shown that there is a relationship between family income, the adolescents' decision to continue schooling beyond the age of 16 and his/her levels of educational attainment' (Blanden and Gregg 2004) cited in Horgan (2007:1). All these situations affect their social and mental health and consequently their families. The two sets of reasons given by students may be the basis why they agreed to some extent and disagreed to another extent.

However, some excuses were given by parents in these words:

> *I hardly discuss the progress of my children's education even though, I know it is my responsibility but because I travel a lot to buy and sell, I find it difficult to do that.* **PR28**

Another said:

> *I have been asking the children about their progress in school but not too often because I hardly stay at home. I travel a lot to buy fish.* **PR15**

The data indicate that some parents are pre-occupied with their work as indicated earlier and therefore hardly find time for their children's educational issues. Parents do not deliberately ignore this responsibility but they sacrifice it to some extent to enable them fulfil other obligations that will enable them put food on table for the children and also provide their educational needs.

Over all, the data from Table 17 show a mean of means of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 1.56 and a mean of means of 3.52 and a standard deviation of 1.88 in both Tables 19 and 20, implying that teachers and both advantaged and disadvantaged SHS neither agreed nor disagreed on the factors raised in respect of educational qualifications of parents and its effects on children's academic attainments. In sum, this suggests that there is some element of truth in the assumption that SES of parents has some influence on their children's success or failure.

A Category of Work Force that has the Highest Number of Children Progressing to SHS Level and Beyond

The researcher asked respondents to rank some categories of work forces listed in the questionnaire indicating those who are capable of supporting their children's education up to SHS level and beyond, these results are presented in Tables 21, 23 and 24 from the perspectives of teachers, and students.

Table 21: Teachers' Ranking of Categories of Workers who have the Highest Number of Children Progressing to SHS Level and beyond

Categories of Work	Ratings							
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	WM	Std	Ranking
Administrative/Managerial	47	40	8	10	37	3.35	1.83	2nd
Professional/ Technical	43	50	13	31	5	3.67	1.92	1st
Production and related workers	14	19	62	27	20	2.86	1.69	3rd
Service workers	11	21	34	50	24	2.61	1.61	4th
Farmers, fishermen and Forestry workers	28	14	24	23	52	2.58	1.60	5th

Key to the Table

WM = Weighted mean, St = Standard deviation

Table 21 shows the ranking of the different categories of work forces. The data reveal that professional and technical workers were ranked first by teachers with a weighted mean of 3.67 as a category of work force that is capable of supporting their children's education to SHS level and beyond. Professional and technical workers such as teachers, nurses are trained and skilful people who are well placed and paid and therefore can afford to support their students' education up to SHS and beyond. A study carried out by Foster and Clignet in the early 1960s in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire 'based on estimates of selectivity indices of various occupational categories' in respect of 'secondary school enrolment' (Antwi, 1992:214) found that:

> the chance of a son of a higher administrative official attaining secondary school is more than 23 times greater than that of a farmer, whereas in Cote d'Ivoire the comparable differential advantage is more than 32 times.

This means that the children from high socio-economic background had a better opportunity of getting admission into secondary school than the children of a farmer. This shows unfair opportunities in the social mobility trend that favoured children of the higher socio-economic background.

This category is closely followed by administrative and managerial class of workers with a weighted mean of 3.35. Administrative and managerial class of workers are well trained

and skilful people who are well paid and can support their children up to SHS and beyond. A study conducted by Dahl and Lochner (2005) observed that family income may also be of help if parents spend the money for the benefits of the children in such ways as; 'child-centred goods like books, for quality day care or preschool programmes...' This finding is also supportive of the main research question of the present study.

In an effort to collect more information on the issue, the researcher interviewed some parents to know their opinions on the assumption that the types of work and income levels of parents to some extent influence the achievement levels of students in school. The data gathered through the interview sessions are quoted as follows:

> *I will say those who are in well paid jobs are more capable of paying students fees and providing their educational needs. Even in choosing SHS those students who come from home background in that income bracket are not perturbed when it comes to payment of money because their parents can pay whatever fees they are asked to pay in the school.* **PR19**

> *Those parents who are well paid such as bank managers, directors, lecturers etc. are more capable of supporting their students in school. This class of workers can afford to send their children to any school of the child's choice. They are abler to take care of their children. On the other hand, those of us with low salaries always have difficulty in paying our children's fees.* **PR21**

The data gathered point to the fact that people in the managerial and administrative, professional and technical categories are more capable of supporting their students up to SHS and beyond. The reason assigned is that they are well paid and therefore are able to provide students with their educational needs. It is also noted that people who are self-employed are equally capable of providing educational support for their children. This finding confirms Ornstein and Levine (2006:323) which show that '...only about 25 percent of high-school graduates from the lowest two socioeconomic quartiles enter college and attain a postsecondary degree, compared with more than 80 percent of high-school graduates in the highest quartile'. This finding agrees with the main research question of the study which examines the SES of parents and its influence on students' achievements.

It must be indicated that emphasis must not be placed on the quantum of money this class of workers are able to pay but the fact is that they have a regular source of income which enables them to take loans from the banks to pay fees and provide educational needs of students. There are instances where low income salary earners have been able to support their children up to university level through this means.

The implication is that when students are provided with the necessary support they have peace of mind and are better able to concentrate on their studies. On the other hand, students who do not have this type of support are unable to concentrate on their studies. Dahl and Lochner (2005:4) suggest that 'children living in poor families may have worse home environment or other characteristics' that the researchers may not take note of, and yet these factors may be responsible for non-performance or low achievement of children and as a result may persistently affect their development even if income level improves. This finding supports the main research question of the present study.

However, farmers, fishermen and forestry workers were ranked 5th with a weighted mean of 2.58. In Ghana, most of our farmers and fishermen operate on small scales because they do not have the capital to embark on large scale enterprises. Most parents who engage in this type of subsistence businesses find it difficult to honour additional responsibilities such as educational needs aside putting food on table for their children. This situation accounts for most of the drop out cases and truancy in schools in Ghana. In the interview session, a parent observed that '*sometimes the students themselves take up the challenges and work to pay for their education if they realise that their parents are not financially sound to support them'.***PR12**

When students were asked to rank these categories of work forces with respect to their ability to support their children, the picture was different compared to that of their teachers. This is presented in Table 22.

The data show that both advantaged and disadvantaged SHS ranked administrative or managerial workers as first with a weighted mean of 4.29 and 4.03 respectively as seen in Tables 22 and 23. Both ranked the first three categories of workers (administrative or managerial, professional/technical, production and related workers) from first to third in that order as can be seen from Tables 22 and 23. It is possible that some of their colleagues have parents who work in these work categories and they know how their parents are able to provide for their educational needs. This might have influenced this

trend of rating from both categories of students. The findings of a similar study over 25-year period show that; between the period 1975 and 1998, 'students whose parents were employed in professional and managerial occupations had the highest average scores' (NSWDT, 2005:2).

Table 22: Advantaged Students' Ranking of Categories of Workers who have the Highest Number of Children Progressing to SHS Level and beyond.

Categories of Work	Ratings							
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	WM	Std	Ranking
Administrative/Managerial	88	33	17	9	3	4.29	2.07	1st
Professional/ Technical	37	85	10	15	21	3.61	1.90	2nd
Production and related workers	8	19	64	36	33	2.58	1.61	3rd
Service Workers	16	11	28	55	38	2.41	1.55	4th
Farmers, fishermen and Forestry workers	8	15	31	38	48	2.26	1.50	5th

Key to Table

WM = Weighted mean, Std = Standard deviation

In a related study in Ghana, it was found that in 1973 government scholarships and bursaries awarded to students in the top ten secondary schools revealed that 43.8% was given to students of high income parents, 27.5% was awarded to students of middle and low income parents and only 14.8% went to a group categorised as 'other children' (Antwi, 1992 and Agyeman, 1993). The data provided by the study show that students from low socio-economic backgrounds were at a disadvantaged because only few of them were able to get admission into the top schools.

When the issue was viewed from the perspective of the disadvantaged SHS students the rating followed a similar trend as can be seen from Table 23. The data show that both advantaged and disadvantaged SHS differed in their ranking of the fourth and fifth positions. Whereas the advantaged SHS ranked service workers fourth with a weighted mean of 2.41; farmers, fishermen and forestry workers were rated fifth with a weighted mean of 2.26, their counterparts (disadvantaged students) ranked farmers, fishermen and forestry workers fourth with 2.62 and service workers fifth with 2.24.

Table 23: Disadvantaged Students' Ranking of Categories of Workers who have the Highest Number of Children Progressing to SHS Level and beyond.

Categories of Work	Ratings							
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	WM	Std	Ranking
Administrative/Managerial	58	30	20	8	6	4.03	2.01	1st
Professional/ Technical	25	55	17	8	14	3.58	1.89	2nd
Production and related workers	18	8	59	27	7	3.02	1.74	3rd
Service Workers	20	6	27	35	38	2.24	1.50	5th
Farmers, fishermen and forestry workers	21	15	13	23	38	2.62	1.62	4th

Key to Table

WM = Weighted mean, Std = Standard deviation

Data collected through the interview reveal that service workers who are usually self-employed like beauticians, caterers, carpenters among others are also said to receive regular income and are more capable to support their students better than some public workers. This is captured in the words:

> *I think the self-employed can cater for their children at the SHS better than the government employees. This is possible if the individual is engaged in a good job. This is different when one is working for the government. That is, in case the person is made redundant it means the child's education is going to be halted. Unlike the self-employed, s/he can manage it for the child to complete school.* **PR12**

> *A well-established self-employed business person can also support children up to senior high school level and beyond.* **PR18**

Some parents are of the view that some self-employed workers are better resourced to support their children than some salaried workers. It is observed some salaried workers are low income earners and this does not suffice them for the month as a result some resort to borrowing even before the month ends. Apart from that, salaried workers may be laid off or retired and such situation can bring untold hardship to the family and students in the

family. However, people who are self-employed can continue to work to support their family and children so long as the business is able to break even.

In a follow-up question, students were asked to indicate whether the type of work their parents do have any relationship with the progress of their education. This enabled the researcher to investigate further the relationship between the type of job and income level of parents and how it affects students' progress in school. The data gathered show that 113(64.6%) students from advantaged SHS said there is a relationship as against 98(72.1%) of their disadvantaged counterparts. This finding is supported by the fact that the top and prestigious secondary schools in Ghana were mostly patronised by students from high income families and educated homes (Antwi, 1992 and Agyeman, 1993). This supports the present study that parent's SES influence their children's educational achievements.

However, 45(25.7%) and 10(7.4%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS respectively answered no to the question. Meanwhile 17(9.7%) and 28(20.5%) students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS indicated they did not know if there is any relationship at all. It is noted that formerly, secondary education even though was highly subsidised by government, it was and 'still not cheap to every parent' (Antwi, 1992:215). It was easier for a son of a Ghanaian graduate to enter into a secondary school than a 'son of a man with primary education'.

The study through an open-ended questionnaire investigated the reasons that account for parents' inability to support their children's education up to SHS level and beyond as revealed by students. The responses point to the fact that their parents are not educated and therefore do not possess the qualifications and skills that will offer them the desired employment that will enable them support the children's education as expected of them.

Type of School Students Attend and how it Influences their Educational Achievements

There is an assumption that the type of school students attend has an influence on their academic achievements. It is believed that if a school is well endowed in terms of quality teachers and facilities, it is expected to excel in its academic achievements, all things being equal. Ainley (2003) found that the school a student attends is an important factor to consider. This assumption is examined from the perspectives of teachers, school officials, students and parents in Tables 24, 25 and 26.

The data in Table 24 show that respondents agreed that teachers' quality influences children's educational achievements in school. This is supported by a weighted mean of 4.19 and a standard deviation of .77. This suggests that teacher training and certification is important in the type of teacher that is employed. Teachers who have received professional training provide quality services to their students that distinguish them from others. Researchers have found that, school culture or environment, teaching and assessment practices, teacher-student class interactions, students' confidence and motivation, school curriculum organisation and resources and teacher quality (Ainley, 2003; Forsyth and Furlong, 2003; NSWDT, 2005; Fredua-Kwarteng, 2004) available in the school may account for the differences in schools scores.

Table 24: Teachers' Views on how Students' Educational Achievement is influenced by the Type of School They Attend

Views	WM	Std	I
Teachers' quality influences children's educational achievements in school.	4.45.	0.77	A
Teachers' teaching experience enhances effective teaching and students' achievements in school.	4.27	0.73	A
Schools' general atmosphere influences students' academic achievements.	4.09	0.75	A
Availability of well stocked and equipped library facility influences students' success in school.	4.19	3.51	A
School's general academic performance influences students' achievements in school.	3.83	0.88	N
Availability of ICT facility and computers enhance students' level of success.	3.54	0.91	N
Support of an effective PTA influences students' achievements level.	3.80	0.73	N
Support of an effective old student's association contributes to students' achievements level	3.56	0.99	N

Mean of means = 3.97   **Standard deviation = 1.16**

When the researcher asked the schools' headmasters to indicate the percentage of their teaching staff that was untrained the following responses were provided:

About 4% of our teachers are untrained. They are mostly Polytechnics graduates. **SO1**

Only 2% of our staff is untrained and they are products of Polytechnics. **SO2**

About 6% of the staff is untrained. **SO4**

Mostly, private schools we deal with professionals but unfortunately I have two thirds of my staff untrained. **SO3**

The data provided show that there is still a significant number of untrained teachers who are teaching at the SHS level. The effort by government has not yielded the desire results because of poor conditions of service that teachers have to contend with. Teacher attrition continues to be a source of worry to all stakeholders of education.

Private schools operate with business orientations and therefore make sure they provide better conditions to entice quality teachers to their schools. Private schools believe that good results entice parents to enrol their children in their schools so they create the right environment for them to get the expected results. However, in the case of this particular school where two thirds of the teaching staff are untrained it might be as a result of the school's inability to attract quality teachers. When the researcher probed further to the background of the teachers, it was revealed that some of them were graduates from the universities and polytechnics without any professional training as teachers. However, the headmasters indicated that they give them regular in-service-training to enhance their teaching skills on the job. This class of teachers needs to go for Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) to enhance their teaching skills.

Further investigation through interviews brought out views of school officials on the importance of teacher quality and its effects on students' academic achievements in school. The following are some of the quotations from respondents:

When teachers are well trained, they know what they are about and then they know their subject-matter very well. I think it encourages teaching and learning. They are able to teach effectively for students to understand so the quality of the teacher is essential in the education of students and their achievements. **SO4**

Most of our teachers are trained over 94% are trained. We have a high calibre of staff and they are delivering, which is showing on our students' academic performance. **SO1**

That one is obvious, you see, qualitative teaching is hard. A child who is weak might need a teacher who turns the entire lesson into a story for the child to understand. Qualitative teaching is very good for effective teaching and learning. **SO2**

The data provided point to the fact that quality teacher is important in students' success. A good teacher knows his or her students' strengths and weaknesses and always prepares the lessons to suit them. School officials must put in place measures that will ensure that they are able to maintain their teachers in the school since experience contributes to effective teaching which manifests in students learning outcomes.

The study further reveals that teachers' teaching experiences enhance effective teaching and students' achievements in school. This is supported by a weighted mean of 4.27 and a standard deviation of .73. This supports Ofosu-Kusi (2007) who is of the view that teachers who are competent and capable of educating and guiding students are provided to help develop students' talents. In the interview session, one of the headmasters stressed the importance of teaching experience and how it reflects in students' achievements. This is emphasised in the words '*because of the teachers' qualifications and experience over the years, students' results are generally good. When you have such quality teachers who are ready to work, it always reflects in students' achievements'* **SO1**. The data indicate that teachers who have the right qualifications and experiences bring this to bear on their teaching which yields good results in students' performance. This suggests teachers who have good qualifications and experience must as well be prepared to work to ensure results.

In addition, the study indicates a weighted mean of 4.19 and a standard deviation of 3.51, which means that respondents were of the opinion that availability of well stocked and equipped library facility influences students' success in school. When the schools' libraries were subjected to investigation in an interview these pieces of information were gathered:

Fairly good except that the space is not adequate. The current library was built for 400 students. Now we have a student population of over 1,400. As a result, we have a lot of books in the store which cannot be kept in the library. The GETfund is putting up a library for us. **SO1**

It is very appalling; it is nothing to write home about. We lack furniture for our library. We don't have enough books for research work. **SO4**

The data collected from school officials in respect of the status of the libraries show that the libraries were not up to standard considering the type of books available and the student population. Studies conducted by Yelkpieri (2007 and 2009) revealed that there were inadequate library books in the SHSs in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. Aside that, the available books were not relevant to the crop of students in the schools at the time of the study. These libraries were constructed for small student population years ago but now the student population has over-grown the size of the libraries. This means that only a small number of students can use the library at a time. Beside, the libraries are not well equipped with all the necessary materials, books, and equipment that are required of standard libraries. None of the libraries had internet facilities let alone to talk of online database search engines.

It was observed that some had inadequate furniture for students to sit and read. Some students were seen carrying chairs to the library. The researcher further noted that some of the books were old and not relevant for the present category of students. This finding agrees with Yelkpieri (2009). The researcher observed that two of the schools had constructed new libraries which were at advanced stages. Other schools also indicated they have plans to expand their libraries in order to accommodate the growing student population.

The study further reveals that teachers neither agreed nor disagreed on the view that support of an effective PTA influences students' achievements level. This is evidenced by a weighted mean of 3.80 and a standard deviation of .73. This means that some of the schools do not have well organised PTAs that support the schools. It is a common knowledge that some of the top secondary schools in Ghana are where they are today because they are well supported by their PTAs in various ways. Some of the school projects undertaken by PTAs include purchase of school buses, staff bungalows, libraries,

among other things. These measures go a long way to influence students' achievement levels in schools.

When the researcher examined the students' views on the same assumption it was realised that there were differences in opinions between students and their teachers and between the advantaged and disadvantaged SHS. These perspectives were compared and discussed from Tables 24, 25 and 26.

Table 25: Advantaged Students' Views on how Students' Educational Achievement is influenced by the Type of School They Attend

Views	WM	Std	I
Teachers' quality influences children's educational achievements in school.	4.23	.95	A
Teachers' teaching experience enhances effective teaching and students' achievements in school.	4.31	.82	A
Schools' general atmosphere influences students' academic achievements.	4.15	.90	A
Availability of well stocked and equipped library facility influences students' success in school.	3.94	1.04	N
School's general academic performance influences students' achievements in school.	3.93	1.03	N
Availability of ICT facility and computers enhance students' level of success.	3.97	.92	N
Support of an effective PTA influences students' achievements level.	3.52	1 .17	N
Support of an effective old student's association contributes to students' achievements level	3.70	1.01	N

Mean of means = 3.97   **Standard deviation = .98**

The data in Table 25 show that advantaged SHS agreed with their teachers on the first three factors listed, while the disadvantaged SHS also agreed with their teachers on the first four factors. This means that students and their teachers agreed on the first four factors to some extent. These factors include; teachers' quality influences children's educational achievements in school, teachers' teaching experiences enhance effective teaching and students' achievements in school, schools' general atmosphere influences

students' academic achievements, and availability of well stocked and equipped library facility influences students' success in school.

The points of departure between the advantaged SHS and their counterparts and their teachers were on the fourth factor (availability of well stocked and equipped library facility influences students' success in school), where the advantaged SHS neither agreed nor disagreed and the fifth factor (schools' general atmosphere influences students' academic achievements) where the disadvantaged SHS also neither agreed nor disagreed with their counterparts and teachers. However, further investigation through interview of school officials reveals that they agreed on the views of the teachers that the general school atmosphere is an important factor in students' academic success as shown in Table 24 with a weighted mean of 4.09 and a standard deviation of .75. The interview data that express school officials' views are as follows:

> *The school atmosphere is good for academic work. The channel of communication is open from the students' level to the top. Students have the chance to air their views on any pertinent issue in the school. So the atmosphere is very conducive for learning.* **SO1**

> *Very excellent, the teachers are very cordial with the students and are always ready to help them. The school environment is conducive for learning. We have trees around and this provides very serene atmosphere, if any student wants to learn at any time s/he can do so.* **SO4**

Another said:

> *Very much indeed, you see the problem that we have here is that initially we never thought the school will expand as we have now, we would have built the school on our new site. Presently, we are just by the highway in the midst of so much noise which disturbs learning activities.* **SO3**

All the interview data reveal that the general school atmosphere plays an important role in students' academic performance in school. In a similar study Yelkpieri (2007) found that students were satisfied with the general school atmosphere. Schools are duty bound to create a conducive atmosphere that is devoid of tension which enables students to have peace of mind to concentrate on their studies. In a similar way, students must be given the opportunity to express their opinions on any issue that bothers on the school's

administration. It was not the case for students in the Brong-Ahafo in Ghana. A study carried out by Yelkpieri (2007) pointed out that students complained about none involvement in decision-making. The serenity of the school atmosphere created as a result of trees' shades and sitting places made available under the trees provide congenial atmosphere for learning for students at any given time.

The data further show that apart from this, students and their teachers neither agreed nor disagreed on the remaining three factors presented on the tables, which indicate that; availability of internet connectivity facility and computers enhance students' level of success, support of an effective PTA influences students' achievements level, and support of an effective old students association contributes to students' achievement levels. This means that respondents were of the opinion that to some extent resource availability promotes students' level of success in school. In this modern era, internet connectivity affords students the opportunity to access information freely on the internet at their own convenience which is a boost to educational success. In order to do this successfully, the schools need the support of their PTAs and old students associations to assist them in providing these facilities in their schools. Antwi, (1992) and Agyeman, (1993) observe that the desire to enrol in a prestigious school becomes so competitive that it usually favours applicants who come from the homes of the socio-economically advantageous. This means that the 'top secondary schools have a higher intake of students' who come from 'professionals and well-educated families' than other schools. This finding supports the present study which investigates SES of parents and its influence on children's educational success.

When the issue was examined from the perspective of the disadvantaged SHS the trend was not any different from their teachers and their student counterparts. This is presented in Table 26. The data in Table 26 further show that disadvantaged SHS agreed that the general academic performance influence students' achievements in the school, which is supported by a weighted mean of 4.09 and standard deviation of 1.07. This view is neither shared by their teachers nor their advantaged SHS counterparts. Schools that have good record of academic performance carve a niche for themselves and this in turn motivate students to work harder to maintain it. In line with this finding NSWDT (2005:2) found that students who attend a 'school that has a high concentration of students from higher socio-economic groups' equally achieve higher results...than their colleagues who attend

schools with 'lower concentration of students from higher socio-economic groups'. This finding support the main research question of the present study.

Table 26: Disadvantaged Students' Views on how Students' Educational Achievements is Influenced by the Type of School They Attend

Views	WM	Std	I
Teachers' quality influences children's educational achievements in school.	4.13	1.23	A
Teachers' teaching experience enhances effective teaching and students' achievements in school.	4.09	1.13	A
Schools' general atmosphere influences students' academic achievements.	4.05	1.16	A
Availability of well stocked and equipped library facility influences students' success in school.	4.01	1.09	A
School's general academic performance influences students' achievements in school.	4.09	1.07	A
Availability of ICT facility and computers enhance students' level of success.	3.87	1.13	N
Support of an effective PTA influences students' achievements level.	3.75	1.94	N
Support of an effective old student's ssociation contributes to students' achievements level	3.59	1.89	N
Mean of means = 3.95		**Standard deviation = 1.99**	

The data in Table 26, show a weighted mean of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 1.89, which suggests that disadvantaged SHS neither agreed nor disagreed that support of an effective old students association contributes to students' achievement levels in school. It is observed that this opinion is shared by both categories of students and their teachers. This might be due to the fact that old students' presence is not felt in the schools as expected. However, well organised old students associations undertake various projects and provide educational materials to support their alma maters. These efforts go a long way to enhance students' academic performance in schools.

Over all the study reveals that all the three categories of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed on the assumption that the type of school one attends influences his or her

academic achievements. This is evidenced in the three mean of means (3.97, 3.97 and 3.95) computed respectively for teachers, advantaged and disadvantaged SHS as indicated in Tables 25, 26 and 27. These means suggest that the respondents agreed to some extent on the assumption presented. Meanwhile, Antwi (1992) and Agyeman (1993) observed that in Ghana, admission into the top ten secondary schools was dominated by children from the homes of the elite and economically well to do families. The data indicate that students whose parents are professionals always achieve better scores that give them advantage over their counterparts whose parents are not. This finding agrees with the main research question of the present study.

In a follow-up question, the researcher asked to know the views of parents whether the types of schools their children attend influence their academic achievements. This question generated different opinions from parents and some of them are:

> *Yes, the types of schools students attend have an influence because sometimes the school environment in terms of facilities may not be available to aid teaching and learning. The types of teachers also play a vital role in the academic performance of students.* **PR22**

> *To a large extent, because if you look at some of the secondary schools some are well endowed. For example, if a student is doing courses in the sciences, then he needs a school that is well equipped and has good laboratories compared to other schools where they might not have the required materials to embark on practical activities in their lessons.* **PR19**

> *Whatever school the child attends if he works hard he will do well, it does not matter the school s/he attends. But children in general always want prestigious schools.* **PR16**

The interview data gathered so far point to the fact that, to a large extent the type of school one attends has an influence on the person's academic achievements. The type of school determines the types of facilities available for teachers and students' use. A school that has all the necessary facilities such as science laboratory, internet connectivity, well stocked library facilities to work with, all things being equal, has a better chance of performing better than the school that is less endowed. For effective teaching and learning to take place, students must be engaged in hands-on activities where necessary. However,

the situation in the study area was entirely different and so Ofosu-Kusi (2007:191) expressed his disgust about the situation when he indicated that it was 'unfair that children in such disadvantaged environment will be expected to develop comparable conceptual sophistication in science and other subjects so that they will all be graded through the same basic education examination'. This supports the main research question of the study.

The type of school also influences the type of supervision that goes on in the school. Effective educational leaders always ensure that they bring staff members on board of the administration in order to promote team work and achievement of institutional objectives. This type of organisational culture foster teacher commitment and hard work that yields good results at the end of the day.

Aside the aforementioned factors, students' attitude towards learning are also important factor to consider. The type of school matters only when students have positive attitude towards learning otherwise all the efforts by heads of schools and teachers will be in vain.

In order to probe, the researcher gave students the opportunity in a focus group discussion to express their views. The following were some of the factors raised in the discussion.

The factors outlined by students in the focus group discussion agree with the interview granted by parents. The overall school performance largely depends on the educational leadership provided in the school and the type of leadership style s/he adopts to administer the school. The present finding is in agreement with Yelkpieri (2007) who found that teachers were satisfied with the way the headmasters inspired a shared vision among members of staff. The study further indicated that teachers were satisfied with the type of relationship that exists between them and their headmaster. The general atmosphere will determine the rapport that exists in the school between students and their teachers. It is believed that healthy school climate fosters teamwork and the achievement of the institutional goals. The quality of a teacher is an important factor but only to the extent that quality teachers are committed to their work and together with the school head, students and other supporting staff to achieve the school's objective.

The status of the school infrastructure and facilities play crucial roles in students' academic achievements and as such the school administration and management must take steps to ensure that the right infrastructure are put in place to enhance quality education delivery. Quality and experience teachers can achieve very little without the requisite

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infrastructure, facilities, equipment and materials that are needed to work with. A study carried out in the present study area found that 'many schools lacked instructional materials and facilities, or where they were available' (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007:190), they were woefully inadequate. On the issue of teaching and learning materials, 21 or 11% indicated they were satisfied with what they had.

It is assumed that well-endowed schools by virtue of their high quality human and material resources are better placed to achieve higher academically than less endowed schools, all things being equal. The researcher observed the status of some school facilities in advantaged SHS and how these could impact on their teaching and learning as presented in Table 27 (see Appendix E).

The information available in Table 27 shows that Insaaniyya Senior High School (ISHS) has very good classroom space that enables free movement of students and teachers. In a similar way, Winneba Senior High School (WSHS) has good classroom space for free movements of teachers and students. The difference between these two schools is that in the case of ISHS the arrangement of furniture was such that they were well spaced to allow teachers and students to move around without difficulty. In the case of WSHS, the arrangement of the furniture was quite close. Yelkpieri (2009b) in a similar study observed poor classroom accommodation and its effects on teaching and learning in selected secondary schools in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.

The researcher also observed that some classrooms were crowded with students. Some had about 50 to 70 students in one classroom. This type of classroom condition does not promote effective teaching and learning since teachers are unable to move freely to give individual students attention.

It was observed that both schools had regular supply of water. Irregular supply of water in a school disturbs school time table and other school programmes. The availability of potable water guarantees good health of both staff and students. In a similar study, Yelkpieri (2009b) observed that some heads of schools noted that water used to be a big problem but now it is a history. Students were asked to break classes and fetch water from a nearby stream to the kitchen for meals to be prepared.

It was also observed that library facilities were in good state in both schools. The libraries were well stocked with books and other reference materials. However, they were not

spacious enough to accommodate more students. In the case of WSHS, the researcher was shown the new library complex under construction in the school.

The researcher further observed that WSHS had a very good sick bay managed by a qualified nurse. In the case of ISHS, this facility was not available. The facility provides first aid for students in school whenever they are sick.

When a similar observation was carried out in the disadvantaged SHS, it was noted that there was a big difference in terms of facilities. The researcher observed that library facilities were not anything to write home about. Both schools had poor libraries with limited number of books which were also old and some were not in line with current programmes in the schools. The present study agrees with Yelkpieri (2009b) when he observed that some of the libraries were stocked with old books which were not relevant to the crop of students in the school.

A situation like this has serious consequences on the teaching and learning efforts of teachers and students respectively. It is expected that a well-stocked library would provide the needed materials and reference books for both teachers and students to make good use of them in order to promote effective teaching and learning that leads to higher academic achievements. Yelkpieri (2009a) found that school resources such as library books and reference books promote teaching and learning.

The study also noted that these schools did not have dormitory blocks to accommodate students, so students had to rely on private hostel facilities for accommodation. These private hostels are usually not decent enough to guarantee the health safety of its occupants. It was further noted that WSB did not have science laboratory in the school. The question that arises immediately is, how was science taught in this school?

The researcher observed that both schools had regular source of power supply which facilitates teaching and learning activities in school. Yelkpieri (2009a) notes that 31% of his respondents indicated that there was regular supply of electricity, while 68% said it was available but inadequate in supply and yet 1% were of the opinion that it was not available. The regular supply always guaranteed power for the computer laboratories, power-point presentations and evening studies in the schools.

The researcher also examined the examination results of the selected schools for at least over the past five years in order to ascertain the extent to which the assumption that the

type of school one attends influences one's academic achievements. In this respect, the researcher, collected secondary data in the form of WAEC results on the core subjects from 2007 to 2012 from the schools to enable him compare the achievements of advantaged and disadvantaged SHS. The secondary data analysis provided the researcher concrete evidence to support the assumption held in the study. The data are presented according to subject areas in order to make analysis easy. Figure 7 examines the results in English Language from 2007 to 2012 between the two categories of schools.
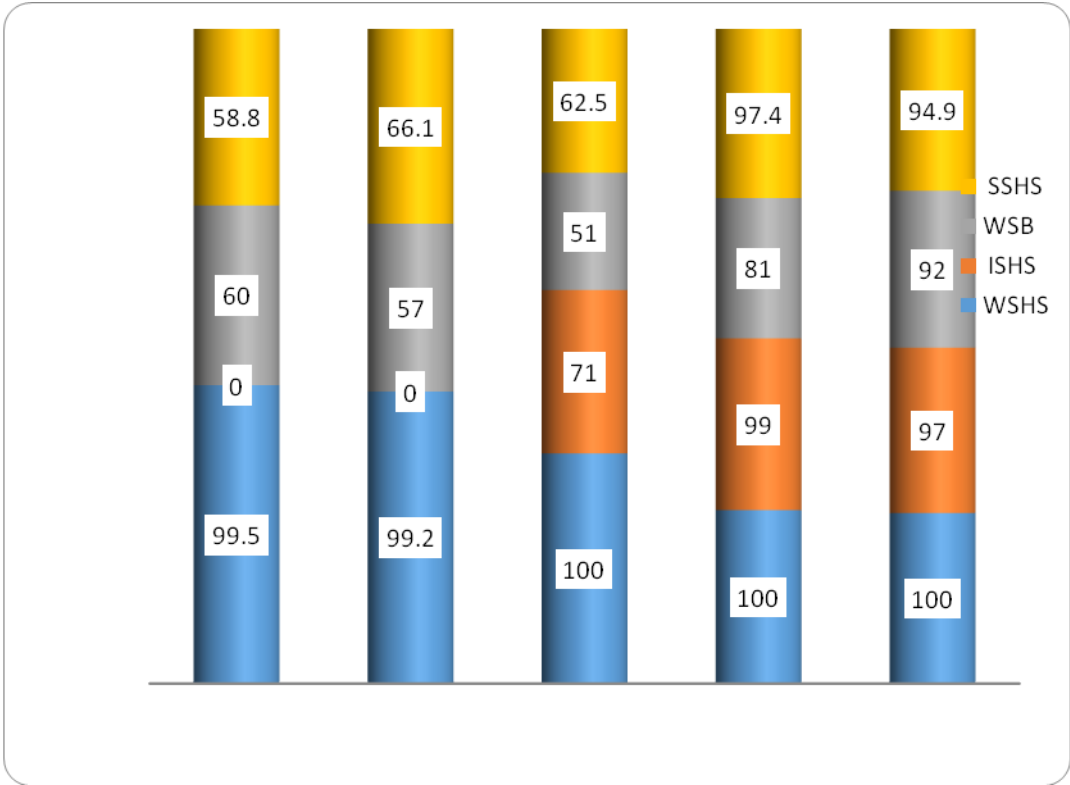
**Figure 7: Comparison of English Language Results between Advantaged and
Disadvantaged SHS**

Source: Extracted from West Africa Examination Council's Broad Sheets

Key to Table

WSHS = Winneba Senior High School,   ISHS = Insaaniyya Senior High School,

WSB = Winneba School of Business,   SSHS = Senya Senior High School, SHS = Senior High School

Data presented in Figure 8 show that the advantaged SHS performed better than the disadvantaged SHS in English Language. However, WSHS shows outstanding scores in

English Language in the five-year period (2007 – 2012). The school scored hundred percent from 2009 to 2012. The data also indicated that ISHS also performed better than their counterpart disadvantaged SHS (WSB and SSHS) as they beat them in all the three years that they took part in the examinations. Ornstein and Levine (2006:323), in a similar study observed that 'social class is associated with many educational outcomes in addition to achievement in reading, maths, and other subjects'. They noted that, 'working-class students not only have lower achievement scores but are also less likely than middle-class students to complete high school or to enrol in and complete college'. It is possible such a situation comes about as a result of poverty which renders parents incapable of supporting their wards in their education. This finding supports the main research question on SES of parents and its influence on children's educational success. When a similar comparison was made in the case of Mathematics, the picture was not different from that of the English Language. This is shown in the data presented in Figure 8.

Again, the data show that the advantaged SHS (WSHS and ISHS) have a better record of achievements than their disadvantaged SHS counterparts (WSB and SSHS). Apart from 2009, where ISHS had low percentage score of 42.0% as against 45.0% and 24.0% respectively by WSB and SSHS, their disadvantaged counterparts, they did well in the subsequent two years. A study conducted by the 'National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and other agencies that collect achievement information from nationally representative samples of students' shows that 'mathematics and reading proficiency scores of groups of students vary directly with social class' (Ornstein and Levine, 2006:321). The information indicates that 'students with well-educated parents score much higher than students whose parents have less education'.

With the exception of the year 2012, when SSHS had 84.3% pass, all other results have not been encouraging when compared to that of their counterparts. This may be due to the fact that the school is less endowed and lacks facilities such as internet connectivity, computer laboratory, libraries, textbooks and quality teachers.

The Integrated Science results followed almost the same trend with a little improvement in performance in the case of SSHS compared to WSB. The details of the information are presented in Figure 9.
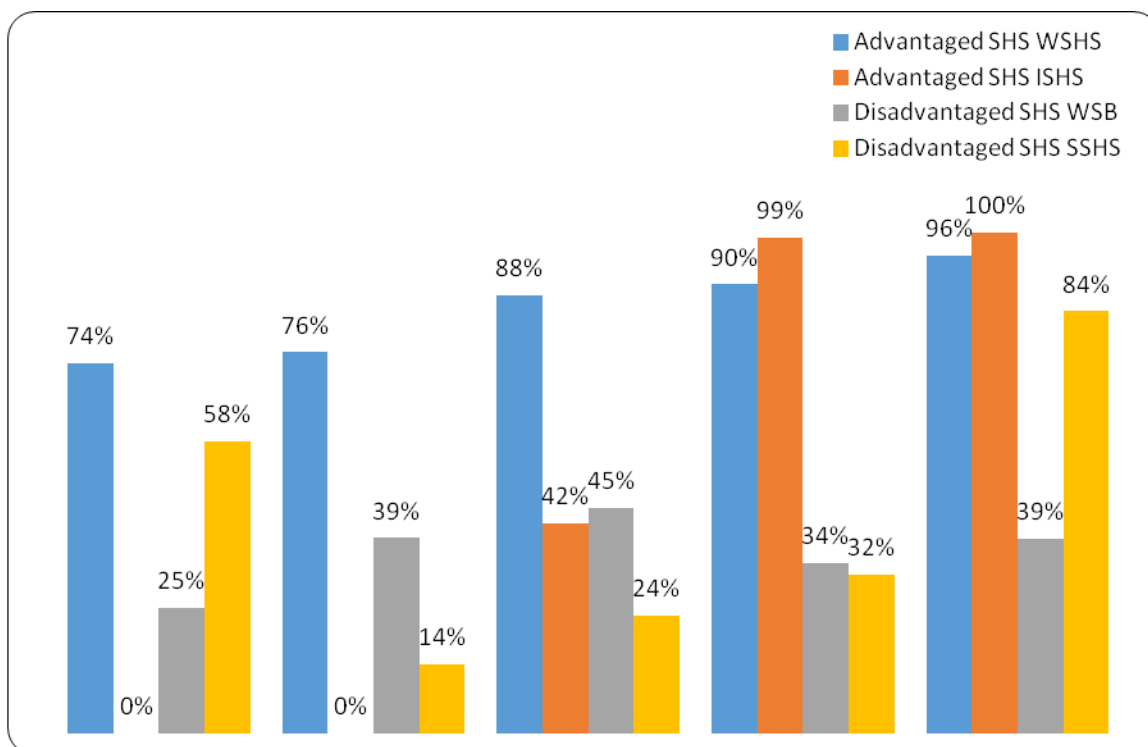
Figure 8: Comparison of Mathematics results between advantaged and disadvantaged SHS

The available data shows that, WSHS continued to show high level of achievements in Integrated Science. This means that the students are taking advantage of their improved school facilities and experienced teachers to achieve good results in all the subject areas. However, ISHS which equally has good facilities comparable to WSHS did not perform as well as WSHS. In the year 2011, ISHS scored 41.0% which is far lower than what its counterparts in the disadvantaged SHS scored. A possible explanation to this abysmal performance might be due to the fact that most of the students of ISHS are disadvantaged students because most of them come from farming and fishing communities. The school is a private school and therefore depends on students who do not get placement in the Computerised Schools Selection and Placement System (CSSPS). A second reason may be as a result of the quality of their teachers since two thirds of the teachers are not trained. A World Bank (2004:42) report revealed that 'poorer children' in disadvantaged schools are not 'reaping educational benefits'.
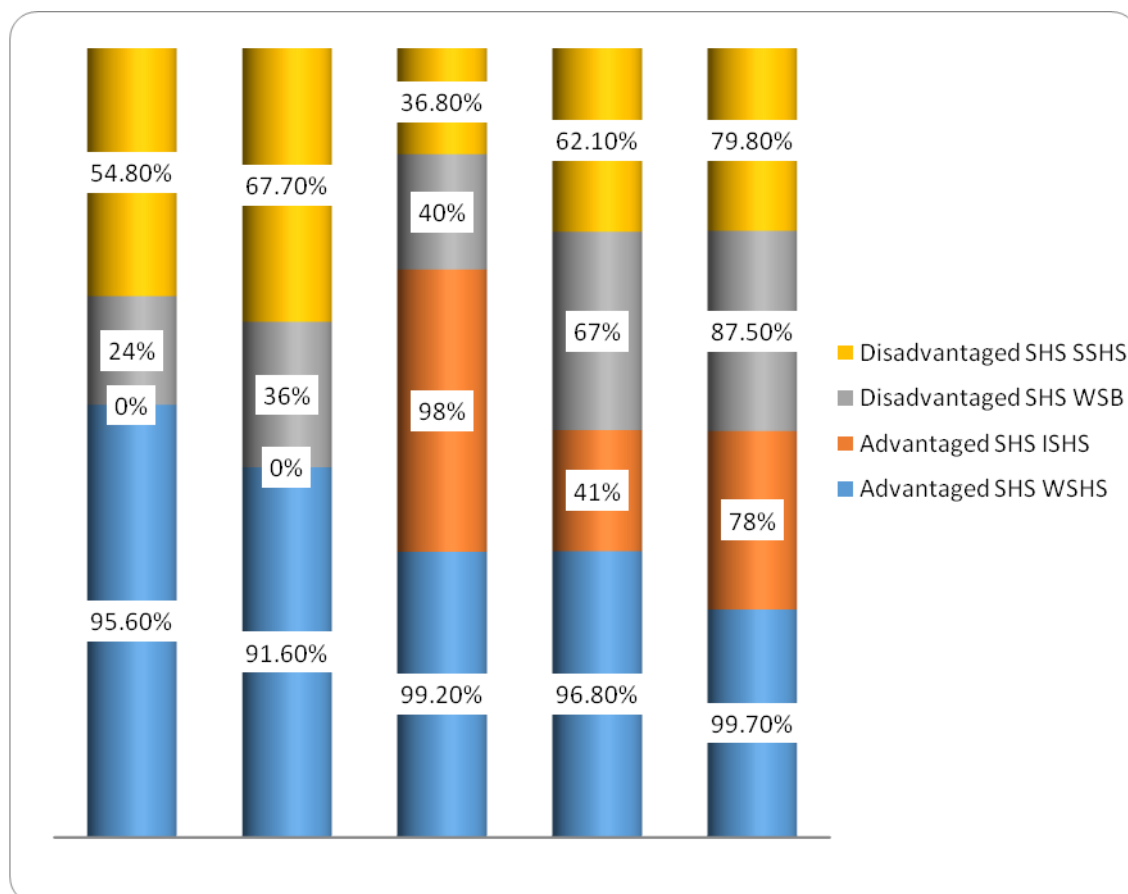
Figure 9: Comparison of Integrated Science Results between Advantaged and Disadvantaged SHS

Source: Extracted from West Africa Examination Council's Broad Sheets

Meanwhile, between the two disadvantaged SHS, it is obvious that SSHS have better record of results in Integrated Science than WSB. The reason for the abysmal performance by WSB might be due to the non- availability of science laboratory, well stocked library facility and their over reliance on part-time teachers. It is unbelievable to note that, teachers could teach a practical subject like science without the required equipment, materials and text books (Ofosu-Kusi, 2007). This unacceptable educational environment has had its toll on the students' achievement in the WAEC results as shown in Figure 9. In such a situation there is little teachers could do to help students to achieve their aims. Over all, the evidence available indicates that the advantaged SHS have higher achievements compared to their disadvantaged counterparts.

Finally, the analysis of the Social Studies results collected shows on the average good results in the four schools. A close examination of the data reveal that all the schools

performed well with high percentage scores except in 2008 when the two disadvantaged SHS namely WSB and SSHS had 68.0% and 58.0% respectively as shown in Figure 10.
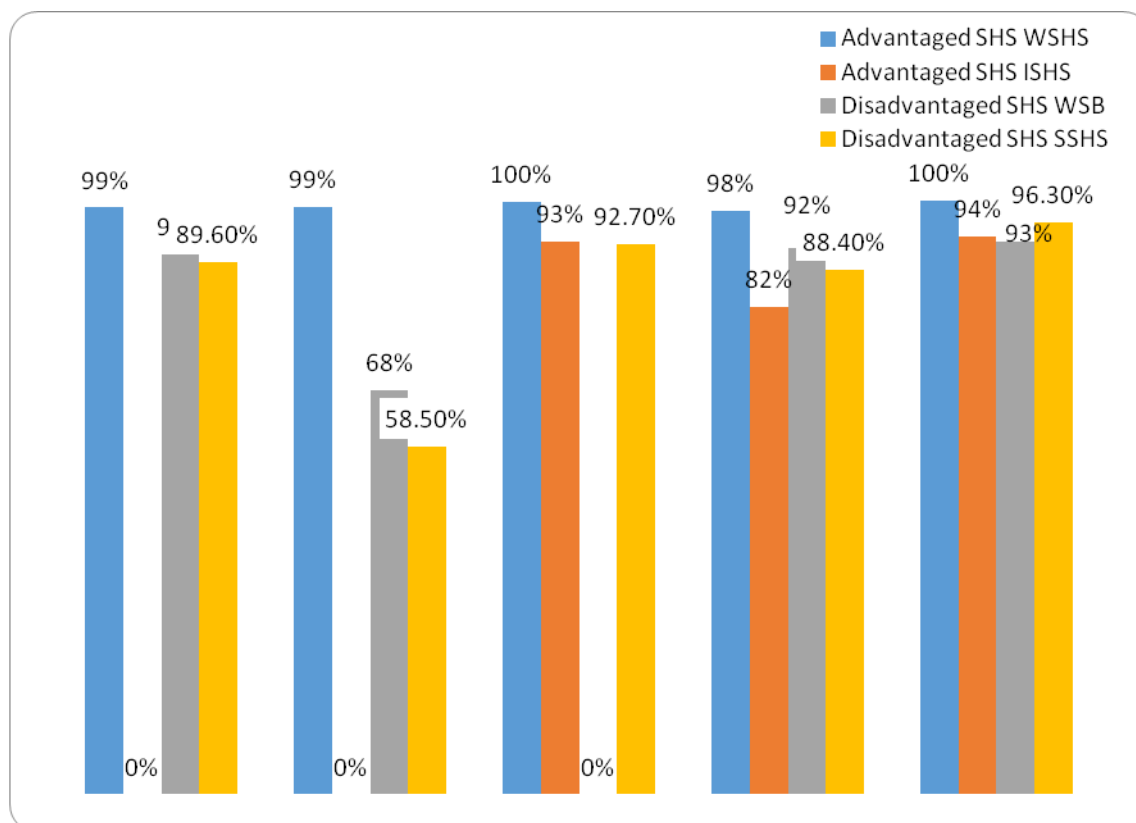
Figure 10: Comparison of Social Studies Results between Advantaged and Disadvantaged SHS

Source: Extracted from West Africa Examination Council's Broad Sheets

The data show that WSHS still stands tall among its counterparts in terms of percentage pass. They had 100% in 2012 compared to ISHS which had 94.0% and 93.0% and 96.3% by WSB and SSHS respectively.

From the analysis of the secondary data so far it is made clear that to a large extent the well-endowed schools enjoy better facilities which lead to high academic achievements. Whereas, the less endowed schools are disadvantaged in many ways because of their inability to provide the requisite facilities for their teachers and students to work with. This deprivation manifests in the poor teaching and learning and finally poor academic results. In conclusion, one could say that the type of school a student attends to a large extent influences his or her academic achievements.

Similar studies show that children from low socio-economic homes and communities are slow in their development of academic skills compared to their counterparts from high socio-economic backgrounds (Morgan, et al., 2009; Kellet and Dar, 2007; Horgan, 2007; Agu and Hamad, 2000; Agyeman, 1993; Antwi, 1992). These reasons may account for the outstanding achievements in academic performance by the advantaged SHS as compared to their disadvantaged counterparts in the study area.

In an attempt to know students' attitudes toward their present schools, the students were given the opportunity to indicate whether they would choose their school if given the second chance to do so. The responses provided show that students from advantaged SHS like their schools compared to their counterparts from the disadvantaged SHS. The available data reveal that 94(53.7%) students from advantaged SHS indicated if given the second opportunity, they would choose their school while 26(19.1%) students of disadvantaged SHS did not like their schools, a good number (94) of the advantaged students like their schools. These reactions were as a result of the state of the school facilities and the quality of teaching staff available in the schools. Those who said 'yes' indicated that they had qualified teachers, adequate facilities and classroom infrastructure. On the other hand, those who said 'no' pointed out that the schools were less endowed; the teachers and administrators were not good.

The quality and level of experience of teachers are critical issues that every school administrator would consider in employing teachers in his school. Again, the atmosphere of a school is another factor that contributes to the level of success of a school. The relationship that exists between teachers and students to a large extent determines how students can approach teachers with their questions and other academic related challenges in school.

From the discussion so far, it is clear that the type of school one attends has an influence on one's academic achievements since success in school depends on quality teaching staff, facilities and the school atmosphere that prevail in the schools. The absence of these may manifest on schools' performance and on students' achievements.

Finally, the researcher wanted to know about the opinions of the school officials on the general academic performance of their schools. In response to the question, various answers were given and some of them are quoted as follows:

I will say excellent, because every year we record very good passes and this year was no exception. This year we had 97% pass. **SO1**

Any way the school's academic performance is not excellent, because of the type of students we admit here. The aggregate they bring for admission are usually on the high side. The grades that they bring here are horrible. However, at the end of the course we are able to bring them to a level. Our passes are not bad. **SO4**

I always say private schools are better than public schools because all students who are average and above average are posted to public schools by the computerised school selection and placement system. We, the private schools benefit from the remnants, i.e. those with aggregate 25 – 35 and we have the arduous task to turn these students around into consumable products for the universities. **SO3**

The data show that all the schools are doing well in their own ways. The reason is that they do not have equal opportunities in terms of facilities and quality of teachers and more importantly, the calibre of students who are admitted into the schools. Since students are usually posted to schools of their choices, the best students are posted to the first class schools. When this happens the remaining students who do not get their first choice schools are then posted to schools of their second or third choices or posted to schools which have not obtained their quota of students. Sometimes when students become frustrated, they go and look for their own schools which are less endowed private schools. It is worth pointing out that the schools put in their best to ensure that these students go back better than they came to the schools.

When parents were given the opportunity to express their opinions on the general performance of the schools their children attend, they came up with different responses and some of them are quoted as follows:

On a whole, I think the schools my children attend are quite good, they can be considered as some of the best schools in Ghana. **PR19**

The school my child attends performs well. However, it also depends on the child's commitment and attitudes towards learning. **PR31**

The level of performance is average and I believe if they work hard it will improve. **PR12**

Well, I cannot tell whether the school performs well academically or not but I have heard the school performs well academically. The students do well in their final external examination. **PR15**

The data indicate that some of the schools that parents send their students are good schools which have recorded good external examination results over the years. Students who attend this category of schools need just a little effort to make it to the university or other tertiary institutions. Some parents know that the schools their children attend are average schools and therefore students who attend this class of schools need to make extra effort to ensure that they pass well in the external examination. Parents who are conscious about this usually arrange for extra classes for their wards to ensure they are well prepared for the external examinations.

Some parents also know that the schools their children attend do not perform well. When this happens parents have the option of looking for a good private school as an alternative for the child or arrange for extra tuition for the child at home and during vacation. Sometimes students who take their lessons serious perform equally good as those who attend the first class schools.

According to the data, some parents, especially the uneducated do not even know the performance of the school they send their children. However, some parents seem to follow with interest the schools their children attend either through conversation with friends or their interactions with their children. They believe that the type of school a student attends is not an end in itself but a means to an end because the onus lies on the student's readiness to learn at school.

Treatment of Hypotheses

H_o: *There is no significant effect of learning environment provided by parents at home on students' academic achievement.*

Provision of an enabling learning environment at home, home environment, parental supervision of students' learning activities and parents and siblings' speech models were used in a standard regression analysis to predict parents' interest in their students'

education. The correlations of the variables are shown in Table 29. As can be seen, all correlations were statistically significant.

Table 29: Correlations of the Variables in the Analysis (N = 141)

	Variable	2	3	4	5
1.	parents' interest in their students' education	.455	.396	.590	.382
2.	provision of an enabling learning environment at home	--	.223	.366	.165
3.	home environment		--	.257	.483
4.	parental supervision of students' learning activities			--	.323
5.	parents and siblings' speech models				--

Note: All correlations were statistically significant ($p < .001$).

The prediction model was statistically significant, $F(4, 136) = 30.463$, $p < .001$, and accounted for approximately 46% of the variance of parents' interest in their students' education ($R^2 = .473$, Adjusted $R^2 = .457$) (see Appendix E, Table 30). Parents' interest in their students' education was primarily predicted by lower levels of parents and siblings' speech models, and by higher levels of parental supervision of students' learning activities and provision of learning environment at home. The raw and standardized regression coefficients of the predictors together with their correlations with parents' interest in their students' education, their squared semi-partial correlations and their structure coefficients, are shown in Table 29. In a similar study, it was revealed that some educated parents show interest in their 'children's academic performance' and by so doing 'choose subjects, meet and collaborate with administrators of higher institutions' in order to ensure that the children are serious in their studies (Good and Brophy, 1997) cited in (Muruwei, 2011:303).

Parental supervision of students' learning activities received the strongest weight in the model followed by provision of an enabling learning environment at home. With the sizeable correlations between the predictors, the unique variance explained by each of the variables indexed by the squared semi-partial correlations was quite low. Examination of the structure coefficients suggests that, with the possible exception of home environment whose correlation is still moderately substantial, the other significant predictors were strong indicators of the latent variable described by the model, which can be interpreted as the effect of learning environment provided by parents at home on students' academic

achievement. Muruwei, (2011:302) in a related study indicated that the 'level of parent education affects the academic performance' of children in school. He and other scholars share the opinion that parents who are well educated and are professionals with good salaries are able to provide their children with good learning environment to enable them excel in their education (Muruwei 2011; Michieka, 2011; Antwi, 1992; Agyeman, 1993; Prewitt, 1974, Nguyen, 2006, Jerrim and Micklewright, 2009).

Table 31: Standard Regression Results

Model	B	SE-b	Beta	Pearson r	sr^2	Structure Coefficient
Constant	-0.304	0.407				
Provision of learning environment at home*	0.303	0.084	0.243	0.455	0.050	0.662
Home environment*	0.157	0.065	0.175	0.396	0.023	0.576
Parental supervision of students' learning activities*	0.475	0.080	0.416	0.590	0.137	0.859
Parents and siblings' speech models	0.117	0.069	0.123	0.382	0.011	0.556

Note: The dependent variable was parents' interest in their students' education affects their academic attainment. $R^2 = .473$, Adjusted $R^2 = .457$.

sr^2 is the squared semi-partial correlation.

*$p < .05$

In testing the hypothesis, the researcher considered the following variables: parents' vocational/professional qualifications influence students' level of achievements, parents' academic qualifications influence children's educational achievements in school, parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of assistance children receive at home, parents' educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities, parents' educational attainments provide inspirations for students, parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of supervision given to students at home, parents' educational qualifications influence the interest they attach to their children's education and type of school parents attended influences students' achievement levels. The results of the test are as presented in Table 31.

H$_0$: *There is no significant effect of educational qualifications of parents on students'*
academic success.

Table 32: Correlations of the Variables in the Analysis (N = 141)

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Parents' vocational / professional qualifications	.584	.336	.342	.359	.551	.451	.510
2. Parents' academic qualifications	--	.350	.321	.232	.423	.458	.439
3. Parents' educational qualifications		--	.512	.359	.464	.460	.243
4. Parents educational attainments enhance			--	.589	.392	.457	.248
5. Parents educational attainments provide				--	.478	.419	.082
6. Parents' educational qualifications determine					--	.434	.408
7. Parents' educational qualifications influence						--	.104
8. Type of school parents attended							--

Note: All correlations except that between parent's educational attainments provide … and
type of school parents attended … were statistically significant (*p < .001*).

A multiple regression was run to predict parents' vocational/professional qualifications
   from parents' academic qualifications..., parents' educational qualifications...,
   parents' educational attainments enhance ..., parents' educational attainments
   provide ..., parents' educational qualifications determine ..., parents' educational
   qualifications influence ... and type of school parents attended. The raw and
   standardized regression coefficients of the predictors together with their
   correlations with parents' vocational/professional qualifications, their squared semi-
   partial correlations and their structure coefficients, are shown in Table 32. These
   variables statistically significantly predicted parents' vocational/professional
   qualifications, F(7, 131) = 21.059, p < .001, and accounted for nearly 51% of the

variance of parents' vocational/professional qualifications ($R^2 = .529$, Adjusted $R^2 = .504$) (see Appendix E, Table 33). Four variables added statistically significantly to the prediction. Muruwei (2011:303) indicated that parents' level of education 'has a positive influence on academic performance of the children'. Muruwei was of the opinion that, in order to 'achieve these objectives' parents of these children might have provided facilities such as story books, television sets, newspapers and even 'pay extra fees to teachers to teach their children at home where the parents have no time'.

Type of school parents attended influence students … had the strongest weight in the model followed by parents' academic qualifications influence … and parents' educational qualifications determine …. For example, type of school parents attended influence students accounts uniquely for about 6% of the variance of parents' vocational/professional qualifications influence students' level of achievement given the other variables in the model.

The correlation between the predictors indicates the unique variance explained by each of the variables indexed by the squared semi-partial correlations, which are quite low. Inspection of the structure coefficients suggests that, with the possible exception of type of school parents attended influence students … whose correlation is still relatively substantial, the other significant predictors were strong indicators of the underlying variable described by the model, which can be interpreted as the effect of educational qualifications of parents on students' academic success. Nguyen (2006:18) in his study found that 'better-educated parents are more motivated to encourage their children to study and are more likely to support children's learning at home'. Muruwei (2011:303) also notes that other researchers have 'argued that students' academic performance in most cases does not necessarily depend on parental enlightenment or professional occupation or on educational attainment'.

Table 34. Standard Regression Results

Model	B	SE-b	Beta	Pearson r	sr^2	Structure Coefficient
Constant	.114	.369				
Parents' academic qualifications influence*	.255	.069	.280	.584	0.049	0.802
Parents' educational qualifications determine	-.035	.067	-.040	.336	0.001	0.462
Parents educational attainments enhance	-.054	.102	-.045	.342	0.001	0.470
Parents educational attainments provide	.170	.103	.135	.359	0.010	0.493
Parents' educational qualifications determine*	.194	.078	.203	.551	0.023	0.757
Parents' educational qualifications influence*	.177	.075	.186	.451	0.020	0.620
Type of school parents attended influence students*	.256	.063	.295	.510	0.059	0.701

Note: The dependent variable was parents' vocational/professional qualifications influence students' level of achievement. $R^2 = .529$, Adjusted $R^2 = .504$.

sr^2 is the squared semi-partial correlation.

p < .05

H_0: *There is no significant effect of the type of school students attend on their academic achievement.*

Schools' general atmosphere influences students' academic achievements, teacher quality influences children's educational achievements in school, availability of ICT facility and computers enhance students' level of success, and support of an effective old student's association contributes to students' achievement levels were used in a standard regression analysis to predict support of an effective PTA on students' achievement level. The correlations of the variables are shown in Table 35.

Table 35: Correlations of the Variables in the Analysis (N = 141)

Variables	2	3	4	5
1. Support of an effective PTA	.441	.424	.455	.475
2. Teacher quality	--	.255	.372	.404
3. Availability of ICT facility		--	.433	.415
4. Support of an effective old student's association			--	.416
5. Schools' general atmosphere				--

Note: All correlations were statistically significant, ($p < .001$).

From Table 35, all correlations were statistically significant. The prediction model was statistically significant, $F(4, 135) = 20.348$, $p < .001$, and accounted for almost 36% of the variance of support of an effective PTA on students' achievement level ($R^2 = .376$, Adjusted $R^2 = . 358$). Support of an effective PTA was largely predicted by higher levels of all the variables. The raw and standardized regression coefficients of the predictors together with their correlations with self-esteem, their squared semi-partial correlations and their structure coefficients, are shown in Table 35. Support of an effective old students association received the strongest weight in the model followed by schools' general atmosphere and teacher quality.

Table 36: Standard Regression Results

Model	B	*SE-b*	Beta	Pearson *r*	sr^2	Structure Coefficient
Constant	0.892	0.344				
Teacher quality*	0.219	0.073	0.231	0.441	0.042	0.719
Availability of ICT facility and computers*	0.152	0.063	0.189	0.424	0.027	0.692
Support of an effective old students association*	0.144	0.060	0.194	0.455	0.027	0.742
Schools' general atmosphere*	0.216	0.079	0.222	0.475	0.035	0.775

Note: The dependent variable was parents' vocational/professional qualifications influence students' level of achievement. $R^2 = .376$, Adjusted $R^2 = .358$. sr^2 is the squared semi-partial correlation. *$p < .05$

With the sizeable correlations between the predictors, the unique variance explained by each of the variables indexed by the squared semi-partial correlations was relatively low. Inspection of the structure coefficients suggests that, with the possible exemption of availability of ICT facility and computers whose correlation is still relatively substantial, the other significant predictors were strong indicators of the underlying variable described by the model, which can be interpreted as the effect of the type of school students attend on their academic achievement. The desire to enrol in an advantaged school becomes so competitive that it favours applicants from the homes of the socio-economically advantageous (Antwi, 1992; Agyeman, 1993).

These findings underscore the fact that the type of school one attends has significant effect on the students' academic achievements. As a result, policy makers, educational leaders and other stakeholders must ensure that schools are well resourced with the requisite human and material resources for them to deliver effective teaching for effective learning to take place.

Of primary interest are the **R Square** and **Adjusted R Square** values, which are. (R^2 = .473, Adjusted R^2 = .457) respectively. This means that the weighted combination of the predictor variables explained approximately **46%** (see Appendix 34) of the variance of parents' interest in their students' education …. These were, however, predicted by **lower levels** of the other factors.

The **ANOVA** table gives the statistically significant values. Here we had, $F(4, 136)$ = 30.463, $p < .001$. *These* were picked from the *df,* F & Sig. columns.

The value of F (high or low) determines the chance of the **Null Hypothesis** being rejected and alternate accepted or vice versa. In our case we had **30.463.**

On the other hand, the **significant** tells us the confidence level. (1 – Sig) of accepting the alternate hypothesis or otherwise. Here the Sig is .001, which means that you are (1 – 0.001 = 0.999) = 99% confident that the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Summary

In this chapter, the data provided by the respondents of the questionnaire and the interviews have been discussed in relation to the literature reviewed. The chapter also discussed the research findings on issues and concerns raised by school officials, teachers, students, and parents in the study together with the factors that account for such issues as

spelt out in the research questions. Parents' level of education plays an important role in children's academic achievements, however, the emphasis should not be placed on the level of qualifications of parents but rather on parents' interest and support they provide children in their education. The type of job a parent does is critical in this context because a parent's ability to support his children depends largely on his level of income. As a result, low income earners are faced with difficulty when it comes to providing children's educational needs. Unless some intervention is given to such children by government to enable them effectively engage in their education most of them are likely to drop out of school. Again, schools are centres of learning and must be fully resourced to ensure that students are able to learn and achieve the desire results. However, this is not the case in some schools in the study area. The next chapter will present the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of this study. Specifically, it will show how the research questions set out in the first chapter have been addressed and will also highlight other relevant issues.

Chapter 6

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This last chapter provides an overview of the study. It highlights the major findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. The chapter is sub-divided into five sections. The first section gives an overview of the study. The second section outlines how the research questions and objectives have been answered. Thus, the main findings are summarised under each research question and the conclusions made from them. The third section, examines the limitations of the study. The fourth section concerns itself with recommendations for professional practice. The fifth section suggests new areas for future research.

An Overview of the Study

This study sought to investigate the extent to which the SES of parents affects students' achievements in the Awutu-Senya and Effutu Educational Directorates of the Central Region of Ghana. Specifically, the study focused on how parents' financial status affects students' academic achievements, the extent to which learning environment at home determines students' academic achievements in school, and the extent to which educational qualifications of parents' influence students' academic success. In addition, the research tried to identify the single category of work force that has the highest number of children progressing to SHS level and beyond and whether educational achievements of students are influenced by the type of school students attended. In order to achieve these objectives, the researcher reviewed relevant literature from various sources which include journals, periodicals, books, conference papers, dissertations and theses. This review informed the choice of the methodology adopted for the study that helped to achieve credible results. As part of the literature review in chapter two, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks identified the challenges that parents encountered in supporting their children's education in Ghana and other countries, particularly in developing nations, and the factors responsible for these challenges. The knowledge gained from the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of SES guided the development of the research questions. The conclusions made provided answers to the research questions posed in chapter one which provided the main themes of the study.

The study adopted a mixed method approach in its data collection, in which case a cross sectional and a multi-site case study were used. The target population consisted of school officials such as headmasters, accountants, and senior housemasters. Others included teachers, students of SHS and parents in the Awutu Senya and Effutu educational districts in the Central Region of Ghana. A sample size of 531 respondents was chosen for the study. The instruments used in the data collections were questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, structured observation, secondary data such as WASSCE scores and schools' financial records. A range of sampling techniques from simple random, purposive, censor, to cluster sampling techniques were adopted in selecting the participants of the study. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in the presentation of the data.

Summary of Findings

The following were the main findings of the study:

The first research question sought to explore how parents' financial circumstances affect students' academic achievements in the Awutu Senya and Effutu Educational Directorates. The findings for this research question from the quantitative data are that teachers agreed that parents' financial circumstances affect students' academic achievements in the study area. This is because most parents found it difficult to support their children's education and were unable to pay their children's school fees, other levies and also provide their educational needs. The interview data revealed that those parents who were hard hit by this situation were parents who did not have employment or employable skills such as subsistent farmers, fishermen, fish mongers, petty-traders, drivers, clerical staff and cleaners. This class of people were low income earners and admitted that poverty was the main reason for their inability to support their children's education. The study further revealed that about 50% of the students in disadvantaged SHS owed fees in arrears. As a result of this, students from poor homes suffered needlessly which affected their academic performance and subsequently their ability to progress. School officials indicated that students who owed fees in school became psychologically disturbed and were unable to concentrate on their studies.

Most parents admitted in an interview that they paid their children's fees by instalments so as to ease the financial pressure that came with their children's education and that they were unable to provide students' needs at the right time. However, both categories of students agreed to some extent that their parents' financial situation affected their

achievement levels in school. This was supported by the fact that students agreed that parents' financial circumstance determined the level of provision made for learning and writing materials. A school official indicated in an interview that if students cannot pay their fees then they cannot concentrate in class. They are usually haunted by the fact that they owe fees, so psychologically they are disturbed.

The second research question examined the extent to which the learning environment provided by parents at home determined the academic achievements of students. In answering this question, the quantitative data from teachers revealed that they were of the opinion that learning environment provided by parents at home determined the academic achievements of students. The reason was that the type of home environment created by parents for students' learning contributed in many ways to their educational success. For example, if parents provide their students with the needed materials such as dictionaries, newspapers, story books, and furniture, text books, conducive learning environment and lights, it is expected that all things being equal, students will perform well and achieve better results at the end of the programme. However, the study found that whilst in some homes students were provided with all things they needed to enable them succeed in their educational endeavours, other students did not have this opportunity. A parent observed that 'I have bought them all kinds of books that will enable them to learn at home. We have a study room where all of us study without any disturbance'. It is for this reason that some school officials in an interview indicated that students from literate homes are academically better than students from illiterate homes.

On the other hand, some parents noted that 'there are lights, tables and chairs at home where they can sit and learn, even though the environment is not conducive for learning'. This was supported by students' own assertion that students from disadvantaged communities did not have home environment which enabled them to learn in the evenings because of noise.

 In addition, parental supervision must be of prime concern at home to ensure that students utilise their time well so as to achieve better outcomes in school. Students on their part agreed to some extent that learning environment provided by parents at home determines their academic achievement levels. Some students from advantaged and disadvantaged SHS indicated that both parents provided their educational materials while others revealed

that they were either provided by their fathers or mothers and sometimes the students themselves.

The third research question also investigated the extent to which educational qualifications of parents' influence students' academic success. In the researcher's investigation the following findings were revealed in the study:

All respondents agreed to some extent with the assumption that educational qualifications of parents' influence students' academic success. They argued that parents' educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities. For example, educated parents know the essence of education better than uneducated parents and therefore, provide the needed materials at the right time and also ensure that students spend time to study. In addition, teacher-respondents were also of the opinion that educational levels of parents have a positive influence on academic performance of their children. It is believed educated parents sometimes assist their students in their studies at home whenever the need arises. Both categories of students neither agreed nor disagreed that parents' educational attainments provide inspirations for students. Some students from educated homes pointed out that they were inspired by their parents' educational attainments and wished to achieve similar levels in their education. Others wished to compensate for their parents' low level of education by working hard to achieve greater levels than that of their parents. Yet, others did not have this inspiration because their parents' education was low and they did not also provide the needed encouragement to push them. They observed that parents' low educational levels might have affected how they valued education and their attitude towards the provision of their children's educational needs. Students noted that parents' low educational backgrounds resulted in low income which did not enable them pay their children's school fees and be able to provide other needs. Parents also indicated that well educated parents who were well paid were usually able to pay for their students' education and provide their needs.

The fourth research question sought to investigate a single category of work force that has the highest number of children progressing to SHS level and beyond. In an attempt to answer this question, opinions were sought from all the respondents and some of their responses are presented as follows:

The quantitative data show that teacher-respondents ranked professional/technical workers first as a category of work force that was capable of supporting their children's education

to SHS level and beyond. However, both advantaged and disadvantaged students ranked administrative/managerial class of workers as first. In an interview, some parents indicated that 'those parents who were well paid such as bank managers, directors, lecturers among others, were capable of supporting their students in school. This class of workers could afford to send their children to any school of the child's choice. However, the respondents were quick to add that 'those of us with low salaries always have difficulties in paying our children's fees. The general impression was that public sector workers were better placed to support their students' education to SHS level and beyond. As observed by a parent, 'I think those in government work like teachers, nurses, police etc, are more capable'. Others were of the view that 'well established self-employed businessmen can also support their children up to SHS level and beyond'. The study found that farmers, fishermen, forestry workers and service workers such as taxi drivers can hardly afford to shoulder such a responsibility.   Students also pointed out that ignorance on the part of some parents about the importance of education accounts for their inability to support their students up to SHS and beyond.

 The fifth research question examined the extent to which students' educational achievements were influenced by the type of school they attended. The quantitative data revealed that teachers and students agreed to some extent that students' educational achievements were influenced by the type of school they attended. It was observed that some schools were more endowed in terms of material and human resources than others. Some schools had very good infrastructure, and facilities that promote effective teaching and learning that leads to higher achievement levels of students. Teacher-respondents and disadvantaged students agreed that availability of well-equipped library facilities influenced students' success in school. However, the advantaged students neither agreed nor disagreed with this view.

On the other hand, poor school infrastructure and facilities as observed in some schools in the study also resulted in poor teaching and learning which also produced in low achievement among students of such schools. All the categories of respondents were of the view that teachers' quality influences children's educational achievements in schools. It was observed that generally, facilities in the advantaged schools were far better than those in the disadvantaged schools and that might be one of the factors that accounted for low achievements of students in these schools. Generally, the study found that advantaged SHS have a record of high achievements compared to their disadvantaged counterparts.

The hypotheses tested indicated that all correlations were statistically significant ($p < .001$). When the first hypothesis (H_o: *There is no significant effect of learning environment provided by parents at home on students' academic achievement*) was tested the test statistics revealed that all correlations were statistically significant ($p < .001$). The prediction model was also statistically significant. This means that parents' interest in their students' education was predicted by lower levels of parents and siblings' speech models, and by higher levels of parental supervision of students' learning activities and provision of learning environment at home.

The second hypothesis (H_o: *There is no significant effect of educational qualifications of parents on students' academic success*) tested show the test statistics that all correlations were statistically significant ($p < .001$). These test statistics predicted parents vocational/professional qualifications. This implies that the type of schools parents attended influence students' academic achievements had the strongest weight in the model followed by parents' academic qualifications which in turn influence children's academic achievements.

The third hypothesis (H_o: *There is no significant effect of the type of school students attend on their academic achievement*) also gave indication that the test statistics of the hypothesis was significant. The data also show that apart from the availability of ICT facilities and computers whose correlation is still relatively substantial, the other significant predictors were strong indicators of the underlying variable described by the model, which is interpreted as the effect of the type of school students attend on their academic achievements.

Conclusions

The conclusions of the study are based on the research questions that guided the study. Thus, it examines the extent to which some of the findings affected education of students and the way forward.

Teachers' admission that parents' financial circumstances affect students' academic achievements in the study area should be a source of worry to all educational stakeholders. The reason is that apart from a small percentage of salary workers and businessmen who can afford to support their students, most parents in the study area are low income earners such as fishermen, fish mongers, petty-traders, artisans and subsistent farmers, drivers, clerical staff and cleaners who are unable to pay school fees and provide for their students'

educational needs. This is not good for youth skills development and national development and must be given a serious attention by all stakeholders in education. Research indicates that children from low socio-economic homes and communities are slow in their development of academic skills as compared to their counterparts from high socio-economic homes (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier and Maczuga, 2009; Kellet and Dar, 2007; Horgan, 2007; Agu and Hamad, 2000; Agyeman, 1993; Antwi, 1992). It is in this respect that efforts by NGOs such as Plan Ghana International, World Vision and philanthropic individuals must be commended. In a situation like this, government needs to encourage skills development among parents who do not have employable skills that would enable them earn a decent living.

The study found that some parents who could not pay their students' fees outright arranged with school officials to pay the fees by instalments. This is commendable and school officials and other stakeholders must educate and encourage parents on the need to save towards the education of their children. When this method of paying fees is adopted by parents, it will relieve students and parents of the embarrassment they experience as a result of their low earnings. This will give students from low income homes the peace of mind to concentrate on their studies while their parents take time to honour their responsibilities towards them in school. Agyeman (1993:28) observes that poverty affects a child's 'chances of successes in school and that a child who always goes to school hungry has difficulty in concentrating on his lessons. He points out that a child whose parents are unable to buy him uniforms may feel bad among his mates and such a situation may discourage him from continuing with his education.

Respondents were of the opinion that learning environment provided by parents at home determines the academic achievements of students. Learning environment created by parents at home include a number of factors that need to be considered ranging from availability of story books, newspapers, dictionaries, light, quiet place for learning, tables and chairs, among other things. Prewitt (1974) in his study found that wealthier educated parents who purchased books and educational toys, who speak English at home, provided initial advantage. Apart from these, providing time for students to learn at home, educational levels of parents and siblings or availability of people who can provide assistance to students when the need arises, parents' interest in their students' education and ability to have quality time with them on their educational issues at home, all constitute the learning environment at home that could influence students' ability and

readiness to learn at home. However, if this type of environment does not prevail at home, it becomes difficult for students to achieve the desired level of success in school. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds experience low academic achievements mostly as a result of their disadvantaged homes or communities in which they find themselves. Aikens and Barbarin (2008) note educational systems in low socio-economic communities are usually under-resourced and consequently affect students' academic performance. In effect, the environment of students matters very much and, therefore, parents must make conscious effort to ensure that they provide some basic facilities at home to enhance students' learning.

The study found that teacher-respondents and students agreed to some extent with the assumption that educational qualifications of parents' influence students' academic success. Parents' educational qualifications or attainments should always inspire children to work harder to equal their parents' educational success or do better than that. Students from high socio-economic backgrounds enjoy a number of educational benefits such as having access to books, newspapers, assistance from parents and siblings, and speech models among other things that their disadvantaged colleagues do not get.   Aside, this class of parents is capable of paying students fees and provide all educational materials that students may request for. These opportunities give students from high socio-economic homes an advantage in concept and language development skills over their counterparts in school. Empirical studies of high socio-economic homes reveal that students take advantage of their economic situation which provides all the necessary materials such as text books, writing materials and other support put at their disposal (Nwadinigwe, 2006; Aikens and Barbarin, 2008; Adegbenga, 2010). It is for this reason that government and other stakeholders of education should support the less privileged in society in their effort to educate their children since education is the route out of poverty and under-development.

Students argued that some parents' low educational level influence how they value education and their attitude toward provision of their children's educational needs. A situation like this discourages such children and may influence their progression and achievement levels in schools. If conscious efforts are not taken to address the situation it may lead to a vicious cycle in these families. A World Bank (2004:42) report revealed that 'poorer children' in disadvantaged schools are not 'reaping educational benefits'. Therefore, educational stakeholders such as GES, District/Municipal/Metropolitan

Assemblies, traditional leaders and NGOs must ensure that they sensitise people in their communities about the spill-over effects of education and the need for families to sacrifice for children's education, the only sure way for social mobility and national development.

Teacher-respondents ranked professional/technical workers first as a category of work force that was capable of supporting their children's education to SHS level and beyond. However, both advantaged and disadvantaged SHS ranked administrative/managerial class of workers as first. Professional/technical as well as administrative/managerial workers are people who have high educational qualifications and, therefore, are skilful in their various areas of specialisation. By virtue of their training and expertise, they earn high incomes that enable them support their students in schools as expected of them. It means that education; training and skills acquisition is essential and must be encouraged by all stakeholders of education. This is in agreement with Horgan (2007:1) who observes that education provides 'a route out of poverty'. Government, churches, NGOS, donor agencies, philanthropic organisations and individuals must see it as a social responsibility to contribute in various ways to the education of the disadvantaged communities and individuals in society.

Teacher-respondents and students agreed to some extent that students' educational achievement is influenced by the type of school they attend. The type of school students attend contributes in diverse ways towards students' success or failure in their educational attainments. Schools that are well resourced in terms of materials and human resources are better placed to provide quality education, all things being equal. On the other hand, schools that are deprived may do their best but may not be able to provide the quality service that is expected of them. For example, schools with poor library, and classroom infrastructure, inadequate furniture and untrained teachers will provide poor service which will in turn reflect in poor academic performance of students. A situation like this will not augur well for national development and therefore requires some interventions from government, PTAs, old students, and other stakeholders of education to provide the needed infrastructure and facilities to ensure quality education no matter the location of the community. It is in the light of this, that President John Agyekum Kufour (former president of Ghana between 2000 and 2008) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) introduced the model school concept in 2001, which aimed at up-grading at least one existing SHS in each educational district, in order to ease the pressure on the few advantaged schools. This policy must be pursued to bring about equal opportunities for all in education irrespective

of one's social status. This policy initiative ties in well with a new Educational Law in the US dubbed 'Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)' signed by President Obama on 10th December, 2015, which emphasises 'equal opportunity for all students' (US Department of Education, 2015:1).

The study confirmed that teachers' quality influences children's educational achievements in schools. Teachers are central to the quality of education and, therefore, the quality of teachers appointed must be of prime concern to all stakeholders of education. It is for this reason that Ofosu-Kusi (2007:188) indicated that there is 'a compelling reason for a higher calibre of teachers at all levels as a way of elevating quality and examination performances to a higher level in the District.

A well trained and experienced teacher is an asset to education and must be maintained to ensure quality education. Government should provide attractive incentive packages such as scholars for at least two children of every teacher, free medical care and housing allowances that will entice more quality teachers into the teaching profession.

Limitations of the Study

The study employed a mixed method approach in carrying out this research and therefore, the limitations of this study are characterised by both quantitative and qualitative factors just like any other mixed method research. First, by virtue of the fact that, this study covered two educational districts in the Central region of Ghana and more so only four selected SHS in these districts makes the generalisation of the findings of this study difficult since the coverage is very limited. It is often argued that, generalising the outcomes of studies with limited coverage is problematic and unreliable (Cohen et. al., 2007). The sample size of 531 for both quantitative and qualitative data, that is 500 and 31 respectively selected from the two districts is good only for academic purposes and therefore could not provide any good grounds for generalisation to cover the entire nation.

However, it is possible for readers of this study to identify their contexts with this study on the basis of common characteristics they may share with the present study. For example, since this study was conducted in a coastal area where small scale fishing and farming were predominantly the occupations of parents, other coastal areas with similar characteristics could associate the findings to their local context if the commonalities are there. On the basis of this, the findings of this study could be used in close association with other findings of research carried out in the Ghanaian educational context to sensitise

people on the challenges that parents face in supporting their students' education at the SHS level and the possible policy implications that could be drawn to help the situation.

The second limitation of this study could be related to sampling of the population and non-involvement of some possible respondents that could have enhanced the findings. The population of the study consisted of school officials, teachers, students, and parents of only the study area due to limited time for data collection and the fact that the study was funded by the researcher himself. The researcher realised that other stakeholders such as the District Directors of Education or their deputies and identified NGOs could have been involved in the sample who could have contributed important information to the study. The non-involvement of such people in the study implies that the researcher might have missed out some vital information to the study. This notwithstanding, the findings of this study are very relevant considering the fact that the relevant people were included in the study. This is borne out from the fact that there was a high degree of agreement between the quantitative and qualitative data collected. Therefore, data that would have been collected from the other stakeholders would not have been much different from what have been gathered.

The third limitation of the study could relate to the quality of research instruments used for the data collection. The researcher used questionnaire, semi-structured interview questions, focus group discussion, observation and secondary data. However, the extent to which these instruments helped in data collection depends to a large extent on the quality of the instruments used. A well designed instrument could help in the collection of the right information needed for the study, all things being equal. On the other hand, a poorly prepared research instruments would collect wrong data that may not be relevant for the study. However, because the researcher carefully prepared the instruments which were vetted by experts in the research area, the quality was guaranteed. More so, the instruments were pilot tested to ensure that the items were reliable. Aside these, a variety of instruments were used to complement other methods to ensure the data collected were appropriate for the study. In addition, data collected from different respondents such as school officials, teachers, parents and students were in agreement on the issues raised in the study.

The fourth limitation of the study relates to the researcher's own biases that could influence the research findings which may lead to subjectivity (Verma and Mallick, 1999;

Muijs, 2004). However, the researcher was pretty aware of the experiences of SES of parents and how it affects students in their educational pursuits in Ghana. These experiences and perceptions are still fresh in the mind of the researcher and could have influenced the interpretations of the data to match his previous experiences and preconceptions rather than what was presented by the participants. As a professional, and very much aware of the temptation associated with this problem, the researcher consciously 'avoided relying on initial intuitive interpretation rooted' in his personal experiences and understanding (Davis, 2002) cited in Jones et. al. (2006:126). As a measure to avoid this problem, the researcher used semi-structured interviews for both school officials and parents and the responses obtained from these two categories of respondents were very much in agreement with the issues raised in the study. In a similar way, students were given questionnaire and focus group discussions and the data collected from both sources were in agreement on the issues. Aside these, the use of observation and secondary data by the researcher ensured that the data was triangulated and therefore eliminated any personal bias of the researcher.

In spite of these limitations, it could be argued that the mixed method approach adopted in this research was appropriate. It helped in providing the right answers and sufficient data to answer the key research questions in the study. The findings of this study are therefore valid, reliable, ethical and trustworthy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study two set of recommendations are made. In the first place, some recommendations are made which could inform or complement policy decisions on SES of parents and how it affects children's education. Similarly, recommendations are also made for the research.

The following are some of the recommendations made for policy:

1. Considering the fact that some students were identified as needy students, the Government of Ghana should take measures to ensure that needy students are given government scholarships and bursaries in order to reduce the financial pressures they experience in their educational pursuit. It is a well-known fact that students who come from middle class homes rather enjoy government scholarships and bursaries in Ghana.

2. The study found that generally facilities in the advantaged SHS were far better than those in the disadvantaged SHS and that account for the low achievement levels in the disadvantaged schools. The study recommends that government should channel more resources into the educational sector to address the challenges of disadvantaged schools in terms of infrastructure, furniture, computers, library books and text books among other needs. The schools and the various assemblies can also solicit support from donor agencies, NGOs, and corporate organisations to assist them for government alone cannot do everything.

3. It was also shown in the study that some parents never had formal education and this might account for their poor attitudes towards their children's education. The study recommends that government intensifies its non-formal education drive which aims at providing adults with skills in literacy and numeracy. This will help parents appreciate the need to support their children's education better.

4. The revelation that most parents did not have employable skills is worrying. Therefore, the Government of Ghana must take skills development of the youth very serious in order to equip the youth with skills during the period when they are waiting for their results after completing school and also repackage some of the National Service Schemes to meet such training needs. This requires that government increases its Skills Development Fund (SDF) for Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET) to carter for this important programme, for today's youth, are future leaders of the nation.

The rest are recommendations for the study:

5. The assertion made by teachers that parents' financial circumstances affect students' academic achievements in the study area is a serious concern that must be addressed to ensure that students achieve the best in their educational endeavours. In line with this finding, the study recommends that parents should make conscious effort to learn trades that will equip them with employable skills that will enable them earn better incomes in order to save towards their children's education. The Government of Ghana should expand its youth training programme on skills acquisition to cover all categories of people who desire skills to make them employable to earn better incomes than relying on public sector employment.

6. The revelation that most parents have difficulties in paying their children's' fees and providing their educational needs is a worrying situation. It is, therefore, recommended that stakeholders of education such as Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies, NGOs, churches and other stakeholders take up the responsibility of educating parents on the need to cultivate the habit of saving. This can be through daily savings ("susu"). This will enable low income earners to access loan in times of need to support their children's education.

7. In cognizance of schools' official admission that students who owed fees become psychologically disturbed and are unable to concentrate on their studies calls for students' counselling in schools to assist students who have such difficulties.

8. The finding that parents' low educational background leads to low income earnings resulting in their inability to pay for their children's school fees calls for sensitisation of parents on the importance of education and the provision of training by Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assemblies and NGOs to equip parents who need skills. The assemblies can use part of their Common Fund to embark on training programmes that will provide employable skills to parents to make them more productive in local occupations such as grass cutter raring, bee keeping, and mushroom production among others. This approach amounts to teaching parents how to 'fish for themselves' and not to rely on others all the time to pay and provide their children's educational needs.

9. The study found that some parents did not have time to discuss with their children the progress and challenges they encounter in their studies. It is in this respect that the researcher recommends that parents must discuss with their students the progress and challenges they have in their studies at least once in every term. This will demonstrate the interest that parents have in their children's education which will urge them to sit up and take their studies serious.

10. In the light of the finding that, poor home environment of students from disadvantaged backgrounds affects their desire to study at home is worrying and must be addressed by parents. Parents must accept the challenge of providing and creating a congenial atmosphere at home that will promote their learning. For example, tables and chairs, dictionaries, story books, newspapers, television and

radio sets and a quiet place for learning at home must be provided by parents so that children can learn.

11. It came to light that some students work before and after school to assist their parents to raise income for the family. The idea of assisting in the household chores and other family duties is not bad but students should not be made to work at the expense of their education. In the same vein, they should not be made to engage in works that are strenuous such as fishing, mining among others which could have health implications for them.

12. The study found that some disadvantaged students care for themselves and therefore making schooling a very difficult task. Some of these students may either be orphans or have single-parents. The study recommends that students in such situation must be identified by the school as needy students who need help. The school can solicit help from corporate organisations, NGOs, philanthropists and scholarship secretariat to assist this category of students.

13. The study revealed that some students spent their fees given to them by their parents on other things and play hide and seek with the school authorities. The researcher recommends that parents should make it a point to visit their children in school once in a while to find out from teachers how they are conducting themselves in school because some students behave differently in school. These unannounced visits will enable parents track the movements of their children in school and take steps to address the situation where necessary.

Suggestions for Future Research

The researcher notes that empirical studies in SES of parents and its effects on education is widely carried out in the developed nations such as US, UK and among other nations. However, research into this area in Africa, and for that matter, Ghana is not enough. Particularly, research on SES of parents and its effects on students at the SHS level is almost non-existent and therefore, the researcher recommends fellow researchers to further research into these areas:

- A national survey is undertaken to assess the effects of SES on SHS students' achievements in Ghana.

- An investigation be conducted to ascertain the extent to which SES affects access of students to SHS in the study area.

- A survey to assess the proportion of advantaged SHS students who gain access to tertiary institutions as against disadvantaged SHS students.

APPENDICES

A1

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION – AWUTU-SENYA DISTRICT

APPENDIX A1

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

In case of reply the
Number and Date of
this letter should be
quoted

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

District Education Office
P.O. Box 11
Awutu Bereku

Tel: 03321-94935

My Ref No: GES/CR/ASDO/202/VOL.1/5
Your Ref. No:……………………….....................

10th December, 2012

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION
MR DANIEL YELKPIERI

We wish to introduce to you the lecturer above who is a Senior Research Fellow of the Centre for Education Policy Studies at the University of Education, Winneba.

We would be very grateful if you give the necessary assistance to enable him conduct research on his project titled "Socio-Economic Status of Parents and its Effects on Student's Educational Achievements in the Awutu-Senya and Effutu Directorates."

Thank you.

ABAIDOO ADENTWI EDZII
DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
AWUTU-SENYA

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION – EFFUTU MUNICIPALITY

APPENDIX A2

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

In case of reply the number and
Date of this letter should be
quoted

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

MUNICIPAL EDUCATION OFFICE
P. O. BOX 54
WINNEBA
TEL: 03323 22075

My Ref. No:GES/CR/EMEOW/ILC.80/VOL.1/12

Your Ref. No:...............................

DATE: 10TH DECEMBER, 2012

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION
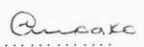
We write to introduce to you Mr. Daniel Yelkpieri, a Senior Research Fellow of the Centre for Educational Policy Studies, University of Education, Winneba.

Mr. Yelkpieri is currently working on a research project titled "Socio-Economic Status of Parents and Its Effects on Students Educational Achievements in the Awutu Senya and Effutu Municipal Directorates".

In view of this your school has been selected for this research project.

Kindly give him your maximum support for the success of his research.

Thank you.

ELIZABETH AMOAKO ENIMIL (MRS)
MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
WINNEBA

ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
SHS IN THE MUNICIPALITY
WINNEBA

B1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Dear Respondent,
This questionnaire is aimed at collecting information on socio-economic status of parents and its effects on students' educational achievements in Awutu Senya and Effutu directorates. The data collected will be used solely for academic purposes. Your objective responses to the questions will help to obtain a good idea of the problem and then possible recommendations to the issues raised in the study.
All respondents are assured of confidentiality of whatever information they provide.
Thank you.
Daniel Yelkpieri
Bio-Data:
1. Gender Male [ ]   Female [ ]
2. Highest qualification:
    a) Masters degree [ ]
    b) Bachelor's degree [ ]
    c) Diploma (undergraduate) [ ]
    d) Others, (please, specify)
3. Length of service/teaching experience:
    a. 1 – 4 yrs [ ]
    b. 5 – 8 yrs [ ]
    c. 9 – 12 yrs [ ]
    d. 13 – 16 yrs [ ]
    e. 17 – 20 yrs [ ]
    f. Above 20 yrs [ ]

Research Question 1: How do parents' financial circumstances affect students' academic achievement in the Awutu Senya and Effutu Educational Directorates?
Respondents are required to tick one of the responses in the columns that correspond to the statement made in the rows of the table below.

Views	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
4. Parents' financial status determines the type of school their children attend.					
5. Parents' ability to support students' education influences their confidence level and attitudes towards learning.					
6. Parents' financial status determines the ease with which students' fees and other levies are paid.					
7. Parents' financial status determines the level of provision made for learning and writing materials.					
8. Parents' financial status					

determines how regular a student is given money for lunch and transport for school.

9. Parents' financial status influences how regular students attend school.

10. What other challenges do students encounter in financing their education?

....

....

Research Question 2: To what extent does the learning environment provided by parents at home determine the academic achievement of students?

Respondents are required to tick one of the responses in the columns that corresponds to the statement made in the rows of the table below.

Factors/Learning Environment	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
11. Provision of learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere for studies helps in the academic achievements of students.					
12. Home environment determines what a student knows before enrolling at SHS.					
13. Parents' interest in their students' education affects their academic attainments.					
14. Parental supervision of students' learning activities affects their achievement level in school.					
15. Parents and siblings' speech models affect students' academic achievement level.					

Research Question 3: To what extent do educational qualifications of parent's influence students' academic success?

Respondents are required to tick one of the responses in the columns that correspond to the statement made in the rows of the table below.

Views	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly disagree 5
16. Parents' academic qualifications influence children's educational achievements in school.					
17. Parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of assistance children receive at home in respect of their studies.					
18. Parents' educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities.					
19. Parents' educational attainments provide inspiration for students.					
20. Parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of supervision given to students' learning at home.					
21. Parents' educational qualifications influence the interests they attach to their children's education.					
22. Parents' vocational/professional qualifications influence students' level of achievement.					
23. Type of school parents attended influence students' achievement level.					

Research Question 4.
Which category of work force has the highest number of students progressing to SHS level and beyond?

Respondents are required to rank the category of work force that has most students in SHS and beyond by ranking them as 1st followed by 2nd as the next category in that order to 6th, the least factor (ranking: 1ST, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th).

Category of Work Force	Rankings
24. Administrative/Managerial e.g. Director, manager	
25. Professional/Technical e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers, lawyers,	
26. Production and related workers e.g. transport, equipment operators and labourers, tailors, carpenters	
27. Service workers e.g. beauticians, taxi drivers,	
28. Farmers, fishermen and forestry workers	

29. What factors account for parents' inability to support their students' education to SHS level and beyond?..

....

....

Research Question 5

To what extent are students' educational achievement influenced by the type of school they attend?

Respondents are required to tick one of the responses in the columns that correspond to the statement made in the rows of the table below.

Views	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly disagree 5
30. Teacher quality can influence children's educational achievement in school.					
31. Teachers' teaching experience enhances effective teaching and consequently students' achievement in school.					
32. Schools' general atmosphere influences students' academic achievement.					
33. Availability of well stocked and equipped library facility influences students' success in school.					
34. Schools' general academic performance influences students' achievement in school.					
35. Availability of ICT facility and computers enhance students' level of success.					
36. Support of an effective Parents Teacher Association (PTA) influences students' achievement level.					
37. Support of an effective Old Students Association contributes to students' achievement level.					

Thank you
Daniel Yelkpieri

SECTION B: STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is aimed at collecting information on socio-economic status of parents and its effects on students' educational achievements in Awutu Senya and Effutu Directorates. The data collected will be used solely for the purpose of the study. Therefore, your objective responses to the questions will help in coming out with a good idea of the problem and then possible recommendations to the issues raised in the study. All respondents are assured of confidentiality of whatever information they provide. Thank you.

Daniel Yelkpieri.

Bio-Data:

1. Gender: Male [ ]   Female [ ]
2. Form :   Form three [ ]   Form four [ ]
3. Fathers' level of education. Please, tick the right level that applies to your father.
    A) Primary school (B 1, B 2, B 3, B 4, B 5, and B 6) [ ]
    B) Junior High School (JHS 1, JHS 2 and JHS 3) [ ]
    C) Senior High School (SHS 1, SHS 2, and SHS 3) [ ]
    D) Diploma (undergraduate) [ ]
    E) Bachelors' degree [ ]
    F) Masters [ ]
    G) PhD/Doctorate [ ]
    H) Others, (Please, specify..)
4. Mothers' level of education. Please, tick the right level that applies to your mother.
    a) Primary school (B 1, B 2, B 3, B 4, B 5, and B 6) [ ]
    b) Junior High School (JHS 1, JHS 2 and JHS 3) [ ]
    c) Senior High School (SHS 1, SHS 2, and SHS 3) [ ]
    d) Diploma [ ]
    e) Bachelors' degree [ ]
    f) Masters [ ]
    g) PhD/Doctorate [ ]
    h) Others, (Please, specify...)
5. Type of housing:
    a) Block and cement with Iron sheets/tiles [ ]
    b) Bricks house with iron sheets [ ]
    c) Bricks house with thatch roofing [ ]
    d) Mud house with thatch roofing [ ]
    e) Mud house with iron sheets [ ]
6. Is the house in which you stay owed by your parents? A) Yes b) No

Research Question 1
How do parents' financial circumstances affect students' academic achievement in the Awutu Senya and Effutu Educational Directorates?
Respondents are required to tick one of the responses in the columns that corresponds to the statement made in the rows of the table below.

Views	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
7. Parents' financial status determines the type of school their children attend.					
8. Parents' ability to support students' education influence their confidence level and attitudes towards learning.					
9. Parents' financial status determines the ease with which students' fees and other levies are paid.					
10. Parents' financial status determines the level of provisions made for learning and writing materials.					
11. Parents' financial status determines how regular a student is given money for school.					
12. Parents' financial status influences how regular students attend school.					

13. Do your parents pay your school fees in instalments? A) Yes   B) No
14. If yes, how many instalments?
      i)   Two
      ii)   Three
      iii)   Four
      iv)   Five
15. Why do your parents pay your school fees by instalments?
    ....
    ....
16. Do you owe arrears in fees from last year? A) Yes B) No
17. Do you take care of yourself as a student? A) Yes B) No
18. Why do you have to take care of yourself?
    ....
    ....
19. What do you do to get money to take care of yourself and your education?
    ....
    ....

20. What other challenges do you encounter in financing your education?

....

....

21. Which of the following learning items/equipment do you have? (Please, tick all those you have)
    - i) Mathematical set [ ]
    - ii) Scientific calculator [ ]
    - iii) Prescribed text books [ ]

22. Why don't you have some of the learning items or equipment?

....

....

23. Do you sometimes fail to go to school because of financial difficulties you encounter? If yes, please, explain further...

....

24. How do your financial difficulties affect your studies in school?

....

....

Research Question 2.
To what extent does the learning environment provided by parents at home determine the academic achievement of students?
Respondents are required to tick one of the responses in the columns that corresponds to the statement made in the rows of the table below.

Factors / Learning Environment	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
25. Provision of learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere for studies helps in the academic achievements of students.					
26. Home environment determines what a student knows before enrolling at SHS.					
27. Parents' interest in their students' education affects their academic attainments.					
28. Parental supervision of students' learning activities affects their achievement					

level in school.
29. Parents and siblings
speech models
affect students'
academic
achievement level.

30. Which of the following facilities do you have at home that promote your learning?
(Please, tick as many as apply to you)
   i)   Bedroom/quiet place conducive for learning [ ]
   ii)   Light (electricity) [ ]
   iii)   Lantern   [ ]
   iv)   Table and chair [ ]
   v)   Dictionary [ ]
   vi)   Story books [ ]
   vii)   Textbooks [ ]
   viii)   News papers [ ]
   ix)   Radio [ ]
   x)   Television [ ]
   xi)   Internet [ ]
   xii)   Computer [ ]
31. Who provide these facilities?..
32. Do your parents make arrangements for extra- teaching for you at home or during
vacation? A) Yes   b) No
33. If no, why?...
....
....
..

Research Question 3.
To what extent do educational qualifications of parents influence students' academic success?
Respondents are required to tick one of the responses in the columns that corresponds to the statement made in the rows of the table below.

Views	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
34. Parents' educational qualifications influence students' educational achievements in school.					
35. Parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of assistance children receive at home in respect of their studies.					
36. Parents' educational attainments enhance home environment for children's learning activities.					
37. Parents' educational attainments encourage students to work hard.					
38. Parents' educational					

qualifications determine the kind
of supervision given to students
learning at home.

39. Parents' educational
qualifications influence the
interests they attach to their
children's education.

40. In what ways do your parents' educational qualifications benefit you as a student?
....
....
....

Research Question 4.
Which category of work force has the highest number of students progressing to SHS level and beyond?

Respondents are required to rank the category of work force that has most students in SHS and beyond by ranking them as 1st followed by 2nd as the next category in that order to 7th, the least factor (ranking: 1ST, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, $5^{th,}$and 6th). Please, do not use one number more than once.

Category of Work Force	**Rankings**
41. Administrative/Managerial e.g. Directors, managers	
42. Professional/Technical e.g. teachers doctors, nurses,	
43. Production and related workers e.g. transport, equipment operators and labourers, tailors, carpenters	
44. Service workers e.g. beauticians, taxi drivers,	
45. Farmers, fishermen and forestry workers	
46. Sales workers/petty traders	

47. What reasons account for parents' inability to support their children's education to
SHS level and beyond?...
....

48. In your opinion, do you think the type of work your parents do has any relationship
with the progress of your education? if yes, explain further..
....

Research Question 5.
To what extent are students' educational achievement influenced by the type of school they attend?

Respondents are required to tick one of the responses in the columns that corresponds to the statement made in the rows of the table below.

Views	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly disagree 5
49. Teacher quality can influence children educational achievement in school.					
50. Teachers' teaching experience enhances effective teaching and consequently students' achievement in school.					
51. Schools' general atmosphere influence students' academic achievement.					
52. Availability of well stocked and equipped library facility influences students' success in school.					
53. Schools' general academic performance influences students' achievement in school.					
54. Availability of ICT facility and computers enhance students' level of success.					
55. Support of an effective Parents Teacher Association (PTA) influences students' achievement level.					
56. Support of an effective Old Students Association contributes to students' achievement level.					

57. If you have a second chance to choose your school would you choose your present school? A) Yes B) No

58. If yes, why?..
....
.
....

59. If no, why? ....
....
....

Thank you.
Daniel Yelkpieri

B3

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADMASTERS AND SENIOR HOUSE MASTERS

1. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Length of service:

a. 1 – 4 yrs [ ]

b. 5 – 8 yrs [ ]

c. 9 – 12 yrs [ ]

d. 13 – 16 yrs [ ]

e. 17 – 20 yrs [ ]

f. Above 20 yrs [ ]

3. What percentage of your teaching staff is untrained?

4. How do teacher quality and its effectiveness contribute to students' educational success?

5. What is your view on the general academic performance of your school?

6. How will you describe the state of your school library?

7. In your opinion do think the general school atmosphere play any role in students' academic performance in school?

8. In your opinion in what ways do parents' educational background influences pupils' academic attainments in school?

9. As a headmaster, have you observed any differences in terms of achievements between socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged students in your school?

10. In your opinion do some of your students have difficulties in funding their education?

11. How does the school handle students who have difficulties in funding their education?

12. In your view do such experiences affect their level of academic achievement in school?

13. In your view what are some of the home-related factors that affect students' academic achievements?

B4

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL ACCOUNTANTS

1. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Length of service:
    a. 1 – 4 yrs [ ]

b. 5 – 8 yrs [ ]

c. 9 – 12 yrs [ ]

d. 13 – 16 yrs [ ]

e. 17 – 20 yrs [ ]
f. Above 20 yrs [ ]
3. What are your views on students' school fees payment plan?
4. How early do your students pay their school fees in a term?
5. Do some of your students have difficulties in funding their education? If yes, please explain further.
6. Do some of your students pay their school fees by instalments? A) Yes B) No
7. If yes, how many instalments?
v) Two
vi) Three
vii) Four
viii) Five
8. Do some of your students owe arrears in fees from last year? I f yes, please explain further.
9. How does the school handle students with such difficulties?
10. In your view do such experiences affect students' level of academic achievement in school?

B5

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. What do you do for a living?
3. Please, what is your level of education?
4. What type of housing do you have?
5. In your opinion do you think your educational background influences your children's educational achievement?
6. What kind of encouragement do you give your children in their education?
7. Do you ensure that your children spend time to do their home work or study when they are at home?
8. How often do you engage your children to discuss the progress in their education?

9. How early do you pay your children's school fees in a term?
10. Do you pay your children's school fees and other levies in instalments? If yes, please explain further.
11. How regular do you give your children lunch and transport money for school?
12. How easily do you provide your children's educational needs such as text books, exercise books, school uniforms, etc?
13. Do your children have arrears to pay in school? If yes, what arrangements have you made to pay such arrears?
14. Do you make any arrangement for extra-teaching for your children at home?
15. Do you sometimes spend time to teach or assist your children at home to do their home work or in their studies?
16. What are some of the facilities you have provided at home to ensure that there is conducive learning environment?
17. In your view how do you rate the performance of the school your children attend?
In your opinion does the type of school students attend influence their academic achievement?
18. In your view which category of work force is generally more capable of supporting their children up to SHS and beyond?

APPENDIX B6
STATE OF SOME SELECTED SCHOOL FACILITIES TO BE OBSERVED

School Facilities	Excellent	V. good	Good	Fair	Poor	Remarks
Class space						
Furniture						
Library						
Science laboratory						
Computer laboratory						
ICT						
Electricity						
Dormitory blocks						
Assembly hall						
Dining hall						
Sick bay						
Water						
School bus						

State of some Seleceted School Facilities to be be Observed

Winnesec

STATE OF SOME SELECTED SCHOOL FACILITIES TO BE OBSERVED

School Facilities	Excellent	V. good	Good	Fair	Poor	Remarks
Class space		✓				
Furniture		✓	✓			
Library			✓			New lib under construction
Science laboratory			✓			
Computer laboratory	✓					Well equipped & modern equip't
ICT	✓					
Electricity		✓				
Dormitory blocks				✓		
Assembly hall		✓				
Dining hall					✓	
Sick bay						
Water	✓					
School bus		✓				

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The main themes around which the discussion will be centred on are :

1.   Funding of education and the challenges.

2.   Learning environment at home and how it influences achievement.

3.   Ways family members such as siblings contribute to enhance educational achievement.

4.   Parents' educational qualification and its influence on students' success.

5.   Type of school one attends and educational achievement.

SCHOOL RECORDS ON PAST EXAMINATIONS

The researcher will collect past examination results on percentage passed in core subjects from 2008 - 2012 as shown in the table as secondary data.

Subject	% passed 2008	% passed 2009	% passed 2010	% passed 2011	% passed 2012
English Language					
Integrated Science					
Social Studies					
Mathematics					

TESTS OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Test 1

```
RELIABILITY
  /VARIABLES=gder hqual lste pfsdtsca passedicll pfsdewsfp pfslpmlm
  pfsdhrsmlt pfsihrsas plehll hendwskbbe pisedafaca psslaafacl pssmasac
  pacqicsc pedqdkascrh pedaehenslac pedapis pedqdksslh pedqiitaced pvpqislac
  tyspatisacl adman protec prwk serwks fffwks tqicedacs tteeeftcsac
  sgatisaca avwslfiss sgacpisacs avictfcesls sefptaisacl sefosacsacl
  /SCALE('ALL VARIABLES')  ALL/MODEL=ALPHA
  /STATISTICS=SCALE CORR .
```

Reliability

[DataSet1] C:\Program Files (x86)\SPSS Evaluation\Pre-testing masters.sav

Warnings

Each of the following component variables has zero variance and is removed from the scale: support of an effective PTA influences students' achievement level.

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	4	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	4	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.795	.858	34

```
RELIABILITY
/VARIABLES=gder hqual lste pfsdtsca passedicll pfsdewsfp pfslpmlm
pfsdhrsmlt pfsihrsas plehll hendwskbbe pisedafaca psslaafacl pssmasac
pacqicsc pedqdkascrh pedaehenslac pedapis pedqdksslh pedqiitaced pvpqislac
tyspatisacl adman protec prwk serwks fffwks tqicedacs tteeeftcsac
sgatisaca avwslfiss sgacpisacs avictfcesls sefptaisacl sefosacsacl
/SCALE('ALL VARIABLES')  ALL/MODEL=ALPHA
/STATISTICS=SCALE CORR .
```

Reliability

[DataSet1] C:\Program Files (x86)\SPSS Evaluation\Pre-testing masters.sav

Warnings

Each of the following component variables has zero variance and is removed from the scale: support of an effective PTA influences students' achievement level.

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	4	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	4	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.795	.858	34

SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBED DATA

Interview with SO1

1. Male   2. 20 yrs and above

3. Abt 5.6%

4. Most of our trs are trained, over 94% are trained. We have a high calibre of staff and they are delivering, which is showing on our stdts academic performance.

5. I will say excellent, b/c the last WASSCE results we had 97%.

6. Fairly good except that the space is not adequate. The current library was built for 400 students. Now we have a student population of over 1400. As a result we have a lot bigger in this stance, the GETfund is putting up a library for us.

7. The sch atmosphere is good for academic work. The channel of communication is open from the student level to top. Students have the chance to air their views on any pertinent issue in the school. So the atmosphere is very conducive.

8. Those parents who are educated take more interest in their wards' education, so they cooperate. In effect, the more educated a parent is the more interest he takes in the child's education and this impact positively on their education.

Yes, parents who are economically ok turn to invest in their chn education and so it positively impact on the education of the students. ~~but~~ Those who are not financially well endowed are ~~able~~ able to pay their students' fees ~~without but those~~ without any problem but those who have difficulties with their finances struggle to pay studts' fees and this affect them.

10 Yes, some of them have difficulties in paying their sch fees, and providing the ednal needs for their wards. ~~edu~~

11 We have Gov't scholarship for brilliant but needy students so we apply for them. In addition, some NGOs like Plan Ch International, and AIHA Educational fund, support some of these students. We also have concern trs who ~~give~~ sometimes assist some of these students.

12. Definitely yes, if they cannot pay their fees then they cannot concentrate in class. They are usually hunted by the fact that they owe fees, so phychologically they are disturbed.

13. One of them is that students from ~~broken~~ homes where the parents are not together have serious problems in paying their fees. The reason is that sometimes the father or mother is not ready to pay the fees. This does not augur well for the child's education.

Poor parents who are not able to provide the needs of the children in school, this affects their performa-a in sch.

students from broken homes are not given the right training at home b/c they lack affection and this can affect their behaviour in school which in turn affect their general school performance.

Some of the day students when they go home, they don't have good places to learn. There are other students where they go home, they have to go and assist their mothers in the market. All these impact negatively on their studies. Some students too go to the beach to help their parents b4 they are able to get whatever they want.

Q1. Male   Q2. 23 yrs   Q3. Abt 4% the trs are untrained, they are mostly polytechnics graduates.

Q4. When the trs are well trained, they know what they are abt and then they know their subject matter very well. I think it encourages teaching and learning. They are able to teach effectively for students to understand so the quality of the tr is essential in the education of student achievements.

Q5. Any way the school's academic performance is not excellent, b/c of the type of students we admit here. The aggregate they bring for admission are usually on the high side. The grades that they bring here are horrible however, at the end of the course we are able to bring them to a level. Our passes are not bad.

Q6. It is very appalling, it is nothing to write home abt. We lack library tables and chairs, we lack lecture furniture. The books, we don't have enough bks for research wk.

Q7. The env't is quiet conducive for learning. We have trees around and this provides very serene atmosphere, if any student wants to learn at any time he or she can do so.

Alright, alright, very excellent. The trs are very cordial with the students and are always ready to help them.

Q8. When they come for admission and you intervie
you realise that some of them are fishermen, farm
and traders, so their educational background is not good
and its affects the stats as well. b/c the grades that they
bring in you say that if care is not taken
B/c supervision at home is not good and students do what
ever they like. Parents - -

Q9. Yes, yes, some of the students who come from socioe
onomically advantaged home are a little bit higher
good homes
academically than those who are coming from socioeco
nomically disadvantaged backgrounds. That is why s
said
The reason is that ☐ stats from socioeconomically adva
ntaged homes are given proper supervision and care
at home by their parents. Parent don't have control
over their chn

Q10. So many of them, b/c at the end of the term we
seek abt 50% to go for their school fees. As the term is
coming to an end now. We will try to drive them away to
collect their sch fees. So payment of sch fees in
this sch is very difficult.

Q11. eeh eh, we give them ample time to pay their
fees. In some sch during the during the term they drive
in the course of the
them away but in our school we allow ample ti
them to taugt
sttime. We don't drive at the initial stage.

We give them some space ..

2. Yes, yes, if the child is financially handicapped and is not able to pay the fees—and we sack him it affects the child psychologically and academically.

psychologically it affects the student #.

Q13. Some of the stalts try to sell, they don't have time to learn, they sell for their parents. Some of them work at home to support their parents. Usually you see them selling kenkey, instead of learning, up to late in the night, they don't learn at home at all. B/c of that poverty the chn do whatever they like b/c their parents don't have control over them. You see them in town roaming abt.

TABLES MOVED TO APPENDIX E

Table 1: Distribution of Target Population

Category of Target Population	Teachers N	Students N
Winneba Senior High School	60	841
Winneba School of Business	22	231
Insaaniyya Senior High School	32	299
Senya Senior High School	75	661
Total	**189**	**2,032**

N= Number

Table 2: Distribution of Sample of Students according to Schools

Schools	Number of Students	Number of Students Sampled
Winneba Senior High School	841	129
Winneba School of Business	231	35
Insaaniyya Senior High School	299	32
Senya Senior High School	661	101
Total	**2032**	**311**

Table 3: Composition of Interviewees

Category of Interviewees	N
School Officials	
Headmasters	4
Senior Housemasters	4
Bursars/Accountants	4
Parents	
Lecturers	2
Police Officers	1
Lawyers	1
Directors (GES)	1
Administrators	2
Teachers	2
Nurses	1
Messenger/cleaner	1
Petty traders	2
Fishermen	2
Fish mongers	2
Farmers	2
Drivers	1
Total	**32**

N = Number

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents of Questionnaires According to Gender (n = 453)

Gender	Category of Respondents	
	N	%
Advantaged Students		
Male	85	48.67
Female	90	51.43
	175	100.00
Disadvantaged Students		
Male	90	66.20
Female	46	33.80
	136	100.00
Teachers		
Male	96	67.60
Female	46	32.40
	142	100.00

Number of respondents, n = Sub-sample

Table 5: Student Respondents According to Type of Schools and Forms (n = 311)

Forms	N	%
Advantaged Schools		
Form 3	4	2.30
Form 4	171	97.70
	175	100.00
Disadvantaged Schools		
Form 3	16	11.80
Form 4	120	88.20
	136	100.00

N = Number of respondents, n = Sub-sample

Table 6: Fathers' Level of Education According to Type of School

Level of Education	Advantaged Schools (n=175)		Disadvantaged Schools (n=136)	
	N	%	N	%
No Education	21	12.0	10	7.4
Basic 1	-	-	-	-
Basic 2	1	.6	-	-
Basic 3	-	-	-	-
Basic 4	2	1.1	-	-
Basic 5	-	-	4	2.9
Basic 6	7	4.0	19	14.0
JHS 1	-	-	3	2.2
JHS 2	-	-	-	-
JHS 3	19	10.9	38	27.9
SHS 1	-	-	-	-
SHS 2	-	-	-	-
SHS 3	40	22.9	21	15.4

Level of Education	N	%	N	%
SHS 4	-	-	-	-
'O' Level	6	3.4	16	11.8
'A' Level	4	2.4	-	-
College of Education	1	.6	-	-
Technical Training	2	1.1	-	-
Diploma	27	15.4	9	6.6
Bachelors' Degree	19	10.9	6	4.4
Masters	14	8.0	10	7.4
PhD/Doctorate	12	6.9	-	-

N = Number of respondents, n = Sub-sample

Table 7: Mothers' Level of Education According to Type of School

Level of Education	Advantaged Schools (n=175)		Disadvantaged Schools (n=136)	
	N	%	N	%
No Education	32	18.3	12	8.8
Basic 1	-	-	-	-
Basic 2	1	.6	-	-
Basic 3	-	-	2	1.5
Basic 4	2	1.1	2	1.5
Basic 5	-	-	1	.7
Basic 6	16	9.1	31	22.8
JHS 1	-	-	2	1.5
JHS 2	-	-	1	.7
JHS 3	37	21.1	42	30.9
SHS 1	-	-	-	-
SHS 2	-	-	-	-
SHS 3	42	24.0	22	16.2
SHS 4	-	-	-	-
'O' Level	3	1.7	12	8.8
'A' Level	3	1.7	-	-
College of Education	1	.6	-	-
Technical/Vocational Training	2	1.1	-	-
Diploma	18	10.3	2	1.5
Bachelors' Degree	8	4.6	2	1.5
Masters	9	5.1	4	2.9
PhD/Doctorate	1	.6	-	-

N = Number of respondents, n = Sub-sample

Table 12: Cross Tabulation of Influence of Home Environment on Students'
Academic Performance

Schools' general academic performance influences students' achievement in school	Responses Agree N	%	Disagree N	%
• Provision of learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere for studies helps in academic achievements of students	127	90.8	13	9.2
• Parents' interest in their students' education affects their academic attainment.	108	77.2	32	22.8
• Parental supervision of students' learning activities affects their achievement level in school.	115	82.8	24	17.2
• Parents and siblings' speech models affect students' academic achievement level.	95	67.9	45	32.1

Table 15: Facilities at Home that Promote Learning (n = 311)

Facilities	Advantaged Schools Available N	%	Not Available N	%	Disadvantaged Schools Available N	%	Not Available N	%
Bedroom/quiet place conducive for Learning	123	70.3	52	29.7	90	66.2	46	33.8
Light/electricity	172	98.3	3	1.7	122	89.7	14	10.3
Lantern	50	28.6	125	71.4	44	32.4	92	67.6
Table & chair	153	87.4	22	12.6	103	75.7	33	24.3
Dictionary	147	84.0	28	16.0	100	73.5	36	26.5
Story books	134	76.6	41	23.4	99	72.8	36	26.5
Textbooks	154	88.0	21	12.0	119	87.5	17	12.5
Newspapers	88	50.3	87	49.7	52	38.2	84	61.8
Radio	136	77.7	39	22.3	93	68.4	43	31.6
T.V.	151	86.3	24	13.7	91	66.9	45	33.1
Internet	83	47.4	92	52.6	47	34.6	89	65.4
Computer	97	55.4	78	44.6	48	35.3	88	64.7

N = Number of respondents, n = Sub-sample

Table 16: Basic Materials and Equipment Students Use in School

Items/Equipment	Advantaged Schools (n = 175)		Disadvantaged Schools (n = 136)	
	N	%	N	%
All (three items)	114	65.1	70	51.5
Mathematical set only	17	9.7	16	11.8
Scientific calculator only	4	2.3	7	5.1
Prescribed text books only	6	3.4	12	8.8
Mathematical set & Scientific Calculator	9	5.1	13	9.5
Mathematical set & Prescribed text books	15	8.6	5	3.7
Scientific calculator & Prescribed text books	2	1.1	4	3.0
None	8	4.7	9	6.6
Total	175	100.0	136	100.0

Table 18: Cross Tabulation of Parents' Academic Qualifications and Children's Academic Performance

Schools' general academic performance influences children's achievement in school	Responses			
	Agree		**Disagree**	
	N	%	N	%
• **Parents' academic qualifications influence children's educational achievements in school**	99	70.7	41	29.3
• **Parents' educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities.**	118	84.2	22	15.8
• **Parents' educational attainments provide inspiration for students.**	122	88.5	16	11.5
• **Parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of supervision given to students' learning at**	92	65.7	48	34.3

home.

- **Parents' educational qualifications influence the interests they attach to their children's education.**   96   68.6   44   31.4

Table 27: Observation Made on some Selected Facilities in Advantaged SHS

School Facilities	Excellent	V. good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Available
Classroom space	● ●	ISHS	WSHS	●	●	●
Furniture	●	ISHS	WSHS	●	●	●
Library	●	●	ISHS WSHS	●	●	●
Science laboratory	●	●	WSHS	●	●	●
Computer laboratory	WSHS	●	ISHS	●	●	●
ICT	WSHS	●	ISHS	●	●	●
Electricity	●	WSHS	ISHS	●	●	●
Dormitory blocks	●	●	ISHS	WSHS	●	●
Assembly hall	●	●	ISHS WSHS	●	●	●
Dining hall	●	●	●	●	WSHS	● ISHS
Sick bay	●	WSHS	●	●	●	● ISHS
Water	WSHS	ISHS	●	●	●	●
School bus			ISHS WSHS			

Key to the Table
WSHS = Winneba Senior High School,   ISHS = Insaaniyya Senior High School

Table 28: Observation Made on some Selected Facilities in Disadvantaged SHS

School Facilities	Excellent	V. good	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Available
Classroom space			SSHS/WSB			
Furniture			SSHS	WSB		
Library					SSHS/WSB	
Science laboratory						WBS
Computer laboratory				SSHS		
ICT			SSHS			
Electricity				SSHS		
Dormitory		SSHS				

blocks				WBS/SSHS
Assembly hall	WSB	SSHS		
Dining hall				WBS/SSHS
Sick bay				WBS/SSHS
Water	SSHS/WSB			
School bus		SSHS	WSB	

Key to the Table

WSB = Winneba School of Business, SSHS = Senya Senior High School

Table 30: Model Summary of parents' interest in their students' education affects their academic attainment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.687[a]	.473	.457	.77668	.473	30.463	4	136	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), parents and siblings' speech models affect students' academic achievement level., provision of learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere for studies helps in academic achievements of students, parental supervision of students' learning activities affects their achievement level in school., home environment determines what students know before enrolling at school.

b. Dependent Variable: parents' interest in their students' education affects their academic attainment.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	73.506	4	18.376	30.463	.000[b]
	Residual	82.040	136	.603		
	Total	155.546	140			

a. Dependent Variable: parents' interest in their students' education affects their academic attainment.

b. Predictors: (Constant), parents and siblings' speech models affect students' academic achievement level., provision of learning environment at home such as light, lantern, textbooks, quiet atmosphere for studies helps in academic achievements of students, parental supervision of students' learning activities affects their achievement level in school., home environment determines what students know before enrolling at school.

Table 33: Model Summary of Parents' Vocational/Professional Qualifications Influence Students' Level of Achievement.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.728[a]	.529	.504	.72094	.529	21.059	7	131	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), type of school parents attended influence students' achievement level., parents educational attainments provide inspiration for students., parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of assistance children receive at home ., parents' academic qualifications influence children's educational achievements in school., parents' educational qualifications influence the interests they attach to their children's education., parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of supervision given to students' learning at home., parents educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities.

b. Dependent Variable: parents' vocational/professional qualifications influence students' level of achievement.

ANOVAᵃ

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	76.617	7	10.945	21.059	.000[b]
1	Residual	68.088	131	.520		
	Total	144.705	138			

a. Dependent Variable: parents' vocational/professional qualifications influence students' level of achievement.

b. Predictors: (Constant), type of school parents attended influence students' achievement level., parents educational attainments provide inspiration for students., parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of assistance children receive at home ., parents' academic qualifications influence children's educational achievements in school., parents' educational qualifications influence the interests they attach to their children's education., parents' educational qualifications determine the kind of supervision given to students' learning at home., parents educational attainments enhance home environment for students' learning activities.

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