

**FACTORS AFFECTING LOW ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF PUPILS
IN KEMP METHODIST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN ABURI, EASTERN REGION**

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DECLARATION

I hereby solemnly declare that, except for references to other peoples' work, which have been duly acknowledged, this thesis is the result of my own research work carried out in the department of social work, under the supervision of Mr. P. K. Abrefah and Ms. Abena Oforiwaa Ampomah.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Mr. Lawrence Asare-Danquah and my children Augusta, Frances and Emmanuella Asare-Danquah for their unwavering love and encouragement during the most difficult period of my life.



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None of those mentioned above however is responsible for any omissions or errors arising from the thesis, for which I accept full responsibility.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that are responsible for the low academic achievement of pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School at Aburi in the Eastern region of Ghana. To identify these factors, comparison was made with a high achieving school within the same Municipal area. Through this, the study has been able to establish issues that are particular to Kemp Methodist Junior High School. These factors attributed to teachers, school environmental, parents and the pupils were primarily responsible for the low academic achievement of the pupils. The school environmental factors identified include limited number of teachers with high academic qualification, inadequate teaching and learning materials, and misuse of contact hours with pupils. The teacher factors that were found to contribute to the low academic performance were incidences of lateness to school and absenteeism, inability to complete the syllabi and inadequate homework assigned to pupils. The pupil characteristics found significant were incidences of lateness to school and absenteeism, lack of assistance with studies at home and use of local language in the classroom. Home conditions or parental support variables causing pupils to perform poorly academically were their inability to provide textbooks and supplementary readers, low level of interaction with children's teachers, and low involvement in the Parent Teacher Association. The study has practical significance as it sheds light on the factors affecting the low academic performance of pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School and for decision making to improve their academic performance. It was recommended among others that there is the need to improve parents' attitudes, intensify supervision of teachers and institute incentive packages, sensitise and motivate the pupils, recognise individual differences in education and encourage guidance and counseling services for pupils.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examinations
EFA	Education for All
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GES	Ghana Education Service
GNCC	Ghana National Commission on Children
GOG	Government of Ghana
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
ISSER	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research
JHS	Junior High School
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOESS	Ministry of Education, Science and Sports
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PWCE	Presbyterian Women's College of Education
SAEMA	Shama Sub-Metro of Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly

SES	Socio-Economic Status
SHS	Senior High School
UN	United Nations
WAEC	West African Examinations Council

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The development of any nation or community largely depends upon the quality of education available to its citizens. It is generally believed that the basis for any true development must commence with the development of human resources. Hence, formal education remains the vehicle for social-economic development and social mobilization in any society. Primary education is the foundation on which further education is built. Primary education has two main purposes. The first purpose is to produce a literate and numerate population that can jointly deal with problems both at home and at work. It also serves as a foundation on which further education is built (Akanle, 2007; Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991).

Achieving Universal Primary Education is an international priority set by the United Nations (UN). In 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, Education for All (EFA) was declared (Baaden, 2002). In April 2000, a World Education Forum was held in Dakar to achieve the EFA goals. In the same year, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were declared by the UN to assist developing countries in their efforts to increase the living standards of people. The second MDG is to “ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling” (UN, 2006, p. 5). This millennium target is often measured through primary school-enrolment, primary-completion and the literacy and numeracy rate among school pupils (Vegas & Petrow, 2008).

In Ghana, there has been significant improvement in achieving the second MDG target of universal access to primary education by 2015. In 2006/07, gross primary school enrolment was 90.8 per cent (Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research [ISSER], 2008). In addition, the government has put in place useful strategies to encourage enrolment, daily attendance and retention of pupils in basic schools across the country in an attempt to realise the objectives of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy as well as the provision of Education for All (EFA) agenda. These strategies include the provision of school pupils with teaching and learning materials, school uniforms, the school feeding programme and the introduction of the capitation grant per child enrolled. The government has also instituted best teacher awards and other teacher career development programmes as motivation to teachers to ensure the delivery of quality of education to its children (Ministry of Education, Science and Sports [MOESS], 2007).

In spite of these achievements, the education sector continues to face many challenges. According to ISSER (2008) the performance of many children is failing to meet the minimum learning requirements and to acquire basic skills and competencies. In 2006, the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results released by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) showed that out of the 308,379 candidates who sat for the examination, only 190,921 candidates were able to obtain aggregates between 06 and 30 (the required national pass aggregates), which represented 62 per cent (WAEC, 2006). Again the 2008 BECE results indicated that about 282,202 candidates obtained the pass mark, which represented 62.18 per cent. Additionally, it was reported that no BECE pass has been recorded in Anyinam Kotoku Methodist Junior High School for eight consecutive years in the Eastern region of Ghana

WAEC, 2008). This buttresses the issue that poor performance in BECE is a problem which needs to be tackled.

Pupils' performance is considered a vital indicator of good schooling, so the poor performance of pupils at the basic level of education has not only led to public outcry, but also educationists have been increasingly occupied in their attempt to identify factors that influence pupils' performance especially in Basic Education Certificate Examination in Ghana. For example, Anamuah-Mensah (2010), an educationist attributed the phenomenon to lack of effective supervision and monitoring at school, lack of motivation for teachers and inadequate number of qualified teachers to fill empty classrooms. Also, Etsey (2005) attributed the cause of poor academic performance in the Shama Sub-Metro of Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Assembly (SAEMA) in Ghana to a combination of factors relating to the school environment, teachers, pupils and parents. In the same vein, Diaz (2003) found factors such as intellectual ability, poor study habit, achievement motivation, lack of vocational goals, low self-concept, low socio-economic status of the family, poor family structure and anxiety as contributing to educational performance.

It goes without saying that poor academic achievement in school may be the result of interplay of several factors. It is therefore important not only to carry out an empirical study on the causes of low academic performance of pupils, but also to look for opportunities and propose measures to assist on-going efforts at improving pupil academic achievement in general.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Over the past few years, concerns have been raised about the poor academic performance of pupils in Kemp Methodist JHS by parents and the Aburi community. A study of the BECE results of the school from 2005 to 2011 buttress this. In 2005, the school presented 71 candidates. Out of this number, only one student obtained aggregate 6-10 representing 1.4%, 4 candidates obtained aggregate 11 -20 representing 5.6%, 33 candidates representing 46% obtained aggregate 20 – 30 while the remaining 33 representing 46% obtained more than aggregate 30. This means only 38 out of the 71 were able to pass their examinations to enable them continue their education. The school was ranked 20th out of sixty-two in the Municipality. In 2011, 51 candidates were presented, out of which 11 candidates obtained aggregates between 26 and 30 representing 22%, while 40 candidates scored above aggregate 30 also representing 78%. Only the 11 qualified to further their education and the school took the 54th position. So far 2011 has been the worst in terms of BECE performance for the Kemp Methodist School (Akuapem South Municipal Ghana Education Service, 2009). All the results have been tabulated at the appendix for a better understanding.

This situation raises questions about the depth of understanding of factors affecting the low performance of pupils of Kemp Methodist JHS. The pertinent questions to address, therefore, are what is the cause of this poor academic performance of pupils? Is the fault entirely that of teachers or pupils or both of them? Or is the poor performance of students caused by parents' neglect or school environmental factors? The present study therefore sought to identify factors causing pupils of Kemp Methodist JHS to perform poorly academically in order to assist educational authorities to develop appropriate strategies to improve their output.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine factors that are responsible for the low academic achievement of pupils in the Kemp Methodist Junior High School, Aburi.

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To find out the role school environmental factors play in pupils' poor academic performance in Kemp Methodist Junior High School;
2. To ascertain home conditions responsible for the poor academic achievement of pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School;
3. To identify teacher factors that contribute to the poor academic performance of the pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School;
4. To identify pupils' characteristics responsible for their poor academic achievement in Kemp Methodist Junior High School; and
5. To find out education administration issues that contributed to the poor achievement performance of pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the following research questions were answered:

1. What school environmental factors are the causes of poor academic performance in the Kemp Methodist Junior High School?
2. What home conditions cause pupils in the Kemp Methodist Junior High School to perform poorly academically?

3. What teacher factors contribute to low academic achievement of the pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School?
4. What pupil characteristics are responsible for their poor academic achievement in the Kemp Methodist Junior High School?
5. What education administration factors contribute to the poor academic performance of the pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study sheds more light into the causal relationships among school environment, home, teacher, education administration and pupil related variables under investigation and achievement of pupils. The outcome of the study is therefore expected to assist all stakeholders in the district, particularly at the basic education level, to fashion out appropriate strategies that would enhance the academic performance of pupils. In this regard, the study would be useful to Kemp Methodist Junior High School in the analysis of the causes of poor performance in BECE. At the micro level, the school children at Kemp Methodist School would benefit by performing better academically, progressing successfully through the stages of education. They would therefore have more life opportunities and also improve their family lives and socio-economic conditions. At the mezzo or community level, Aburi would benefit from improved quality of education and successful pupils and citizens. The community would also get more contributions from its members. And at the macro level, identifying the variables that influence the achievement of young individuals at school is of great importance, because it would serve as an essential tool for Ghana Education Service and other policy makers in the design of education

policies. This would eventually lead to a rise in the number of pupils who pass nationally. The study would also add to the body of knowledge in the study area.

1.6 Definition of Concepts

It is important to define some key concepts that have been used in order to clarify the context within which they are being used in this study.

Academic achievement refers to a successful accomplishment or performance in a particular subject area. It is indicated as by grades, marks and scores of descriptive commentaries. It includes how pupils deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers in a fixed time or academic year (Hawis & Hawes, 1982 cited in Dimbisso, 2009). In order to avoid monotony, different terms such as academic performance, student performance and pupil performance are used in this study. All meant to refer to academic achievement.

Low Academic Achievement refers to a situation in which the pupil performs below his or her potential in both class tests and subsequent BECE exams, resulting in low levels of knowledge acquisition that fall short of what is required to successfully complete basic education and continue to senior high schools, technical and other vocational institutions in the country. The concept is interchangeable with poor academic performance in this study.

School environmental factors refer to the quality of the physical environment, building and facilities. Pupils' perceptions of their school environmental influence their academic performance and engagement in school.

Home conditions refer to the provision of educational resources in the home. They refer to whether homes provide a stimulating environment, full of learning physical objects and materials, and whether parents spend time with their pupils in pursuit of activities that aid in cognitive development including monitoring of children's use of time outside of school.

Teacher factors refer to his/her commitment to teaching, qualification and experience, his or her mastery of the subject matter and methods of teaching. Teachers are believed to be the major source of knowledge for pupils as well as the main actors in educational curriculum implementation (Anamuah-Mensah, Asabere-Ameyaw & Dennis, 2007).

Education administration is the division of the education system that initiates and makes available what is needed to ensure quality teaching and learning in the school.

Pupils' characteristics refer to pupil well-being, perception of the school environment, motivation, involvement in scholastic and co-curricular activities and efforts of students, perception of students' on parental support and involvement, and locus of control in all areas have significant effects on a students' academic achievement (Engin-Demir, 2009).

1.7 The Study Area

An important component of the research process is site selection. According to Berg (2004), an inappropriate location could "weaken or ruin eventual findings. The researcher must be careful to identify an appropriate population, not merely an easily accessible one," (p. 33) to obtain the most relevant data. Aburi, a town in the Akuapem South Municipality of the Eastern Region was purposefully chosen for the study area for a number of reasons.

First, in the Akuapem South Municipality, BECE results and academic performance in general are relatively poor in Aburi when compared to other towns in the Municipality. Academic achievement variations in each of the basic schools in Aburi were also taken into account. Kemp Methodist JHS for instance, is the only school out of the three basic schools in Aburi that has shown consistent poor performance in BECE and other public examinations. Second, being familiar with the area and within reach of the researcher, it would lessen the negative impact on the collection of data as well as the analysis in light of time limitation and financial challenges likely to be faced during the study. Lastly, personal acquaintance with and work experience in the locality could help the researcher gain access to valuable information.

Aburi has a population of 10, 400 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). Though Nsawam is the capital of the Akuapem South Municipality, Aburi is the traditional capital. The main language spoken in Aburi is the Akuapem Twi and their main occupations are farming, trading and carving.

As the traditional capital of the Municipality, the paramount chief of Akuapem Anafo rules the people from Aburi. Even though majority of the people are Christians specifically Presbyterians, they are very involved in the celebration of traditional festival “Odwira” which is celebrated in either October or November annually. During the festival all sons and daughters from far and near congregate at Aburi to participate in the activities. School children usually absent themselves from school to partake in the activities.

Funerals are also organized in Aburi every fortnight and mostly Fridays preceding funerals are considered “holidays” for most school children. They stay away from school with the consent of their parents to help in organizing the funerals. They fetch water and run errands just to get food

to eat during the celebrations. Again, schooling on Fridays is not very pleasant to pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School. This is because mostly they either weed at school or fetch water for teachers during contact hours while others prefer to stay away from school instead of going to work. Indeed, teaching and learning on Fridays is not very encouraging. Teachers seem to be tired and give notes to pupils to copy instead of being in the classroom with them. These are important issues that might be affecting performance in the school, and an indication of why Kemp School is a good choice of area for the study.

Aburi is also noted for hosting one of Ghana's biggest Botanical Gardens popularly known as Aburi Gardens. The Garden is a dazzling cornucopia of trees and things to see and do. It attracts a lot of tourists to Ghana and contributes to the Gross Domestic product. Aburi is also popular because of the carving industry. Educationally, Aburi can boast of three Senior High Schools namely, Aburi Girls' Senior High School; Adonten Senior High School; Presbyterian Secondary Technical School and Presbyterian College of Education. Aburi also has a Teacher Training College. There are also private schools springing up in the neighbourhood due to the low performance of the public schools.

1.8 Organisation of the Study Chapters

The success of any research work depends on how it is orderly organised. This thesis is organised into five chapters. The thesis starts with chapter one which presents the introduction and provides a background to the study and then discusses key research issues such as statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, the definition of concepts, profile of the study area as well as the organisation of the study chapters.

Chapter two is the literature review. Literature on the role of different factors in pupils' academic performance including school environmental, home and community, teacher, education administration and pupil related variables have been reviewed. It includes the Theoretical framework. In chapter three, the research methods are outlined including the research design, sampling techniques and procedures, population definition, instrumentation. It also describes the data sources and methods of data collection, ethical concerns and data handling procedures. Chapter four is the data analysis and discussion, and finally in the last chapter, a summary of finding, conclusions and recommendations are offered.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

One limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the study, that is, the study has conducted based on data collected at only one point in time rather than collection of data at different periods of time. Thus, future research should be based on data collected at different periods of time to determine more precisely the factors affecting the low academic performance of pupils in Kemp Methodist JHS. In this regard, it is suggested that future research should look at factors that affect academic performance with a gender perspective in basic schools. Also, this study covers only two basic schools, it would be difficult to generalize the findings to the population as a whole. As such, while the findings from this research may be used to guide future research efforts, it cannot be applied to other settings. Despite the above limitations the study has implications for practitioners.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This section reviews literature on factors affecting academic performance. Poor academic achievement in school may be the result of interplay of many factors. In the first part of this chapter, the concept of academic performance is defined and its scope delineated. This was followed by factors influencing academic achievement in terms of home-related factors, school-related factors, student characteristics and teacher-side factors. Though an attempt is made in this chapter to review some of these factors under the aforementioned headings, it must be reiterated that most of these factors are closely related.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. He developed the ecological systems theory in an attempt to define and understand human development within the context of the system of relationships that form the person's environment. According to Bronfenbrenner's initial theory (1989), the environment, is comprised of four layers of systems which interact in complex ways and can both affect and be affected by the person's development. These are Microsystems, Mesosystem, Ecosystems and Macrosystem. He later added a fifth dimension that comprises an element of time (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) which he called Chronosystem. This theory can be extended to model the development of an organization as well, and is particularly appropriate for describing the complex systems of a school district or even of an individual school. Each of the four system layers is described below:

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

Mesosystem: The mesosystem, simply stated, comprises the linkages between Microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Just as the direction of influence between the school and each structure within the Microsystems is bi-directional, the mesosystem involves bi-directional influences between these various structures. An example of the mesosystem of an individual school can be seen in the interactions and dynamics between two of its microsystems, students and parents. Parental expectations regarding the academic and extra-curricular success of their children can often create a dynamic that directly and indirectly impacts the atmosphere and climate of the school. Unreasonably high expectations and low tolerance for failure can create a dynamic between parent and child that is characterized by tension and fear. This dynamic impacts the school in various direct and indirect ways, including, for example, student behaviour in the classroom resulting from such expectations, pressures to ensure their child's success placed on school personnel by the parent, or an attempt by school personnel to shield students from such

parental pressures by restricting the amount of information that is communicated regarding student achievement (Johnson, 2008).

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

Macrosystem: The macrosystem can be thought of as the “social blueprint” of a given culture, subculture, or broad social context and consists of the overarching pattern of values, belief systems, lifestyles, opportunities, customs, and resources embedded therein (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). This system is generally considered to exert a unidirectional influence upon not only the person but the micro-, meso-, and exosystems as well. The macrosystem of an individual school is embodied not only in the cultural, political, social, and economic climate of the local community, but that of the nation as a whole (Johnson, 2008).

Chronosystem: Although not one of the four system layers per se, the chronosystem represents a time based dimension that influences the operation of all levels of the ecological systems. The chronosystem can refer to both short- and long-term time dimensions of the individual over the course of a lifespan, as well as the socio-historical time dimension of the macrosystem in which the individual lives. The chronosystem of an individual school, therefore, may be represented by both the day-to-day and year-to-year developmental changes that occur in its student body, teaching staff, curricular choices, etc., as well as the overall number of years in operation (i.e., a

newer school faces challenges and opportunities that differ from those of a school that has been in operation for a length of time).

In an attempt to understand the causes of the poor academic performance in Kemp Methodist Junior High School, one has to take into account the individual children as well as the context within which it occurs. The relevance of this theory to the study is that it impinges on the researcher to view the poor academic performance in the school as a phenomenon that is influenced by wider social systems. The theory opined that school children are directly present within some of these social systems, such as their household, school and immediate neighbourhood, and there are others in which they are not directly represented, but which impinge on their development including their siblings', social networks and their parents' or carers' friendship, leisure and the workplace relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). In addition, the theory makes us aware of the influences of wider social systems including the cultures, political systems, social institutions, and values that exist in the society and argues that they should be taken into account in children's educational upbringing.

By inference, the influences and experiences that result from the interactions between different social systems play a key role in determining the extent to which children perform in school. From the constructs of the ecological theory, the poor performance of the pupils is inextricably linked with the characteristics of social systems in Aburi. The ecological theory is, therefore, the most appropriate theory for studying the causes of poor academic performance in the school and for locating target(s) of intervention. It is appropriate in that it directs attention to the whole and not to any one part, system, or aspect of the children situation. Consequently, it is within this framework that the present study seeks to investigate the causes of poor academic performance in Kemp Methodist Junior High School. Since learning outcomes depend on the way it is

presented to the learner by his or her teacher, the way the learner interacts with the learning experiences presented to him and the environment within which the learning takes place, it is therefore expected that these entities would be affected by factors associated with the school environment, home and community conditions, teacher, education administration and the pupils themselves.

2.3 Definition of the Concept of Academic Achievement

Cary, Roseth, David and Roger (2008) define academic achievement as:

Performance on task with measures including comprehension, quality and accuracy of answers of tests, quality and accuracy of problem solving, frequency and quantity of desired outcome, time or rate to solution, time on task, level reasoning and critical thinking, creativity, recall and retention, and transfer of tasks. (p. 29)

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

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

Good (1973) as cited in Dimbisso (2009) stated that achievement encompasses actual accomplishment of the students' of potential ability. Kobaland and Musek (2001, p. 9) stated that:

there are two broad groups of definitions of academic achievement. The first one could be considered more objective, because it refers to numerical scores of a pupil's knowledge, which measure the degree of a pupil's adaptation to school work and to the educational system. The second group is a more subjective one, as its determination of academic success is reliant upon the student's attitudes towards his academic achievement and himself, as well as by the attitudes of significant others towards his/her success and him/herself.

The concept of low academic performance varies in its definition. Diaz (2003) considers low academic performance or academic failure as the situation in which the subject does not attain the expected achievement according to his or her abilities, resulting in an altered personality which affects all other aspects of life. Similarly, Tapia (2002) as cited in Diaz (2003) notes that while the current educational system perceives that the student fails if he or she does not pass, more appropriate for determining academic failure is whether the student performs below his or her potential. Aremu (2000) defines poor academic performance as performance that is adjudged by the examinee/testee and some other significant as falling below an expected standard. The interpretation of this expected or desired standard is better appreciated from the perpetual cognitive ability of the evaluator of the performance. The evaluator or assessor can therefore give different interpretations depending on some factors.

Bakare (1994) as cited in Asikhia 2010) described poor academic performance as any performance that falls below a desired standard. The criteria of excellence can be from 40 to 100 depending on the subjective yardstick of the evaluator or assessor. For example, a 70 per cent

performance of senior secondary three students in junior secondary English language examination is by all standards a very good performance. However, a cursory look at the performance and the individual examined and the standard of the examination he or she took could reveal that the performance is a very poor one. On the other hand, a junior secondary two student's performance of 37 per cent in senior secondary three mathematics can be said to be a poor performance when in actual fact the performance is by all standards a very good one. This shows that the concept of poor academic performance is very relative and this depends on so many intervening variables.

2.4 Factors influencing Academic Achievement

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

2.4.1 Home-Related Factors

Whether a child performs well in school can be influenced by a range of household factors. These include socio-economic status (education, occupation and income), size of the household, type of discipline at home, family structure, and the level of parental involvement and interest in child schooling are all factors which affect performance in school. In a study by Christenson and Gorney (1992), family and environmental factors were found to affect students' achievement. The factors are parents' expectation and attribution, structure and learning, home environment, discipline, and parental involvement.

Engin-Demir (2009) argued that sizable research has consistently shown that students' academic achievement has been influenced by background of family characteristics such as socio-economic status of parents. Schiller, Khmelkov and Wang (2002) also argued that parents who have more education appear better able to provide their children with the academic and social support important for educational success when compared to parents with less education. Acheampong (1992, cited in Avotri *et al.*, 1999), for instance, found that the educational status of parents was a major factor determining a child's academic achievements. This finding corroborates that of Johnson and Kyle's (2001) study that parental education, particularly the mother's education has a big influence on children's school achievement. Fertig and Schmidt (2002) also found that mother's education has a greater effect on child's learning overall, but that father's education becomes more important when they have attained tertiary levels.

Fuchs and Woessmann (2004) found parental education and occupation to have more substantial effects on reading than on mathematics test scores. They stated that parental occupation and having at least one parent with a full-time job have important effects on pupil academic performance. In other words poverty, low level of parental education, parental and neighbourhood negative attitudes toward schooling in general, children among from disadvantaged background have significantly affected academic achievement negatively (Currie, 1995; Gregg & Machin, 1999) whereas children with high level of parental education have greater access to a wide variety of economic and social resources (family structure, home environment, parent-child interaction) that can be drawn upon to help their children succeed in school (Coleman, 2006; McNeal, 1999). Higher family income is associated with higher students' achievement (Hanushek, 1992). According to Asikhia (2010) pupils from poor homes are forced out of school and made to engage in hawking, selling packaged drinking water and the

likes so as to save money for their school expenses. Most of the time, they cannot afford instructional materials, and are always at the mercy of examiners during examination period. The persistence of this in the life of an individual student may spell doom for his academic success. Tracy and Walter (1998) as cited in Asikhia (2010) corroborate this when they submit that individuals at the lowest economic level are often the least well-served by the school system. Akanle (2007) studied socio-economic factors influencing students' academic performance in Nigeria. The study revealed that insufficient parental income influences students' academic performance. Jing-Lin, Gang and Wei (2009) found that perceived importance of learning success to family, English writing ability and social communication with their compatriots are significant predictors of international students' academic achievement.

The number of siblings that a pupil has is assumed to have an influence on his/her academic achievement. The larger the family size the less the attention and devotion from parent child parents and the more the difficulties encountered by the parents in meeting the needs of the children both physically and emotionally particularly in this austerity period when the prices of food and commodities are skyrocketed (Asikhia, 2010). An increased number of children in the family leads to less favourable child outcome. Children from larger families have been found to have less favourable home environments and lower levels of verbal facility (Parcel & Menagham, 1994) as well as highest rates of behavioural problems and lower levels of education achievement (Downey, 1995).

Research work has shown that the nature of parental discipline affect academic output of children (Aremu, 2000). Oluwole (2001) found that the degree of self-efficacy and anxiety manifested by learners determine their academic performance. On the other hand, children from

permissive homes are too complacent, unmotivated, and lack personal will to succeed. The democratic style of parenting has been found to be very helpful to teaching-learning situation. Here, children receive punishment that is commensurate with the offence committed. Such children are strong willed and ready for success. Aremu (2000) observes from a study that undergraduates that receive democratic type of parenting perform better than their counterparts from autocratic homes.

In addition, structurally, a family is either broken or intact. A broken family in this context is one that is not structurally intact for various reasons; death of a parent, divorce, separation, dissolution and illegitimacy in which case, the family was never completed (Coulter, 1996). This analysis becomes necessary because life in a single parent family can be stressful for both the child and the parent. Such families are faced with the challenges of diminished financial resources, assumption of new roles and responsibilities, establishment of new patterns in intra-familial interaction and reorganization of routines and schedules (Agulanna, 1999). These conditions are not conducive for effective parenting. This is because when the single parent is overburdened by responsibilities and by their own emotional reaction to their situation, they often become irritable, impatient and insensitive to their children's needs. Such conditions do not provide a conducive environment for academic excellence (Nzewunwah 1995 cited in Uwaifo, 2008).

Furthermore, parental involvement tends to influence children's school achievement. Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1987) indicated that pupils with parents who are involved in their education tend to have better academic performance than pupils whose parents are not involved in their school. Corroborating this finding, Reynolds and Gill (1994) revealed that a significant relationship existed between parental involvement and academic achievement. Conway and

Houtenwille (2008) also found that parental involvement has a strong positive effect on student achievement. Further research shows parental involvement in children's learning not only leads to higher academic achievement, but greater cognitive competence, greater problem solving skills, greater school enjoyment, better school attendance and fewer behavioural problems at school (Melhinsh *et al.*, 2001 reported in Ademola & Olajumoke, 2009). Additionally, Tremblay, Ross and Berthelot (2001) found a significant association between students with parents involved at school and their academic performance.

Also, parental interest in schooling has been found to contribute significantly to the academic achievement of pupils. For instance, Odinko and Adeyemo (1999) found that parental interest in schooling together with socio-psychological factors were good predictors of students' learning outcomes in English language. Ghanney (2007) examined the effects home environment has on the child's achievement in primary schools in Winneba Township. He found that positive parental attitude towards education; great parental support and interest combine to enhance children's progress in education rather than the level of parent's educational attainment.

2.4.2 School-Related Factors

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

Instructional materials provide information, organise the scope and sequence of the information presented, and provide opportunities for pupils to use what they have learned (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991). Students usually perform better when they have books or study aids to foster

their learning. These study aids or material resources could be textbooks, teachers' guides, wall pictures, maps, atlases and other learning aids. The availability and use of teaching and learning materials affect the effectiveness of a teacher's lessons.

In addition, the school location and quality of the physical building influence the performance and achievement levels of pupils. Harbison and Hanushek (1992) stated that the quality of the physical facilities is positively related to student performance. This assertion corroborates that of Danesty (2004, cited in Yinusa & Basil, 2008) who stressed that good sitting arrangement and good buildings produce high academic achievements and performance, while dilapidated buildings that lack mental stimulating facilities coupled with low or no sitting arrangements is destructive. According to Asikhia (2010) where the school is located determines to a very large extent the patronage such a school will enjoy. Similarly, the entire unattractive physical structure of the school building could de-motivate learners to achieve academically. This is what Isangedighi (1998) refers to as learner's environment mismatch. According to him, this promotes poor academic performance. Engin-Demir (2009) argue that attending a school with a better physical environment is associated with increased maths scores. Adepoju (2001) found that students in urban schools manifest more brilliant performance than their rural counterparts. Also, Ogunleye (2002) reported a significant difference in the achievement of students in urban peri-urban areas.

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

and Saeed (2007) found a significant correlation between school size and students' achievement in Pakistan. They revealed that small schools performed better than medium and large schools. In 2001, Tremblay, Ross and Berthelot found class size to be inversely related to achievement, especially for children in early grades. Kraft (1994) in his study of the ideal class size and its effects on teaching and learning in Ghana concluded that class sizes above 40 have negative effects on students' achievement. Adeyela (2000) found that large class size is un conducive for serious academic work.

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

2.4.3 Student Characteristics

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

According to Engin-Demir (2009) regardless of intelligence, students who spend more time on assignments and homework are very important activities to improve their grades. The amount of

time students invests in homework and other related activities have also been found to be strongly related to motivation. Butler (1987, quoted in Etsey, 2005) found homework to be a correlate of academic performance. He stated that “homework bore a positive relationship with learning outcomes when it is relevant to learning objectives, assigned regularly in reasonable amounts, well explained, motivational and collected and reviewed during class time and used as an occasion for feedback to students” (p. 3). Homework is in reality an interaction between school and the home, and an essential ingredient of the educational process when measuring academic achievement (Harbison & Hanushek, 1992; Alomar, 2006). Also Stricker and Rock (1995) conducted an analysis by assessing the impact of the pupils’ initial characteristics (gender, ethnicity, parental education, geographic region and age) and the academic performance. They found that the students’ initial characteristics have a modest impact on their academic performance and among them parental education is the most significant.

In addition, school attendance has a high correlation with individual academic achievement. The success of a pupil in school is predicated on regular school attendance. According to Allen-Meares, Washington and Welsh (2000) poor attendance such as truancy or unexcused absence from school, cutting classes, tardiness, and leaving school without permission is seen as important in determining pupils’ academic. Heady (2003) argued that there is a negative relationship between student academic achievement and work during school hours. As Akabayashi and Psacharopoulos (1999) found that additional working hours decrease a child’s reading and computational ability, whereas with additional hours of school attendance and study the reading and computational ability increased. From their findings, Ray and Lancaster (2003) concluded that time spent at work had negative impact on education variables with marginal

impact weakening at higher levels of study hours. Unbalanced demand of work and education places a physical and mental strain on students and often leads to poor academic performance.

Several researchers have investigated the significant role of pupil attitudes toward learning with regard to their academic achievement. Pupils' attitudes such as absenteeism, truancy, indiscipline, etc can affect their performance. For instance, McLean (1997) found, by distinguishing between the attitudes of high and low achievers, that five attitudinal factors were significantly related to academic performance. Pupils' attitudes may not only directly affect academic achievement, but also may indirectly influence the effect of other factors as well. In another study, Abu-Hilal (2000) found the effect of attitudes on student level of aspiration. Despite the difference between the findings of these two studies, the authors achieved consensus as regards to the significance of attitudes in predicting achievement. House (1997) and Hassan (2002) further complemented the results of earlier studies, with the former proving that the pupil's initial attitude towards school was significantly related to academic performance, while the latter found that attitudes predicted the pupil's basic approach to learning.

Among one of the personal variables most studied is self-concept, which concerns the group of thoughts and beliefs that a pupil has about his/her academic ability. Self-concept results from the pupil's internalisation of his social image. It is developed from different interactions with the social environments and agents. Great importance is assigned the pupils self-image and the acceptance or rejection by others (Diaz, 2003). This factor has also been investigated by several authors, as regards the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement. Marsh (1990) investigated the reciprocal relationship between self-concept and academic achievement and found that an individual's present achievement is affected by prior academic self-concept, and that grades had no effect on subsequent academic self-concept. Similarly, Marsh and

Yeung's (1997) revealed that prior academic achievement did affect subsequent academic self-concept, and likewise, prior academic self-concept also affected subsequent achievement, with prior achievement being the control. Contrary to these results, Helmke and Van Aken (1995) found that elementary school achievement did not affect prior self-concept. Edwards (2002) found that self concept better predict performance than variables such as age or student gender.

Another personal variable most studied is motivation. Motivation is considered to be the element that initiates the pupil's own involvement in learning. When a student is strongly motivated, all his effort and attention are directed toward the achievement of a specific goal, thus bringing to bear all his or her resources (Diaz, 2003). In relation, students' academic achievement motivation is influenced by the students' perception of parental support and involvement. If students' perception is positive on their parents support and involvement, they will achieve well (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Wang & Wildman, 1995). Gottfried (1994) revealed that parental motivational practices have significant direct effects on academic intrinsic motivation, and indirect effects on subsequent motivation and achievement. According to Engin-Demir (2009):

Students' perceptions that their parents are involved and interested in their schooling and encourage them to do well are positively related to academic achievement. Through their involvement, parents convey the message that school is important and provide their children with positive emotional experiences in relation to school. Fuchs and Woessmann (2004) observed that students performed significantly worse in reading, maths and science in schools whose principals reported that learning was strongly hindered by the lack of parental support. However, some research has shown most aspects of the relationship between educational support of parents and scholastic achievement of children to be negative (p. 19).

Studies have looked at children's nutritional and health status on school indicators such as classroom concentration, general intelligence and performance on selected cognitive tasks including achievement test scores (Pridmore, 2007). Research by the Ghana National Commission on Children ([GNCC], 2000) found that in total, a little over 16 per cent of school-aged children surveyed, suffered from recurring health problems such as headache, malaria/fever, stomach disorder and other ailments. Research by Fentiman, Hall and Bundy (2001) in the Eastern Region, revealed that 70 per cent of all primary school-age children were anaemic. Sarris and Shams (1991) studied malnutrition among school age children in Ghana and found that about 36 per cent of children surveyed were malnourished. Most weighed below the 80 percent Harvard weight-for-age standard. The GNCC survey (2000) also reported that only about a third (29%) of children ate meals with protein. The research indicates that in general malnutrition is higher in northern Ghana (Sarris & Shams, 1991) where socio-economic indicators are low. In these regions enrolment, attendance, completion rates and achievement tend to be lower.

Health has the potential to affect access to schooling. Research indicates a child's health can influence when and whether they go to school, their functioning in school and how long they are expected to stay in school. Research in Ghana indicates a correlation between malnutrition, stunted growth and delayed enrolment in school (Glewwe & Jacoby, 1995; Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy, 1999, 2001). A child's health status affects how they function at school. Children who suffer from malnutrition, hunger, or who lack certain micronutrients do not have the same potential for learning as healthy and well-nourished children (Pridmore, 2007, p. 21).

Harbison and Hanushek (1992) found a statistically significant relationship between health and nutritional indicators and academic achievement. They concluded that the influence of poor

health and nutritional status on achievement begins early in a child's life and have cumulative impact on pupils' achievement. Vegas and Petrow (2008) assert that although the mechanisms by which malnutrition affects academic performance are not known, deficiencies in proteins, calories and micronutrients are believed to impair cognitive development. Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) indicate three aspects of nutritional status that affect academic achievement adversely: temporary hunger, micronutrient deprivation and protein-energy malnutrition. A local study on early primary school children in Malaysia showed a weak but significant association between poor nutritional intake and academic achievement (Ong, Chandran, Chen & Poh, 2010). Pollitt (1990, cited in Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991) reported a significant relationship between protein-energy nutritional status and school performance in Kenya. He further indicated that children who are temporarily hungry as a result of not eating breakfast are more easily distracted from their school work than those who have eaten.

2.4.4 Teacher-Side Factors

Several teacher factors influence academic performance. These include teacher attendance in school, teachers' interest and motivation, and teaching effectiveness and methods of teaching.

Teacher regularity in school is important in terms of both children's access to education and the nature of that access. A widespread problem of teacher absenteeism is likely to contribute to poor pupil performance. The prevailing evidence is that teacher absenteeism at primary school level in Ghana appears to have worsened in the last fifteen years (World Bank, 2004). The World Bank impact evaluation of basic education in Ghana found that, "in 2003, nearly 13 per cent of teachers had been absent in the past month, compared to just over 4 per cent in 1988" (World Bank, 2004, p. 101). It also observed that "in 1988, 85 per cent of schools did not suffer

at all; whereas this figure has now fallen to 61 per cent, with 13 per cent of schools with over one-third of the teachers being absent for reasons other than sickness in the past month” (World Bank, 2004, p. 103). The study also found absenteeism to be significantly worse in rural schools than in urban schools, and worse in public schools compared to private schools. Similarly the CARE International (2003, p. 18) report which looks at deprived rural areas in northern Ghana talks of ‘chronic teacher absenteeism’ which ‘adversely affects the learning environment’ and Dunne and Leach (2005) talk about the low levels of professionalism in schools (especially low performing ones), with teachers having high rates of lateness, absenteeism and sometimes refusing to teach classes.

The World Bank (2004) report put forward a number of reasons for the increasing teacher absenteeism. These included teachers living long distances from schools and experiencing transportation difficulties; teachers having to travel to town once a month to collect their pay, which may or may not have arrived; and, rural teachers engaging in farming activities. Although factors will be context-specific, multivariate analysis on teacher survey data also showed that teacher absenteeism was more likely to occur if the following factors were prevalent: poor working conditions, low morale, and high pupil-teacher ratio, living with spouse, being in their home district, and having good social relations (World Bank, 2004). These last three factors were explained as possible causes of distraction from work. Barnes (2003) indicates how teachers are being encouraged in Ghana to facilitate local level development, which although it can have positive impact on schooling, can also lead to teacher absenteeism and lateness.

In another study, Fobih, Akyeampong and Koomson (1999) arrived unannounced in some 60 schools and found that about 85 per cent of teachers go to school late. Lateness ranged from five minutes up to one and a half hours. This meant teaching time was lost, teachers taught fewer

school subjects (i.e. taught mainly English and Mathematics out of 10 subjects), and the shortening of the school day for students. Lateness and absenteeism affect completion of syllabi. When the syllabus is not completed, pupils find it difficult to understand content that is to be taught in the next class which foundation in most cases is based on the previous class (Etsey, 2005). This assertion supports Pryor and Ampiah's (2003) view that most children do not follow school work because they do not possess the understanding from previous work that is prerequisite for the syllabus of the higher grades of primary school and junior secondary school. Both absenteeism and lateness Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) point out are symptomatic of education systems that are unable to manage teachers effectively, have weak teacher management structures, and are unable to provide incentives to motivate teachers to improve their attitudes to work.

Another factor is teacher motivation. A highly motivated person puts the maximum effort in his or her job. Ofoegbu (2004) linked poor academic performance of students to poor teachers' performance in terms of accomplishing the teaching task, negative attitudes to work and poor teaching habits which have been attributed to poor motivation. Corroborating this position, Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) asserted that lack of motivation and professional commitment on the part of teachers produce poor attendance and unprofessional attitudes towards pupils which in turn affect the performance of students academically.

The influence of effective teaching on pupils' academic performance has been the subject of several studies. Quality of teachers and commitment are key inputs in educational production to perform better achievement. A teacher's knowledge of the subject matter coupled with textbooks, instructional time and other learning materials have great influence on learning at the basic school level (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991). Agyemang (1993) reported that "a teacher

who does not have both the academic and the professional teacher qualification would undoubtedly have a negative influence on the teaching and learning of his/her subject” (p. 2). According to Hedges (2002) many trained teachers are unwilling to accept postings to deprived communities in Ghana. As a result there is a tendency for less qualified teachers to be employed in these communities, which affects their academic performances negatively. Darling-Hammond (2000) found that teacher quality characteristics such as certification status and degrees in subject to be taught are very significant and positively correlated with subject outcomes in science and mathematics. Ingersoll (1999) found out that 63 per cent of chemistry, physics, earth and space science instructors do not have certification in the subjects and this result in the poor performance of students in American Secondary schools. Also, Greenwald, Hedges and Laine (1996) found academic achievement to be positively correlated with teacher qualification. Additionally, Abuseji (2007) found teacher’s qualification to be the second most potent causal effect on student’s achievement in chemistry. Its direct and indirect effect accounted for 4.37 per cent, and 5.00 per cent of the total effect on students’ achievement in chemistry in Lagos state, Nigeria.

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

Effective teaching embraces a variety of different aspects of teaching such as subject mastery, effective communication, lesson preparation and presentation, pacing the class to the students’ level and taking into account individual differences, allowing students to practise and applying

what they have learned, letting students know what is expected of them, and monitoring and evaluating performance so that students learn from their mistakes (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991). Jacob and Lefgren (2006) found a positive correlation between effective teaching and academic achievement. Similarly, Adediwura and Tayo (2007) suggest that effective teaching is a significant predictor of students' academic achievement and concludes that effective teaching produce students of higher academic quality. Akiri and Ugborugbo (2009) showed that effective teaching produced better performing students.

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, literature has been reviewed on issues related to the study. These included school environment, home related, student characteristics and teacher factors responsible for poor academic performance. However, the literature reviewed does not address the questions raised by this research in the study. Knowledge on factors causing low academic performance in the study is limited. Information on variables causing the low academic performance in the basic level education in the Kemp Methodist Junior High School is pertinent to help stakeholders to develop strategies for improving academic performance of students. This demonstrates a need for further study on this topic and provides the rationale for this thesis.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

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

3.2 Research Design

Research designs are plans and procedures for doing an investigation. The plan is a guide to the whole process. This plan tells how the researcher is going to test, measure or observe a phenomenon of interest. The design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained.

A quantitative design was adopted for this study using a causal-comparative (ex-post facto) approach. In the causal-comparative or ex-post facto approach, the cause, or reason for existing differences in the behaviour or status of groups of individuals is determined, and when it is found that the groups differ on some variable, an attempt is made to identify the major factor(s) that has led to this difference (Gay, 1996). It is, therefore, an after-the-fact study. Such an approach does not involve the manipulation of variables in the study. It neither adds to nor subtracts from the existing facts. It only carefully observes and records data as it naturally occurred at the time the study was conducted.

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that are responsible for the low academic achievement of pupils in Kemp Methodist JHS. To identify these factors, comparison was made with a high achieving school within the same town. The causal-comparative (ex-post facto) approach was, therefore, appropriate because it enabled the researcher to identify the differences between a low achieving school and a high achieving school in terms of school environmental, teacher, pupil and parental variables. Kemp Methodist JHS represented the low achieving school while the Presbyterian Women's College of Education (PWCE) Demonstration JHS represented the high achieving school. The other junior high school (Aburi Anglican JHS) was used for the pre-testing of the questionnaire. The low and high achieving classification of Kemp Methodist JHS and PWCE Demonstration JHS were by the results of their 2005 to 2011 BECE examinations. A study of Kemp Methodist JHS BECE results from 2005 to 2011 gives an appalling picture while the BECE results of PWCE Demonstration JHS from 2005 to 2011 showed otherwise (see Appendix IV).

3.3 Population of the Study

3.3.1 Target Population

Target Population refers to the empirical units such as persons, objects, occurrences, etc used for the study. The target population is the group of interest to the researcher. It is the group from whom the researcher would like to generalize the results of the study. The target population consisted of school children, teachers, and parents. The study population was made up of Pupils of Kemp Methodist JHS and PWCE Demonstration JHS, Parents of Kemp Methodist JHS and PWCE Demonstration JHS and Teachers of Kemp Methodist JHS and PWCE Demonstration JHS in the study.

3.3.2 Sampling Frame

Sampling Frame refers to the list or quasi list that approximates the population. These could be class registers, duty roaster, voters register, etc. Class registers were obtained from Kemp Methodist JHS and PWCE Demonstration JHS. Their parents were also compiled. The list of teachers was also obtained. Table 3.1 approximates the elements in the study population.

Table 3.1: Sampling Frame

Name of Population	Sample Frame	Sample Identification
Pupils	530	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class registers of pupils in Kemp Methodist JHS 1 to 3. • Class registers of pupils in PWCE Demonstration JHS 1 to 3.
Parents	530	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents of pupils in Kemp Methodist JHS 1 to 3 • Parents of pupils in PWCE Demonstration JHS 1 to 3
Teachers	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of teachers in Kemp Methodist School • List of teachers in PWCE Demonstration School

Source: Author's Construct, May, 2011

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Procedures

Sampling Techniques and Procedures refer to the methods used to select a sample from the target population. Examples are simple random sampling, systematic sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling, etc. Multistage Sampling is a sampling strategy (example, gathering participants for a study) used when conducting studies involving a very large population. The entire population is divided into naturally-occurring clusters and sub-clusters, from which the researcher randomly selects the sample. This was used to select the respondents for the study.

As already indicated, the main concern in this study was to identify the differences between a low achieving and a high achieving school. Kemp Methodist JHS and PWCE Demonstration JHS were selected based on purposive sampling. The purpose was to select schools to reflect high achieving and low achieving by the results of BECE examinations from 2005 to 2011. Thus, PWCE Demonstration JHS was chosen to represent high achieving schools while Kemp Methodist JHS represented the low achieving schools in the study area.

There are three classes in a Junior High School namely, JHS one, JHS two and JHS three. All the three classes were considered for the study. The researcher believed that pupils in these classes might have knowledge about BECE and is also familiar with school and home factors that influence their academic achievement. Class registers and a personal visit to count the pupils present in each sampled class in the schools were used to arrive at the exact class enrolment for the selection. The total enrolment from JHS One to JHS Three in Kemp Methodist JHS was 216 pupils while the total enrolment in PWCE Demonstration JHS from JHS One to JHS Three stood at 314 pupils. The researcher intended to select an equal number of pupils from both schools. Systematic sampling was used in the selection process.

At Kemp Methodist JHS, the researcher intended to select 60 out of the total of 216, which means that the researcher had to divide 216 by 60 to get the sampling interval to use in the selection. In that case the sampling interval was 4. This interval (4) comprised the numbers between 0 and 4 in the list. The first four numbers were copied and placed in a box and one was randomly selected. Thus, the number drawn was 3 or the 3rd name in the list and represented the first pupil; the next pupil was $3+4=7$, $7+4=11$, for the third pupil and so forth. The researcher kept selecting names by adding 4 until the required sample of 60 pupils was reached. The procedure ensured that all the pupils had an equal chance of being selected.

At PWCE Demonstration JHS, the researcher wanted to select 60 pupils out of 314, the researcher had to divide 314 by 60 to get the sampling interval to use in the selection. In that case the sampling interval was 5. This interval (5) comprised the numbers between 0 and 5 in the list. The first five numbers were copied and placed in a box and one was randomly selected. Thus, the number drawn was 2 or the 2nd name in the list and represented the first pupil; the next pupil was $2+5=7$, $7+5=12$, for the third person and so forth. The researcher kept selecting names by adding 5 until the required sample of 60 pupils was reached. This process ensured the pupils had an opportunity of being selected.

Parents and teachers

Each sampled pupil was to have one of his/her parents interviewed. Purposive sampling was used to select parents from the list of parents. The purpose was to interview parents of pupils that participated in the study at the school level. In each sampled school community, a purposeful effort was made to get these parents. A total of 120 parents were interviewed. Currently, there are 14 teachers in Kemp Methodist JHS while PWCE Demonstration School has 17 teachers. All the teachers in both schools were considered for this study. However, in the data collection exercise, a teacher from Kemp Methodist JHS was on maternity leave. In the end, 30 teachers were involved in the study instead of the targeted 31.

3.4.2 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the total number of independent, random sample units drawn from the research population. At the end of the sampling procedure, there were sample total of 120 basic school pupils; 31 basic teachers, 120 parents and three key informants involved in this survey. Table 3.2 provides a summary of the sample distribution.

Table 3.2: Distribution of Study Participants

School Type			
Participants	Low achieving	High achieving	Total
Pupils	60	60	120
Parents	60	60	120
Teachers	13	17	30
Total	133	137	270

Source: Author's Construct, May, 2, 2011.

3.5 Instrumentation

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

3.5.1 Pre-Testing of Questionnaires

A pre-test was conducted to ascertain any need for revisions. The pre-test involved administration of the questionnaires to 10 teachers, 20 pupils and 20 parents in Aburi Anglican Junior High School which was not included in the sample for the study. Participants of the pre-test were asked to complete the questionnaires and to provide comments or suggestions for revising any ambiguous items. The final instruments for the study (see Appendices) were produced after subsequent revisions in the wording of a few items. The reliability of the instruments was determined using Cronbach's alpha analysis. Cronbach's coefficient alpha values of 0.74, 0.98 and 0.79 were obtained for pupils, teachers and parents' questionnaires respectively. Cronbach's alpha as an estimate of reliability was adequate at 0.74, 0.98 and 0.79. Such reliability values, according to Livingstone (1985), were a fair indication of a good internal consistency, and the researcher thus concluded that the instruments were adequately reliable.

3.6 Methods of Data Collection

3.6.1 Data Sources

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

Face-to-face interviews

Face-to-face interviews were used to collect data from the pupils. In this method, the interviewer reads the questions to the respondent and records the responses. This method enabled the researcher to translate questions into the local language for some pupils and also provided

clarification on some questionnaire items to the pupils. Similarly, face-to-face interview was used to collect data from the parents. Since most of them do not understand English, the method afforded the researcher the opportunity to translate the questions into the local language. It also gave the researcher the chance to observe home and community conditions relevant to this study.

Self-administered questionnaire

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from teachers. In this method, the respondent completes the questionnaire themselves. This method was used because it would allow the teachers to complete the questionnaires at their convenience and to check records if necessary, in relation to the pupils' performance.

3.7 Data Handling and Methods of Analysis

The field data were collated, sifted through and edited in order to address questions that have been answered partially or not answered. After editing, the open-ended questions were coded (i.e., the assignment of numbers or codes to responses to make them computer readable). After editing and coding, the data were entered into the computer using the Statistical package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Before performing the desired data transformation, the data were cleaned by running consistency checks on every variable. Corrections were made after verification from the questionnaires and the database was generated. Data from the low achieving school and the high achieving school were then merged into one file to facilitate the comparison of characteristics between the groups. The data were analysed using basically descriptive statistics involving mainly frequency distributions and cross tabulations. To guard against drawing unjustified conclusions in some stages, Chi-square (χ^2) statistical tests were

carried out to consider whether the relationship between the high achieving school and the low achieving school in terms of a given variable were statistically significant.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained consent from the school head teachers before interviewing the pupils. For those who were 18 and 19 years, the researcher sought direct consent from them. In doing so, a consent statement was read out to each participant for acceptance before administration of questionnaires. For parents and teachers, the researcher obtained informed verbal consent from them before commencement of the interviews. The participants were made aware that their participation was voluntary, and that they were free to decline or end the interviews at any time during the study. Efforts were made to maintain confidentiality of the responses. Participants were told that their responses would be kept confidential and that no one known to them would have access to the information provided and none of the respondent's name was recorded. Additionally, the questionnaires were packed in an envelope and locked in a cabinet to prevent the loss of any of the questionnaires. All references were duly acknowledged to avoid plagiarism.

3.9 Conclusion

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

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at presenting and discussing findings obtained from the interviews concerning the factors affecting low academic achievement in Kemp Methodist Junior High School. The respondents of the study were pupils, parents and teachers. The chapter is based on data obtained from 120 basic school pupils; 30 teachers, and 120 parents in PWCE Demonstration JHS (high achieving school) and Kemp Methodist JHS (low achieving school).

The data were analysed using frequency distributions and cross tabulations. To guard against drawing unjustified conclusions, statistical tests using Chi-square statistic (χ^2) were carried out to consider whether relationships between variables were statistically significant. The first part of this chapter describes the demographic characteristics of respondents. In the second part, the research findings are presented in five sections according to the research questions posed on school factors, parental/home support variables, teacher factors, pupils' characteristics and education administration issues.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Study Participants

4.2.1 Pupils' Demographic Characteristics

Age and sex

The 120 pupils who participated in this study were sampled from PWCE Demonstration JHS (high achieving school) and Kemp Methodist JHS (low achieving school). Out of the 120 pupils interviewed, 59.2 per cent were female and 40.8 per cent male. The average age of the pupils

was 15.25 years. The youngest was 13 years old and the oldest 19 years old. The age distribution shows that all the respondents were of school going age.

Number of siblings of pupils

The study shed some light on the number of siblings of the school pupils. This is because the number of siblings of a pupil is assumed to have an influence on his/her academic achievement. According to Blake (1989), the number of siblings one has affects school performance because of a dilution of familial resources such as parents' time, emotional and physical energy, attention and ability to interact with children as individuals to pupils in large families and a concentration of such resources in small ones. Asikhia (2010) also indicates that the larger the family, the less the attention and devotion from parents to each child and the more the difficulties encountered by the parents in meeting the needs of the children.

Findings of the study indicate that 98.5 per cent of the pupils had other siblings in the family: they had an average of two brothers and two sisters in the family. Their rank among the siblings was 2, on the average, with about a fifth (20.8%) as the oldest children in the family. The position that a child occupies in a family equally plays a significant role in his academic achievement. Generally, parents are always excited and determined to give the first child all that he/she needs especially among the middle class and the 'rich.' Those that are undetermined achieve low academic excellence. However, among the 'poor', the first child labours seriously to achieve academic excellence. This is because the child has to assist his parents in the upkeep of the family (Asikhia, 2010).

Survival status of biological parents

The composition of the family such as whether or not a child lives with his/her biological parents has an influence on the educational outcomes of pupils. Kim (2004) asserted that having both biological parents around improves children's educational achievements. Thus, it becomes imperative to shed some light on the survival status of biological parents of the pupils under study.

The results indicate that an overwhelming proportion of both parents (85.0%) of pupils are alive, about (10.0%) had only their mothers being alive with only (5.0%) having none of their biological parents living. While the high achieving school (PWCE Demonstration JHS) has 52.9 per cent of both parents alive, the low achieving school (Kemp Methodist JHS) has 47.1 per cent of both parents alive. Most pupils not having both parents alive are likely to miss the love, attention and the encouragement to achieve academic excellence. Also the burden of providing for the child's needs will be the responsibility of the surviving parent and this will affect the quality of care a child enjoys. These results could account for differences in performance in the schools as asserted by Kim (2004).

Living Arrangements of Pupils

Whether a child performs well in school can be influenced by a range of household factors including living arrangements. Pilon (2003) discusses vulnerability of children in foster care and indicated that the children most vulnerable to non-enrolment and poor performance in school were foster children, especially girls. The closeness of biological ties governs altruistic behaviour, and that whether children have access to school to some extent depends on their relatedness to their household heads (Case, Paxson & Ableidinger, 2004).

From the results, it is observed that two-thirds (65.0%) lived with both parents, whereas a fifth (20.0%) lived with a single parent. The remaining (15.0%) who did not stay with either both parents or a single parent mentioned other relatives such as uncle, grandmother, aunt, grandfather, brother, sister and guardians as people they were staying with. Between the groups, while a larger number of pupils (90.0%) from the high achieving school lived with both parents, about 40.0 per cent of pupils from the low achieving school lived with both parents. About 10 per cent of pupils from the high achieving school lived with a single parent while 30 per cent of pupils from the low achieving school lived with a single parent. None of the pupils from the high achieving school lived with other relatives, but 30 per cent of pupils from the low achieving school lived with other relatives. Some of these pupils under foster care work till they go to bed and hardly find time to learn and this can really affect their academic performance unlike those live with their parents. These results could be the reason for existing differences in performance in the two schools.

4.2.2 Parents' Demographic Characteristics

Parental education

Research shows that parents' level of education is significantly related to their pupils' educational achievement. According to Anamuah-Mensah *et al.* (2007) educated parents tend to value their children's education more, buying books and other supporting materials, helping them with homework and advising them on career options. In studying factors affecting low academic performance, the educational levels of parents become crucial in an understanding of the phenomenon.

Findings from the study indicate that about 40.0 per cent of parents were educated up to the tertiary level. More than a third (35.0%) of the parents were educated up to the JSS/middle school level, and about a quarter (25.0%) has had secondary/technical level education. Between the two schools, majority (60.0%) of parents of pupils from the high achieving school have had tertiary level education, while a larger proportion (70.0%) of parents of pupils from the low achieving school are educated up to the JSS/middle school level. It is clear that most of the parents of the low achieving are not highly educated so they do not place much premium on their children's education. These results could be an explanation for differences in performances between the two schools.

Parents' occupation

Parents' occupations are often used as proxies for their socio-economic status (SES). Parents in high level occupation usually have higher SES and tend to have higher incomes than those in low level occupation. Therefore, pupils from high income families usually enjoy some privileges like attending extra class and buy supplementary books which normally enhance their performance at school. In addition, parents with high SES are more likely than parents with low SES to be involved with their children's education, as evidenced by parental interaction with teachers and participation in school activities (Avotri *et al.* 1999; Vegas & Petrow, 2008). The survey thus enquired about the occupation of the parents of pupils under consideration.

The parents showed a wide range of occupation. Quite a number (40.0%) of parents were found to be low level sales workers (i.e., food vendors and petty traders). More than a fifth (25.0%) of parents was in the middle level profession (i.e., teaching, nursing, policing, accounting, etc). About a fifth (20.0%) of parents was in low level professions (i.e., tailoring, hairdressing,

driving, etc.). A tenth (10.0%) were into agriculture and related activities with barely (5.0%) being unemployed.

4.2.3 Teachers' Demographic Characteristics

Sex

Out of the 30 teachers interviewed, majority (86.7%) were female and 13.3 per cent male, indicating that there are more female teachers than male teachers in Aburi. This finding concurs with Anamuah-Mensah *et al.* (2007) who revealed that more female teachers are in urban areas in Ghana. This could partly be due to female teachers joining their husbands who work in urban areas and therefore manage to avoid working in rural schools (Avotri *et al.*, 1999). It could also be that some unmarried female teachers avoid working in the rural areas because of the fear of remaining single for the rest of their lives or getting married to rural husbands with little potential (Avotri *et al.*, 1999).

Teachers' ages

Teachers' ages are an important indicator for assessing the experience they have as well as future supply on the basis of attrition which could result from retirement, death and other factors (Avotri *et al.*, 1999). Teachers' ages ranged between 25 and 52 years old with a mean age of 38.3 years. Overall, most of the teachers fall within 33-36 age range. This age group represents about 26.7 per cent of the total number of teachers interviewed. Those within 49-52 age range make up about a fifth (20.0%) of total respondents. The age distribution particularly in the schools studied indicates that a substantial proportion of the teaching force is young (33-36). This can lead to the assumption that a shortage of teachers is not likely to occur from imminent retirement of teachers in the Aburi area in the near future.

Teaching experience

Teacher quality is normally proxied by such variables as experience in the profession. According to Tremblay, Ross and Berthelot (2001), pupils perform better at school when taught by teachers who have more than 10 years' experience in the lower elementary school grades. From the results, the number of years of teaching experience ranged from 3 to 25 years with a mean of 11.4 years. Majority (50.1%) of the teachers have more than 10 years of teaching experience. A sizeable number (49.9%) of the teachers have less than 10 years of teaching experience. It can be assumed that most of the teachers have adequate work experience and knowledge about their schools and thus are able to provide reliable information about the schools.

4.3 The Role School Environmental Factors Play in Pupils' Poor Academic Performance

The first objective of this study was to find out the role school environmental factors play in pupils' poor academic performance in Kemp Methodist Junior High School. The research findings are presented according to the research question posed to achieve this objective.

What school environmental factors are the causes of poor academic performance in the Kemp Methodist Junior High School?

The school environmental factors considered include academic qualification of teachers, availability of teaching and learning materials, use of contact hours and availability of infrastructure and facilities.

4.3.1 Academic Qualification of Teachers

The teachers were asked to indicate whether they possessed Bachelor degrees. A total of 13 teachers from the low achieving school and 17 teachers from the high achieving school provided responses for the questionnaire item. The results are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Academic Qualification of Teachers and School

Academic Qualification of Teachers	School Type		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
Non Bachelor degrees	5 (38.5%)	1 (5.9%)	6 (20.0%)
Bachelor degrees	8 (61.5%)	16 (94.1%)	24 (80.0%)
Total	13 (100.0%)	17 (100.0%)	30 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)=4.887 (1), p-value =0.027, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$ Source : Field Data, 2012.

As shown in Table 4.1, among the teachers from the high achieving school, 94.1 per cent reported that they possessed Bachelor degrees. Among those in the low achieving school, 61.5 per cent reported that they were Bachelor degree holders. A chi-square test of association was performed to consider whether the relationship between academic qualification of teachers and school was statistically significant. A chi-square statistic (χ^2) value of 4.887, with degrees of freedom (df) of 1 which has associated probability of 0.027 were obtained. However, the

associated probability of 0.027 is smaller than the preselected significance of 0.05, showing that statistically significant relationship existed between academic qualification of teachers and school. The results therefore showed that there were more teachers having Bachelor degrees in the high achieving schools than in the low achieving school. This will affect their level of delivery during teaching.

The results show that Kemp Methodist JHS had fewer teachers with Bachelor degrees than PWCE Demonstration JHS. In Ghana, teachers' Certificate 'A' is the basic requirement for teaching in a basic school. However, it is believed that teachers with higher academic qualification have more knowledge of the subject matter and in terms of high quality of teaching skills (feedback, questioning, explaining things clearly to pupils). According to Sanders and Rivers (1996) a teacher with higher qualification in a given subject is most likely to ask higher level cognitively based questions; thus helping the students to learn and perform better. In Kemp Methodist JHS, the limited number of teachers having Bachelor degrees showed that they were not able to use effective teaching skills. The outcome was that the pupils in the school performed poorly. This finding supports the research findings of Darling-Hammond (2000), Abuseji (2007) and Greenwald, Hedges and Laine (1996) who found that teacher quality characteristics such as certification status and degree in subject to be taught are very significant and positively correlated with subject outcomes in science and mathematics.

4.3.2 Adequacy of Teaching and Learning Materials

A total of 13 teachers from the low achieving school and 17 teachers from the high achieving school were asked to provide responses about the adequacy of TLMs in their schools. The results are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Adequacy of Teaching and Learning Materials and School

Teaching and Learning Materials	Low achieving	High achieving	Total
Adequate	0 (0.0%)	16 (94.1%)	16 (53.3%)
Not adequate	11 (84.6%)	1 (5.9%)	12 (40.0%)
None available	2 (15.4%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.7%)
Total	13 (100.0%)	17 (100.0%)	30 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)=26.267 (2), p -value =0.001, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$ Source: Field Data, 2012.

As shown in Table 4.2, an overwhelming majority (94.1%) of the teachers from the high-achieving school reported that teaching and learning materials were adequate. None of the teachers in the low achieving school reported that teaching and learning materials were adequate. A chi-square test of association was carried out to ascertain whether the relationship between adequacy of teaching-learning materials and school was statistically significant. The results showed a chi-square (χ^2) value of 26.267, with significance or probability of 0.001 at 2 degrees of freedom (df). This associated probability of 0.001 is smaller than the preselected significance of 0.05, showing that the relationship is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. The results

showed that the high achieving school has more teaching-learning materials than the low achieving school.

The results show that Kemp Methodist JHS (low achieving school) had fewer TLMs to use than the PWCE Demonstration JHS (high achieving school). Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) such as textbooks, teachers' guides, wall pictures, maps, atlases and other learning aids are critical ingredients in the teaching and learning process. The TLMs aid teaching and learning because pupils are able to see and often feel what the teacher teaches. They also provide opportunities for pupils to use what they have learned (Etsey, 2005; Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991). Since there were less teaching-learning materials in the low achieving school, the situation made it difficult for the pupils to understand the lessons, learn more and retain what they learn, this led to lower performance. This position confirms the research findings of Avotri *et al.* (1999) and Etsey (2005) that the shortage of teaching-learning materials deprived pupils of exercises, attention and feedback from teachers to enhance their gained knowledge and improve their academic performance.

4.3.3 Use of Contact Hours

A total of 120 pupils were asked to indicate how often they work (i.e., weed at school or fetch water for teachers) during school hours. The results are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Frequency of Use of Contact Hours and School

Frequency of use of contact hours for work	School Type		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
Never	0 (0.0%)	47 (78.3%)	47 (39.2%)
Sometimes	19 (31.7%)	13 (21.7%)	32 (26.7%)
All the time	41 (68.3%)	0 (0.0%)	41 (34.2%)
Total	60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)	120 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)=89.125 (2), p-value =0.001, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$ Source : Field Data, 2012.

From the data displayed in Table 4.3, two-thirds (68.3%) of the pupils from the low achieving school reported that they work during school hours all the time. None of the pupils from the high achieving school work during school hours all the time. A chi-square test of association was done to investigate whether the relationship between frequency of use of contact hours for work and type of school was statistically significant. The results showed the chi-square statistic of 89.125, with df of 2, and a Significance value of 0.001, which is significant at the 0.05 level. In other words, there is a significant relationship between frequency of use of contact hours for work and school ($\chi^2 = 89.125$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$). This study thus found that the pupils in the high achieving school were more likely to use school hours for teaching and learning than the pupils in the low achieving school.

The results showed that pupils in Kemp Methodist JHS spent more teaching and learning time either weeding at school or fetching water for their teachers than pupils in the PWCE Demonstration JHS. This meant that teaching and learning time in Kemp Methodist JHS was lost, teachers taught fewer school subjects and the school day was shortened. These ultimately led to the low academic performance of the pupils. This finding is consistent with Boakye, Agyeman-Duah, Osei and Brew-Ward (1997), who revealed that misuse of school teaching time for other activities such as sports and using pupils to work on farms and fetching water contributed to poor performance of pupils in Ghana. The study results further agreed with Heady (2003) that there is a negative relationship between academic achievement and work. Additionally, the finding supports Ray and Lancaster (2003, cited in Dimbisso, 2009) that time spent at work had negative impact on education variables such as school performance. They concluded that unbalanced demand of work and education placed physical and mental strain on students and often lead to poor academic performance. The ecological theory strengthens the fact that the child's low performance is not solely his doing but teachers play active role in it.

4.3.4 Availability of Infrastructure and Facilities

The teachers were asked to describe the state of the following school infrastructure and facilities: water, head teachers' office, school building, school store, school library, toilet and electricity. These were assessed in terms of good condition, poor condition and not available. However, the study found no statistically significant difference in terms of the school infrastructure and facilities considered for this study. In other words, the state of infrastructure and materials in the schools was therefore not a reason for the difference in academic performance between the Kemp Methodist JHS pupils and those in the PWCE Demonstration JHS.

4.4 Home Conditions Responsible for the Poor Academic Achievement of Pupils

The second objective was to ascertain home conditions responsible for the poor academic achievement of pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School. The research findings are presented according to the research question posed to achieve this objective.

What home conditions cause pupils in the Kemp Methodist Junior High School to perform poorly academically?

Home conditions investigated include provision of textbooks and supplementary readers, interaction with children's teachers, involvement in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), provision of breakfast for pupils and provision of basic school needs.

4.4.1 Parents' Provision of Textbooks and Supplementary Readers

It is the responsibility of parents to make available to their pupils relevant subject textbooks and supplementary readers. A total of 120 parents were asked if they provided subject textbooks and other supplementary readers for their children. The results are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Parents' Provision of Textbooks and Supplementary Readers and School

Response	School Type		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
Yes	18 (30.0%)	48 (80.0%)	66 (55.0%)
No	42 (70.0%)	12 (20.0%)	54 (45.0%)
Total	60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)	120 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)=30.303 (1), p-value =0.001, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$

Source : Field Data, 2012.

Table 4.4 shows that an overwhelming number (80.0%) of the parents of pupils from the high achieving school and about a third (30.0%) of the parents of pupils from the low achieving school reported that their children were provided with textbooks and supplementary readers. A chi-square test of association found the relationship between parents' provision of textbooks and supplementary readers and school to be statistically significant. The results showed a chi-square statistic of 30.303, with df of 1 and an associated probability of 0.01, which is significant at the 0.05 level of significance ($\chi^2 = 30.303$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$). The results therefore showed that more parents of the pupils in the high achieving school provided the textbooks and supplementary readers than the parents of the pupils in the low achieving school.

It was found that many parents of the pupils in the Kemp Methodist JHS did not purchase textbooks and supplementary readers for their wards as the Government supply was woefully inadequate. Textbooks and other supplementary readers are tools for children's learning and

their availability in the home affect the learning of children in school. The unavailability of textbooks and supplementary readers in the home for pupils in Kemp Methodist JHS meant that they were handicapped, and thus resulted in the low academic performance. This supports Tremblay, Ross and Berthelot (2001) who found a gap in achievement between Grade three students whose parents or guardians reported having a computer and more than 100 books at home and those of parents or guardians who reported neither of these resources. The findings of this study also confirmed Etsey (2005) who found statistically significant differences in the academic performance between pupils whose parents provided textbooks for their children and pupils of parents who did not provide textbooks and supplementary readers for their wards.

4.4.2 Interaction with Children's Teachers

Parents were asked if they had ever inquired from their children's teacher about their children.

The results are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Parents' Interaction with their Children's Teachers and School

Response	School Type		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
Yes	27 (45.0%)	46 (76.7%)	73 (60.8%)
No	33 (55.0%)	14 (23.3%)	47 (39.2%)
Total	60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)	120 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)=12.626 (1), p-value = 0.001, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$ Source: Field Data, 2012.

As shown in Table 4.5, a higher proportion (76.7%) of the parents of pupils from the high achieving school and nearly half (45.0%) of the parents of pupils from the low achieving school reported that they interacted with their children's teachers. A test of association showed a significant relationship between parents' interaction with teachers and school. A chi-square statistic of 12.626, with a df of 1 and a Significance value of 0.001 was obtained. However, the Significance value of 0.001 is statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($\chi^2 = 12.626$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$). The results showed that parents of the pupils in high achieving school interacted with the teachers more than parents of the pupils in the low achieving school.

The study thus found that parents from Kemp Methodist JHS did less interaction with their children's teachers. According to Etsey (2005) interactions with teachers put the pupils on the alert to study in school because they would know that their parents would come and inquire about their performances in school. In addition, through interactions with teachers, parents would know the problems confronting their individual pupils and offer any assistance that would make positive impact on the pupils. The mesosystem of the ecological systems theory also affirms that a linkage between parents and teachers can affect the pupils performance. Since parental interactions with teachers in Kemp Methodist JHS were limited, they were not able to know about what was happening in the school regarding their children. As such they could not provide much guidance and help to make their children's performance improve. This supports Etsey (2005), who found parents' interaction with teachers to be significant and positively correlated with pupil academic performance. The results are also consistent with Ghanney (2007) who found that positive parental attitude towards education and interest enhances children's progress in education.

4.4.3 Involvement in the Parent Teacher Association

Parents were asked if they attended the last two Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings.

The results are shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Involvement of Parents in the PTA and School

Response	School Type		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
Yes	37 (61.7%)	53 (88.3%)	90 (75.0%)
No	23 (38.3%)	7 (11.7%)	30 (25.0%)
Total	60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)	120 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)=11.378 (1), p-value = 0.001, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$

Source: Field Data, 2012.

The results in Table 4.6 showed that more than 88.3 per cent of the parents of pupils from the high achieving school and about 61.7 per cent of the parents of pupils from the low achieving school reported that they attended the last two Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings. A chi-square test of association produced the value of 11.378 at 1 df, with associated probability of 0.001, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This means that there is a statistically significant relationship between attendance at PTA meetings and school ($\chi^2 = 11.378$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$). The results showed that parents of the pupils in high achieving school were more involved in attending PTA meetings than parents of the pupils in the low achieving school.

The study found that parents from the Kemp Methodist JHS had little involvement in the PTA in the school compared with the parents from pupils in the PWCE Demonstration JHS. According to Etsey (2005) when parents are not involved in PTA, some problems facing the school are not attended to and this does not create a conducive environment for teaching and learning in the school, which affects both the teachers and the pupils' output. In Kemp Methodist JHS, since involvement in the PTA was limited, teachers and pupils in a way were not motivated enough to engage in teaching and learning because the school's problems which parents would be able to help solve, were not attended to. The consequence was the low academic performance of the pupils in the school. The mesosystem again confirms that a good relationship between parents and teachers can contribute significantly to pupils' performance. This supports the research findings of Tremblay, Ross and Berthelot (2001) and Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1987) that pupils with parents who are involved in their education tend to have better academic performance than pupils whose parents are not involved in their school. This position also confirms Reynolds and Gill (1994) who demonstrated that a significant relationship existed between parental involvement and academic achievement.

4.4.4 Parents Provision of Breakfast for Pupils and Provision of Basic School Needs

The parents were asked to indicate how often they provide breakfast for their pupils before leaving for school because children cannot learn on empty stomach. Parents from both the high and low achieving schools responded that they provided their children with breakfast every morning. This was either food provided at home or money given for food. The study results did not yield any significant relationship between eating breakfast at home and school. This meant that parents of pupils in both schools provided breakfast always before the children left for school. In other words, eating breakfast before going to school was not one of the factors that

led to the low academic performance of pupils of Kemp Methodist JHS. In addition, the teachers were asked to indicate what percentage of the pupils in their class was provided with all the basic school needs (school uniform, school bag, exercise books, pencils, ruler and pens). The study did not find any significant relationship between provision of basic school needs and school. Thus, the low academic performance of the pupils in Kemp Methodist JHS could not be attributed to deprivation of basic needs of the pupils.

4.5 Teacher Factors that Contribute to the Poor Academic Performance of the Pupils

The third objective was to identify teacher factors that contribute to the poor academic performance of the pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School. The research findings are presented according to the research question posed to achieve this objective. What teacher factors contribute to low academic achievement of the pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School?

The teacher factors considered include; incidences of lateness to school and absenteeism, completion of syllabi, regularity of homework, language used in teaching, interest in children understanding of lesson, and teacher work habits.

4.5.1 Incidence of Lateness to School

The pupils were asked to indicate how often their teachers came to school before morning assembly. The results are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Incidence of early Presence in School among Teachers and school

Response	School Type		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
Never	0 (0.0%)	7 (11.7%)	7 (5.8%)
Sometimes	48 (80.0%)	28 (46.7%)	76 (63.3%)
All the time	12 (20.0%)	25 (41.7%)	37 (30.8%)
Total	60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)	120 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)=16.831 (2), p -value = 0.001, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$

Source : Field Data, 2012.

The results in Table 4.7 shows that 12 (20.0%) of the pupils from the low achieving school and 25 (41.7%) from the high achieving school reported that their teachers came to school before morning assembly all the time. A chi-square test of association produced a test statistic of 16.831, with a df of 2 and a Significant value of 0.001, which is significant at the 0.05 ($\chi^2 = 16.831$ df = 2; $p < 0.05$), showing a statistically significant relationship between teacher presence in school before morning assembly and school. The results show that the teachers in the high achieving school were more likely to be present and not be late to school than the teachers in the low achieving school. This implies that at the start of lesson majority of the teachers from Kemp Methodist JHS would be late while majority of the teachers from PWCE Demonstration JHS would be present.

The study results shows that teachers in Kemp Methodist JHS often got to school late. When teachers get to school late, they do not take part in the morning assembly and start classes on time. This meant teaching time was lost; fewer school subjects were taught and shortened school days for pupils in the school. As this continued, there would be a backlog of syllabi not taught and this resulted in the lower output of work by the pupils from Kemp Methodist JHS. This is consistent with Etsey (2005) who found a statistically significant relationship between teacher lateness to school and academic performance of pupils in Ghana. The finding also agreed with Fobih, Akyeampong and Koomson (1999) who indicated that about 85 per cent of teachers in Ghana go to school late, which contributed to poor performance of basic school pupils.

4.5.2 Incidence of Absenteeism

The pupils were asked to indicate how often their teachers attend school. Table 4.8 illustrates the results.

Table 4.8: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Incidence of Regular School Attendance among Teachers and School

Response	School Type		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
On average, comes three times week	24 (40.0%)	7 (11.7%)	31 (25.8%)
On average, misses once every two weeks	24 (40.0%)	0 (0.0%)	24 (20.0%)
Comes everyday	12 (20.0%)	53 (88.3%)	65 (54.2%)
Total	60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)	120 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)=59.184 (2), p -value = 0.001, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$ Source: Field Data, 2012.

The data displayed in Table 4.8 show that an overwhelming number (88.3%) of the pupils from the high achieving school and about a fifth (20.0%) of the pupils from the low achieving school reported that their teachers came to school every day. A chi-square test was performed to ascertain whether the relationship between teacher presence in school and school was significant. The test reveals a chi-square statistic of 59.184, with a df of 2 and a Significant value of 0.001, which is significant at the 0.05 level. In other words, there is a statistically significant association between teacher presence in school and school ($\chi^2 = 59.184$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$). The results shows that the teachers in high achieving school were more likely to be present and not be absent from school than the teachers in the low achieving school. The study found that teachers in Kemp Methodist Junior High School were often absent from school. A number of reasons

might have accounted for teachers absenting themselves from school. These included teachers having to attend lectures because most of them are pursuing higher education and asking for permission to write examinations. Some teachers were also absent because of maternity leave.

A widespread problem of teacher absenteeism reduces the amount of instructional time and this often results in the syllabi not being completed. Teachers from Kemp Methodist Junior High school therefore were not able to cover a lot more of the syllabus before the end of the year resulting in the poor performance by the pupils. This finding is consistent with Etsey (2005) who found teacher absenteeism to be significantly and positively correlated with primary school pupils' performance in Ghana. The finding also supports CARE International (2003) assertion that chronic teacher absenteeism adversely affects learning in school. Urie Bronfenbrenner's microsystem of the ecological theory also highlights the importance of other people's behaviours on a developing person. The teachers' lateness and absenteeism affect the pupils they teach. Additionally, the finding confirms Etsey, Amedahe and Edjah (2004) who found academic performance to be better in private schools than public schools because of regular school attendance among teachers.

4.5.3 Completion of Syllabi

Teachers were asked to indicate whether they completed the syllabi for the classes they taught the previous academic year. Table 4.9 displays the results.

Table 4.9: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Teacher Completion of Syllabuses and School

Status of syllabuses completion	School Type		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
Completed all	2 (15.4%)	15 (88.2%)	17 (56.7%)
Completed some	5 (38.5%)	2 (11.8%)	7 (23.3%)
Not completed any	6 (46.2%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (20.0%)
Total	13 (100.0%)	17 (100.0%)	30 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)=16.996 (2), p-value = 0.001, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$ Source: Field Data, 2012.

The results in Table 4.9 shows that a larger proportion (88.2%) of the teachers from the high achieving school and less than a fifth (15.4%) of the teachers from the low achieving school reported that the syllabi for the classes they taught the previous academic year were completed. A chi-square test of association was performed to consider whether the relationship between the completion of syllabuses and school was statistically significant. A chi-square statistic (χ^2) value of 16.996, with df of 2 which has associated probability of 0.001 were obtained. However, the associated probability of 0.001 is smaller than the preselected significance of 0.05, showing that statistically significant relationship existed between the completion of syllabuses and school

($\chi^2 = 16.996$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.05$). The results show that more teachers in the high achieving school completed syllabi than the teachers in the low achieving school.

The results show that fewer teachers in Kemp Methodist JHS completed the syllabi than the teachers in the PWCE Demonstration JHS. The completion of the syllabus for each subject in each class provides the foundation for the next class to be built upon. When the syllabus is not completed, content that should be taught in the next class which is based on the previous class could not be understood. As this continues, there would be a backlog of content not taught and this would affect the performance of the pupils. In the final analysis, the non-completion of syllabus in Kemp Methodist JHS resulted in poor performance of the pupils. This position supports Pryor and Ampiah's (2003) assertion that most children perform poorly because they do not follow school work due to lack of understanding from previous work, which is a prerequisite for the syllabus of higher grades.

4.5.4 Regularity of Homework

The pupils were asked to indicate the number of times in a week their teachers gave them homework. The results are shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Regularity of Homework to Pupils and School

Response	School		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
Once a week	18 (30.0%)	9 (15.0%)	27 (22.5%)
Two or three times a week	29 (48.3%)	11 (18.3%)	40 (33.3%)
Almost every day of the week	13 (21.7%)	40 (66.7%)	53 (44.2%)
Total	60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)	120 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)=24.855 (2), p -value = 0.001, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$ Source : Field Data, 2012.

Table 4.10 shows that a little over a fifth (21.7%) of the pupils from the low achieving school and more than two-thirds (66.7%) of the pupils from the high achieving school reported that their teachers gave them homework almost every day of the week. A chi-square test was done to find out whether the relationship between the regularity of homework and school was significant. The test yielded a chi-square (χ^2) value of 24.855, with df of 2 and a probability of 0.001. However, the probability value of 0.001 is smaller than 0.05 significance level. This shows that the relationship between the regularity of homework and school was significant ($\chi^2 = 24.855$; df = 2; $p < 0.05$). The results show that the teachers in the high achieving school gave homework more regularly to their pupils than the teachers in the low achieving school.

The results show that pupils from PWCE Demonstration JHS were assigned homework more regularly than the pupils in the Kemp Methodist JHS. Homework is a supplement of schoolwork and enhances pupils' learning abilities and school achievement. According to Harbison and Hanushek (1992) homework is in reality an interaction between school and the student. Since pupils in Kemp Methodist JHS were not assigned homework more regularly, their academic performance tended to be low. This supports Butler (1987 cited in Etsey, 2005) who found homework to be a correlate of academic performance. He stated that "homework bore a positive relationship with learning outcomes when it is relevant to learning objectives, assigned regularly in reasonable amounts, well explained, motivational and collected and reviewed during class time and used as an occasion for feedback to students" (Butler, 1987 cited in Etsey, 2005, p. 2). The finding of this study does not support Cooper, Lindsay, Nye and Geathouse (1998), as they found a negative correlation between student achievement and volume of homework. In other words they found student performance to be high with limited volume of homework.

4.5.5 Teacher Work Habits, Language used in Teaching, and Teacher Interest in Children's understanding of lesson

Pupils were asked to describe their teachers work habit in school in terms of very hardworking, hardworking, works normally, lazy and does not care about teaching. A chi-square test of association did not produce a significant result between teacher work habit and school. This meant that teacher work habit was not a reason for the difference in performance between the pupils of Kemp Methodist JHS and those in the PWCE Demonstration JHS. Also, the teachers were asked about the language of instruction. However, the study results did not produce any

significant relationship between language of instruction and school. The medium of instruction used by the teachers was not a factor that resulted in the low academic performance of the pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School.

The pupils were asked what their teachers did to encourage them to study. They were provided with the following response sets: Makes sure I understand each lesson; Help me with extra tuition; Explains what I can do with my education; Praises me when I do well; and Refers me to other pupils that can help me with studies. The study results however showed no significant relationship between teacher encouragement and school. Teacher encouragement was therefore not a reason for the difference in performance between the Kemp Methodist JHS pupils and those in the PWCE Demonstration School.

4.6 Pupils' Characteristics Responsible for their Poor Academic Achievement

The fourth objective was to identify pupils' characteristics responsible for their poor academic achievement in Kemp Methodist Junior High School. The research findings are presented according to the research question posed to achieve this objective.

What pupil characteristics are responsible for their poor academic achievement in the Kemp Methodist Junior High School?

Pupil characteristics studied include incidences of lateness and absenteeism, help with studies and homework, language pupils' use in class, attendance in school, pupils' involvement in lessons, time with books and homework, use of time after school, and extra class attendance.

4.6.1 Incidence of Lateness

Teachers were asked to indicate whether lateness to school was a common problem exhibited by pupils in the schools. Table 4.11 indicates the results.

Table 4.11: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Incidence of Lateness among Pupils and School

Issue	School Type		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
Lateness is a problem	13 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (43.3%)
Lateness is not a problem	0 (0.0%)	17 (100.0%)	17 (56.7%)
Total	13 (100.0%)	17 (100.0%)	30 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)=30.000 (1), *p*-value = 0.001, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$

Source: Field Data, 2012.

As shown in Table 4.11, all (100%) of the teachers from the low achieving school reported that lateness was a problem. None of the teachers from the high achieving school indicated that lateness was a problem. A further test using the chi-square was performed to consider whether the relationship between lateness to school and school was statistically significant. The results showed the chi-square statistic of 30.000, with df of 1, and a Significance value of 0.001, which is significant at the 0.05 level. In other words, there is a significant relationship between lateness to school and school ($\chi^2 = 30.000$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$). The results show that lateness was a

problem among pupils from the low achieving school and significantly contributed to the difference in performance between the two schools.

The study shows that pupils in Kemp Methodist JHS were often late to school when compared with PWCE Demonstration JHS pupils. This resulted in the low academic performance of pupils. This was because their continuous lateness to school resulted in loss of content and knowledge in terms of what was taught. They could not understand guidelines for doing assignments and exercises and hence the class assignments and exercises were not properly and correctly done. This is consistent with Etsey (2005) who found a significant relationship between incidence of lateness among pupils and academic performance.

4.6.2 Incidence of Absenteeism

Teachers were asked to indicate whether absenteeism was a common problem exhibited by pupils in the schools. Table 4.12 shows the results.

Table 4.12: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Incidence of Absenteeism among pupils and School

Issue	School Type		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
Absenteeism is a problem	13 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	13 (43.3%)
Absenteeism is not a problem	0 (0.0%)	17 (100.0%)	17 (56.7%)
Total	13 (100.0%)	17 (100.0%)	30 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)=30.000 (1), p-value = 0.001, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$

Source: Field Data, 2012.

From Table 4.12, all (100%) the teachers from the low achieving school reported that absenteeism was a problem. None of the teachers from the high achieving school indicated that absenteeism was a problem. A chi-square test of association found the relationship between absenteeism and school to be statistically significant. The results show a chi-square statistic of 30.000, with df of 1 and an associated probability of 0.001, which is significant at the 0.05 level of significance ($\chi^2 = 30.000$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$). The results show that pupils from the low achieving school absented themselves from school more than the pupils in the high achieving school.

The study shows that Kemp Methodist JHS pupils were often absent from school. Most pupils absented themselves from school on Fridays preceding funerals and also during the Odwira festivities. Those who sell in the night also absented themselves from school because of

tiredness. The effect of absenteeism is that the pupils found it difficult to understand the materials that were taught. The consequence was the low academic performance. This is consistent with Etsey (2005) who found a significant relationship between incidence of absenteeism among pupils and academic performance. Dimbisso (2009) also found a strong positive correlation between school attendance and individual academic achievement.

4.6.3 Help with Studies and Homework

Pupils were asked if anybody helps them at home with their studies or homework. The data is shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Help with Studies at Home and School

Response	School Type		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
Yes	12 (20.0%)	49 (81.7%)	61 (50.8%)
No	48 (80.0%)	11 (18.3%)	59 (49.2%)
Total	60 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)	120 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)= 45.646 (1), p -value = 0.001, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$

Source: Field Data, 2012.

From the data shown in Table 4.13, a fifth (20.0%) of the pupils from the low achieving school and a larger number (81.7%) of the pupils from the high achieving school reported that they

received help at home with their studies and homework. It was found through a chi-square test that the relationship between help with studies/homework at home and school was statistically significant. The results show a chi-square statistic of 45.646, with df of 1 and an associated probability of 0.01, which is significant at the 0.05 level of significance ($\chi^2 = 45.646$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$). The results show that the pupils in the high achieving school received more help with their studies and homework at home than the pupils in the low achieving school.

This implies that pupils from the PWCE Demonstration JHS received more help with their studies and homework than the pupils in Kemp Methodist School. Help with studies and homework is a supplement of schoolwork and those who receive additional help usually would do better in school. Since pupils in Kemp Methodist JHS could not receive much help at home, their academic performance tended to be low. This position supports Ademola and Olajumoke (2009) who indicated that pupils with parents who monitor homework and actively teach their children at home tend to have better academic performance than pupils whose parents are not involved. This supports the assertion that a pupil's performance is affected by many things outside his domain.

4.6.4 Language Pupils' Use in Class

Teachers were asked to indicate what language pupils' use mostly in class among themselves. The results are shown in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Cross-tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Language Use among Pupils and School

Language used	School Type		Total
	Low achieving	High achieving	
Local language	11 (84.6%)	7 (41.2%)	18 (60.0%)
English language	2 (15.4%)	10 (58.8%)	12 (40.0%)
Total	13 (100.0%)	17 (100.0%)	30 (100.0%)

Notes: χ^2 (df)= 5.792 (1), *p*-value = 0.016, Significance level=0.05

significant at $p < 0.05$, not significant at $p > 0.05$ Source : Field Data, 2012.

As shown in Table 4.14, an overwhelming majority (84.6%) of the teachers from the low achieving school and a sizeable number (41.2%) of the teachers from the high achieving school reported that the pupils used local language among themselves in the classroom. In addition, less than a fifth (15.4%) of the teachers from the low achieving school and majority (58.8%) of the teachers from the high achieving school reported that the pupils used the English Language. A test of association showed a significant relationship between language use and school. A chi-square statistic of 5.792, with a df of 1 and a Significance value of 0.016 was obtained. However, the Significance value of 0.016 is statistically significant at the 0.05 level ($\chi^2 = 5.792$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.05$). The results showed that pupils from the low achieving school used the local language among themselves in the classroom while pupils in the high achieving school used English language.

The findings from the study indicated that pupils in the high achieving school used English Language mostly among themselves while the pupils in Kemp Methodist JHS used the local language (Akuapem Twi) among themselves in the classroom. The prevalence of the use of the local language in Kemp Methodist School affected their assignments and exercises which were often in the English Language. Additionally, the widespread use of local language meant that they lacked a lot of vocabulary in English needed to understand teachers' lessons and textbooks they read. These ultimately affected their academic performance. This position is consistent with Etsey (2005) who found a significant relationship between the language use at school and the student performance in Shama sub metro schools in Ghana.

4.6.5 Attendance in School, Involvement in Lessons, Time with Books and

Homework, Use of Time after School, and Extra Class Attendance

Pupils were asked about their attendance in school, enjoyment of teachers' lessons, time with books and homework, use of time after school, and extra class attendance. However, significant differences were not found in respect of the factors mentioned above. This meant they did not account for the difference in performance between the pupils in the low achieving school and those in the high achieving school.

4.7 Education Administration issues that Contribute to the Pupils Poor Achievement

The last objective was to find out education administration issues that contribute to the poor achievement performance of pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School. The teachers were

to indicate how often the following education administration issues are done in their respective schools: in-service training, regularity of staff meetings, preparation and vetting of lesson notes, provision of teaching and learning materials, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. However, statistically significant differences were not found in respect of the above mentioned education administration issues. This meant that education administration issues studied did not account for the difference in academic performance between the Kemp Methodist School pupils and those in the PWCE Demonstration School.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings from the interviews of teachers, pupils and parents. At the beginning of the chapter, respondents' backgrounds were introduced to provide some thorough understanding of their demographic characteristics. Then it came to the data analysis and discussion of findings on school factors, parental/home support variables, teacher-side factors, pupils' characteristics and education administration issues. Factors that showed statistically significant relationship with the school received discussion in detail these included school factors, pupil factors and teacher factors while those that did not show statistically significant relationship with the school received less discussion. It meant those factors did not account for the difference in academic performance between the two schools surveyed.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter has presented the results of the factors affecting low academic achievement of pupils in the Kemp Methodist Junior High School in Aburi. This chapter highlights the main findings of the study and the overall study conclusions and implications of the study findings. It also provides concrete recommendations on what needs to be done based on the identified factors responsible for the poor academic performance in the Kemp Methodist Junior High School.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Over the past few years, concerns have been raised about the poor academic performance of pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School (JHS) in Aburi. The situation raises questions about the depth of understanding of factors affecting the low performance of pupils of Kemp Methodist JHS. The study therefore sought to examine factors responsible for the low academic achievement of pupils in the Kemp Methodist JHS and to suggest strategies that may help to improve pupils' academic performance. More specifically, the research has identified school environmental factors, home conditions, teacher factors, and pupils' characteristics that are significantly affecting pupils' academic performance.

School environmental factors such as limited number of teachers with high academic qualification, inadequate teaching and learning materials, and misuse of contact hours have

accounted for the low academic performance in Kemp Methodist JHS. Teachers' level of education plays a very important role in their level of delivery in the classroom. A teacher's knowledge of the subject matter coupled with all the educational material have great influence on teaching and learning in Kemp Methodist Junior High School .Though majority of the teachers (61.5%) have bachelor degrees the rest of the teachers knowledge in their subject areas can still affect the performance of the school. Inadequate teaching and learning materials also accounted for the low academic achievement of pupils of Kemp Methodist Junior High School. None of the teachers of the school indicated that the school had enough teaching and learning materials to support their work. Pupils perform better when they have teaching materials like textbooks, maps, science equipments and pictures to aid them. Contact hours are meant for academic work but pupils of Kemp Methodist Junior High School sometimes miss this. Sometimes they either weed or fetch water for teachers when they should be in class learning. Hardy (2003) throws more light on the negative relationship between work and academic.

In addition, teacher factors such as incidence of lateness to school and absenteeism, inability to complete the syllabi and inadequate homework assigned to pupils contributed to the low academic performance of pupils from Kemp Methodist JHS. The role of the teacher in achieving academic excellence is very important so lateness to school on the part of the teacher affect the pupils greatly. Teachers lateness to school affect their output of work and this can be seen in they not being able to complete their syllabi before pupils write their final examination. Giving homework to pupils is a way of ensuring that pupils continue to learn after school so if teachers refuse to give them regularly this does not encourage the lazy pupils will not learn after school and this will affect them academically.

Furthermore, pupil characteristics found to have affected the pupils' performance were incidence of lateness to school and absenteeism, lack of assistance with studies at home and use of local language in the classroom. Lateness and absenteeism by pupils of Kemp Methodist Junior High School have had a negative effect on their academic achievement greatly. Lessons are taught during the contact hours to those in school so those who are either late or absent lose a lot and all these come to play when they write their final examination.

Parents' educational levels of education have significant influence on their children's academic performance. Parents with high level of education have more interest in their children's education by buying more books to supplement their school work and also help with homework. Most of the parents of Kemp Methodist Junior High School (70%) have been educated to only Junior High school or Middle School and so are not able to help their children with their studies.

The official language for teaching is the English Language and most of the pupils have difficulties with it so they are unable to read and write and this affects them in their final examination.

Finally, home conditions or parental support variables causing pupils to perform poorly academically were the number of siblings, survival status of parents, their inability to provide textbooks and supplementary readers, low level of interaction with children's teachers, and low level of involvement in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

Parents' interests in their children's education enhance their performance greatly. Parents do this by providing all their school needs, interacting with teachers to know how their children are faring in school and also the school attending Parent Teacher Association Meetings to help in putting measures to encourage teaching and learning like scholarship schemes. Results from this

studies showed that the PTA of Kemp Methodist Junior School were no really involve in motivating teaching and learning in the school.

5.3 Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to examine the factors that were responsible for the low academic achievement of pupils in the Kemp Methodist Junior High School at Aburi in the Eastern region of Ghana. To identify these factors, comparison was made with a high achieving school within the same Municipal area. Through this, the study has been able to establish factors that pertain solely to the Kemp Methodist Junior High School. These factors attributed to teachers, school environment, parents and the pupils were primarily responsible for the low academic performance of the Kemp Methodist Junior High School pupils.

The school environmental factors found included lateness, absenteeism, inadequate teaching learning materials and misuse of contact hours leading to not completing of the syllabi. Also home conditions found to have influence on academic performance included parents not supporting their children with their home work, not interacting with teachers to know how their children are doing in school.

Pupil factors found to affect their academic achievements include lateness, absenteeism and problem with use English Language in class. The findings are generally consistent with the ecological perspective of Urie Bronfenbrenner that poor academic performance is influenced by wider social systems. This shows that pupils face many challenges that justify the need for stakeholders to come up with intervention measures to improve their output. The study has practical significance as it sheds light on the factors affecting the low academic performance of

pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School and for decision making to improve their academic performance. It must be emphasized that these factors generally do not operate in isolation. Therefore any attempt to improve the academic performance of the pupils in the Kemp Methodist Junior High should involve a total package.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

5.4.1 Improve Parents' Attitudes towards Schooling of their Wards

Parents' factors that accounted for the low academic performance in the school were lack of provision of textbooks and supplementary readers, less interaction with children's teachers, and less involvement in the PTA. It is recommended that parents need to be sensitised to make the education of their children and wards a priority. This can be achieved through organising regular sensitization meetings, community non-formal education classes by Youth Groups within the Aburi communities. This would encourage parents to be active in the affairs of the school. As Etsey (2005) indicates:

Parents' involvement in school activities would make them aware of problems and issues affecting the pupils, teachers and the school in general. In this way, they would be able to provide solutions that would lead to the provision of a better teaching and learning environment to improve upon the academic performance in the schools. They would also see the need to provide basic needs of their pupils and provide help for them at home with their studies. (p. 30)

Sensitisation meetings with parents should also focus on encouraging them to develop a sense of ownership for schools. When parents are encouraged to consider the school as their own and not for the district assembly or the government, they would be more proactive in matters that concern the schools. As a result, parents would be aware that the onerous responsibility of improving pupils' performance in school should not be left to the school alone and therefore, the need to forge home-school partnership.

5.4.2 Intensify Supervision and Institute Incentive Packages

The teacher factors that contributed to the low academic performance were incidence of lateness to school and absenteeism, inability to complete the syllabi and low assignment of homework to pupils. It is recommended that supervision should be strengthened and circuit supervisors should be more regular in the sub-metro schools. Regular visits to the schools would motivate the teachers to be more regular and early in school. When pupils realize that supervisors are regular in visiting the schools and teachers are also present always, they would be challenged to change their attitude towards school.

In addition, the Akuapem South Municipal Assembly should work out incentive packages to increase teachers' motivation to teach. Motivation is the force that determines how much effort a teacher puts into teaching. According to Farrant (1980) when a teacher is motivated, remarkable feat of teaching can be achieved. Awards could be instituted for performances. Areas such as school and pupil discipline, teacher performance, pupil attendance and achievement and community and parent participation in school activities should be rewarded to serve as a motivation. This would go a long way to solve the problem of teacher absenteeism and lateness

as the motivational incentives may arouse the interests and desires of the teachers. This will result in a better teaching and learning environment in the school.

5.4.4 Sensitize and Motivate the Pupils

The pupil characteristics that caused the low academic performance were incidence of lateness to school and absenteeism, little help with studies at home and use of local language in the classroom. It is recommended that pupils need sensitization and past students from the community who have made progress in their fields need to be invited regularly to talk to the pupils. Pupils who made it to the senior secondary schools could be used for the same purpose. They would serve as role models and motivators. In addition, teachers need to motivate the children. It is important for the teachers to arouse the interest and the joy in each lesson they teach. They could do this through the use of humour in the classroom, paying individual attention to the pupils, using different approaches to teaching and positive reinforcements. This can also be done by developing achievement motivation in students through achievement motivation training.

5.4.5 Recognize Individual Differences in Education and Encourage Guidance and Counselling

There is the need for the recognition of individual differences in pupils and the need to deal with them accordingly. By gaining a better understanding of individual differences in learning, teachers would develop more effective methodologies in teaching their subject matter. Furthermore, guidance and counselling should be encouraged in the schools to meet pupils' needs. School social workers should provide the necessary assistance and psychological support for the pupils to overcome obstacles in the home and school environment. However, social

workers, because of their emphasis on system/ecological perspective, often played an important role in this shift in focus from individual to family counselling. Social workers in particular focus on the strengths of family members and of the family as a total system, building on those strengths to make the system more supportive of its individual members.

5.5 Conclusion to the study

The study revealed factors affecting the academic performance of pupils of Kemp Methodist JHS. The findings are categorized under school related factors, teacher and pupil factors and home related factors. The study expatiated on how each of these factors contributed to the pupils' poor performance and made recommendations to help improve pupils' performance.

The recommendations included improving parents' attitudes towards the schooling of their children, intensifying supervision of schools, instituting incentives packages for teachers, motivating pupils to learn hard and recognizing individual differences in education and also encouraging guidance and counseling.

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APPENDIX I**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA****DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK****QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS**

Dear Respondent,

The goal of this study is to obtain evidence of the factors that are responsible for the poor academic performance of pupils in schools. This is a partial fulfilment of my M.Phil programme. I, therefore, solicit your cooperation and consent to participate in this study. The confidentiality of your responses is guaranteed.

A. Socio-Demographic Characteristics

1. What is your age? (Completed years)

2. Are you male or female?

1. Male []

2. Female []

3. Do you have other siblings?

1. Brothers.....

2. Sisters.....

4. What is your rank in siblings?

5. Are any of your parents still alive?

1. Yes, both alive []
2. Yes, father alive []
3. Yes, mother alive []
4. None alive []
5. Don't know []

6. Whom do you live with?

1. Both parents []
2. One parent []
3. Other relatives []
4. Other (specify).....

7. What is the occupation of your parent/guardian?

B. School Environmental Factors

8. Do you feel happy at school?

1. Yes []
2. No []

9. Which do you prefer?

1. Home []
2. School []
3. Both []
4. Neither []

10. Give reasons.....

11. How often do you work (i.e., weed at school or fetch water for teachers) during school hours?

1. Never []
2. Sometimes []
3. All the time []

C. Teacher Factors

12. How often do your teachers come to school before morning assembly?

1. Never []
2. Sometimes []
3. All the time []

13. How often do your teachers come to school?

1. On average, comes once a week []
2. On average, comes two times a week []
3. On average, comes three times a week []
4. On average, misses once every two weeks []
5. Comes everyday []

14. What do your teachers do most to encourage you to study?

1. Makes sure I understand each lesson []
2. Help me with extra tuition []
3. Explains what I can do with my education []
4. Praises me when I do good []
5. Refer me to other pupils that can help me with studies []
6. Nothing. Does not care about me []

15. How many times in a week do your teachers give you homework?

1. Never []
2. Once a week []
3. Two or three times a week []
4. Almost every day of the week []

16. How would you describe your teacher work habit in school?

1. Very hardworking []
2. Hardworking []
3. Works normally []
4. Lazy []
5. Does not care about teaching []

D. Pupils' Characteristics

17. How regular do you go to school?

1. Sometimes I come, sometimes I don't []
2. Every week I miss 3 days []
3. Every week I miss 2 days []
4. Every week I miss 1 day []
5. I come to school every day []
6. Other (specify).....

18. How frequently do you come to school before morning assembly?

1. Once a term []
2. Two or three times a term []
3. About once a week []
4. A few times a week []
5. Almost every day []

19. How often do you enjoy your teachers' lessons?

1. Rarely []
2. Sometimes []
3. Almost always []
4. Other (specify).....

20. Does somebody at home help with your studies or homework?

1. Yes []
2. No []

21. How would describe your motivation to learn.

1. Highly motivated []
2. Lowly motivated []

22. Do you attend extra classes?

1. Yes []
2. No []

23. Do you have a role model?

3. Yes []
4. No []

24. Are you in a love relationship with the opposite?

1. Yes []

2. No []

25. How often do you participate in celebration of festivals during school hours?

1. Never []

2. Rarely []

3. Sometimes []

4. Often []

5. Always []

26. How often do you participate in organizing funerals during school hours?

1. Never []

2. Rarely []

3. Sometimes []

4. Often []

5. Always []

27. How often do you attend videos shows in the town?

1. Never []

2. Rarely []

3. Sometimes []

4. Often []

5. Always []

28. How often do you sell after school hours?

1. Never []

2. Rarely []

3. Sometimes []

4. Often []

5. Always []

APPENDIX II**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA****DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK****QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS**

Dear Respondent,

The goal of this study is to obtain evidence of the factors that are responsible for the poor academic performance of pupils in schools. This is a partial fulfilment of my M.Phil programme. I, therefore, solicit your cooperation and consent to participate in this study. The confidentiality of your responses is guaranteed.

A. Background Information

1. Age (in completed years)

2. Are you male or female?

1. Male []

2. Female []

3. What is your academic qualification?

1. Degree holder []

2. Non Degree holder []

4. How long have you been teaching at the basic education level?

B. School Environmental Factors

5. How many professional teachers are in your school?

6. How would you describe the adequacy of teaching-learning materials such as textbooks, teachers' guides, wall pictures, maps, atlases and other learning aids?

1. Adequate []
2. Not adequate []
3. None available []

7. How would you describe the state of the following school infrastructure and materials?

Infrastructure and materials	Good condition	Poor condition	Not available
School building			
Head Teachers' office			
School store			
School library			
Toilet			
Water			
Electricity			

C. Home Conditions

8. What percentage of pupils in your class has all the basic school needs? (School uniform, school bag, exercise books, pencils, ruler and pens)

1. 50% and above of the class []
2. Less than 50% of the class []

9. Does somebody (parent, guardian, etc.) ever ask you about his or her child's progress in school?

1. Yes []
2. No []

10. If yes, how often do parents of your pupils interact with you about their children's performance in school?

1. Rarely []
2. Sometimes []
3. Often []
4. Always []

11. How often does your school Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meet?

1. Never []
2. Once every term []
3. Twice a term []

4. Once a year []

12. How would you describe parents' attendance to the last two Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings?

1. Low []

2. Medium []

3. High []

D. Teacher Factors

13. What language do you use in teaching?

1. Local []

2. English []

3. Both []

14. Did you complete the syllabuses for the classes you taught the previous year?

1. Completed all []

2. Completed some []

3. Not completed any []

4. Other (specify).....

E. Pupils' Characteristics

15. Is lateness to school a common problem exhibited by pupils in your school?

1. Lateness is a problem []
2. Lateness is not a problem []

16. Is absenteeism a common problem exhibited by pupils in your school?

1. Absenteeism is a problem []
2. Absenteeism is not a problem []

17. What language do pupils use mostly among themselves in school?

1. Local language []
2. English language []
3. Both []

F. Education Administration Factors

18. Do they organize in-service training for teachers in this school?

1. Yes []
2. No []

19. If yes, how often do you attend in-service training in the last two months?

1. About once a month []
2. About twice or thrice times a month []
3. Four or five times a month []
4. Several times a month []
5. Other (specify).....

20. How often do you organize staff meetings in this school?

1. Never []
2. Rarely []
3. Sometimes []
4. Often []
5. Always []

21. Do you usually write complete lesson notes weekly?

1. Yes []
2. No []

22. How often is your lesson notes vetted?

1. Never []
2. Rarely []
3. Sometimes []
4. Often []
5. Always []

23. How often are teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, wall pictures, chalk & chalkboards, maps, atlases, charts and magazines, teachers' guides provided?

1. Never []
2. Rarely []
3. Sometimes []
4. Often []
5. Always []

24. How often is monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning done in the school?

1. Never []
2. Rarely []
3. Sometimes []
4. Often []
5. Always []

APPENDIX III**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA****DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK****QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS**

Dear Respondent,

The goal of this study is to obtain evidence of the factors that are responsible for the poor academic performance of pupils in schools. This is a partial fulfilment of my M.Phil programme. I, therefore, solicit your cooperation and consent to participate in this study. The confidentiality of your responses is guaranteed.

A. Background Information

1. What is your age? (completed years)

2. Are you male or female?

1. Male []

2. Female []

3. What is the highest level of literacy you attained?

1. Middle/JSS []

2. Secondary/SSS []

3. Tertiary []

4. Other (specify).....

4. Occupation.....

B. School Environmental Factors

5. What school environmental factors do you think affects your children's academic performance in their present school?

.....

C. Home Conditions

7. Do you provide breakfast for your child or children before they leave for school?

1. Yes []

2. No []

8. If yes, how often do you provide breakfast for your child or children before they leave for school?

1. Never []

2. Sometimes []

3. Always []

9. Do you provide subject textbooks for your child or children?

1. Yes []

2. No []

10. Have you ever inquired from your children's teacher about your children?

1. Yes []

2. No []

11. If yes, how often do you interact with your children's teachers?

1. Rarely []

2. Sometimes []

3. Always []

12. Have you attended the last two Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings?

1. Yes []

2. No []

3. Don't know what it is []

D. Teacher Factors

13. What teacher factors do you think affects your children's academic performance in their present school?

.....

.....

.....

.....

E. Pupils' Characteristics

15. Does your child have enough time with books and homework at home?

1. Yes []

2. No []

16. If No, give reasons.....

.....

.....

.....

17. What does your child do mostly after school hours?

1. Homework/private studies []

2. Selling []

3. Watch TV/Video []
4. Play with school mates []
5. Play games on the computer/surf internet []
6. Don't know what they do after school hours []
7. Other (specify).....

18. Do you monitor your child/children use of time after school hours?

1. Yes []
2. No []

19. What do you do to monitor your children's use of time outside of school?

1. Establish a specific period of time for study at home []
2. Do not allow them to watch TV except for a few hours on the weekend []
3. Limit the time my child/children play with friends/peers []
4. Gives them extra tuition at home []
5. Do not allow them to work on the farm []
6. Limit their work on domestic chores []
7. Nothing. Does not care about them []
8. Other (specify).....

APPENDIX IV**BASIC EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS RESULTS OF THE SCHOOLS
SURVEYED**

BECE Results of KEMP Methodist JHS, 2005-2011

Year	No. of candidates	Aggregate 0-10	Aggregate 11 - 20	Aggregate 21 - 30	Aggregate 31 +	Position in Municipality
2005	71	1	12	33	33	20 th
2006	75	1	12	20	42	33 rd
2007	71	0	8	18	45	25 th
2008	45	0	0	10	28	40 th
2009	100	0	1	33	66	47 th
2010	52	0	6	<u>20-25</u> 18	<u>26+</u> 28	48 th
2011	51	0	0	11	40	54 th

Source: Akuapem South Municipal Ghana Education Service, 2009

BECE Results of PWCE Demonstration JHS, 2005-2011

Year	No. of candidates	Aggregate 0-10	Aggregate 11 - 20	Aggregate 21 - 30	Aggregate 31 +	Position in Municipality
2005	102	10	35	54	3	14th
2006	94	9	45	29	8	12th
2007	98	10	42	31	15	16th
2008	107	29	52	19	7	18th
2009	136	42	27	52	15	13th
2010	115	35	50	15	15	10th
2011	102	37	45	10	20	18th

Source: Akuapem South Municipal Ghana Education Service, 2009