

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON**  
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**CENTRE FOR SOCIAL POLICY STUDIES**

**AN EXAMINATION OF FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH SCHOOL PARTICIPATION**  
**IN THE ACCRA METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLY**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I hereby solemnly declare that, except for references to other people's work, which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is the result of my own research work carried out at the Centre for Social Policy Studies under the supervision of Professor Ellen Bortei-Doku Aryeetey.

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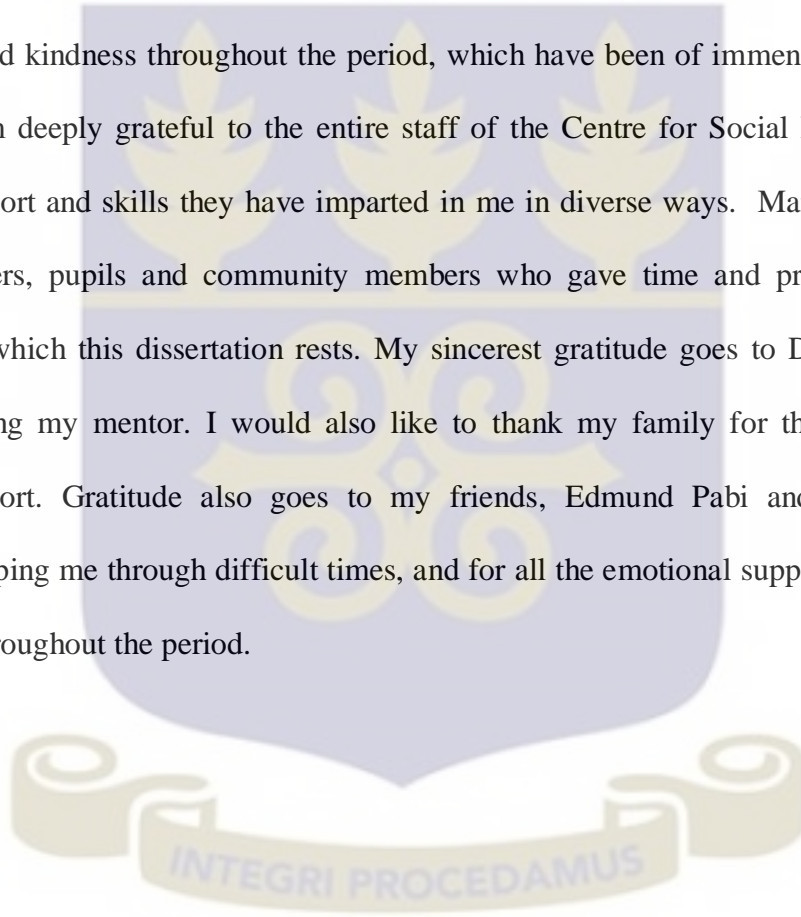


## ABSTRACT

This research aimed to explore the factors associated with school participation among selected basic school pupils within the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. These factors were explored from varied contexts focusing on the school, teacher and home environment all of which the literature has identified as being influential on children's education participation and performance. Through the use of semi-structured in-depth interviews and questionnaires, 102 participants (students, parents, teachers, SMC/PTA, and education officials), selected using systematic random sampling and purposive sampling, were interviewed across 5 schools within the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. Both qualitative and quantitative analyse of the data show that family socio-economic background, availability of appropriate and adequate school infrastructure (well ventilated classrooms, seating places and toilet facilities), as well as teaching and learning materials proved significant for children's school participation. Teacher attitudes and behaviours as well as pedagogical and professional qualifications also proved significant for student participation. Additional factors that significantly correlate with school attendance include family living arrangement, parental material support; emotional support and guidance and involvement in school activities. However, sibling size, and other school infrastructure including urinals and hand washing facilities were not found to significantly correlate with school participation. The study recommends the institutionalization and adherence to effective infrastructure standards and guidelines, as well as the provision of adequate infrastructure by the government. The study also recommends increased supply of teaching and learning materials especially textbooks; effective use of appropriate teaching methodologies by teachers; and sensitization to increase parents/guardians and school collaboration in order to monitor pupils participation.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents and siblings for their continuous support towards my academic advancement. I also dedicate this work to my best friend, Edmund Pabi, thanks for being a good friend. May God bless you.



## ACRONYMS



AESPR	Annual Education Sector Performance Report
CCEUCC	Centre for Continuing Education of the University of Cape Coast
CEDAW)	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EFA	Education for All
EGMA	Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESP	Education Sector Performance
ESPR	Education Sector Performance Report
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
GCE	General Certificate Examination
GDHS	Ghana Demographic Health Survey
GES	Ghana Education Service
GPI	Gender Parity Index
ICESCR	International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JHS	Junior High School
KG	Kindergarten
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOE	Ministry of Education
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework

NALAP	National Accelerated Literacy Program
NRC	National Redemption Council
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SMC	School Management Committee
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
PTTR	Pupil Trained Teacher Ratio
SHS	Senior High School
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSSCE	Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination
TLM	Teaching and Learning Material
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
ACRONYMS.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiii
CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Background.....	1
1.1 Policy and Legal Framework for Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education in Ghana ...	3
1.2 Problem Statement .....	5
1.3 Research Objectives .....	6
1.4 Research Questions .....	7
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	7
1.6 Organization of the Study .....	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITREATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.0 Introduction .....	9
2.1 Educational Reforms in Ghana .....	9
2.2 Factors Influencing School Participation and Learning .....	12
2.2.1 School Related Factors.....	12
2.2.2 Teacher-Related Factors.....	15
2.2.3 Parental and Community Related Factors.....	19
2.3 Theoretical Framework.....	24
2.3.1 Application of the Theory .....	26
2.4 Conceptual Framework.....	28
2.4.1 Concepts and Operational Definitions .....	29
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY .....	33

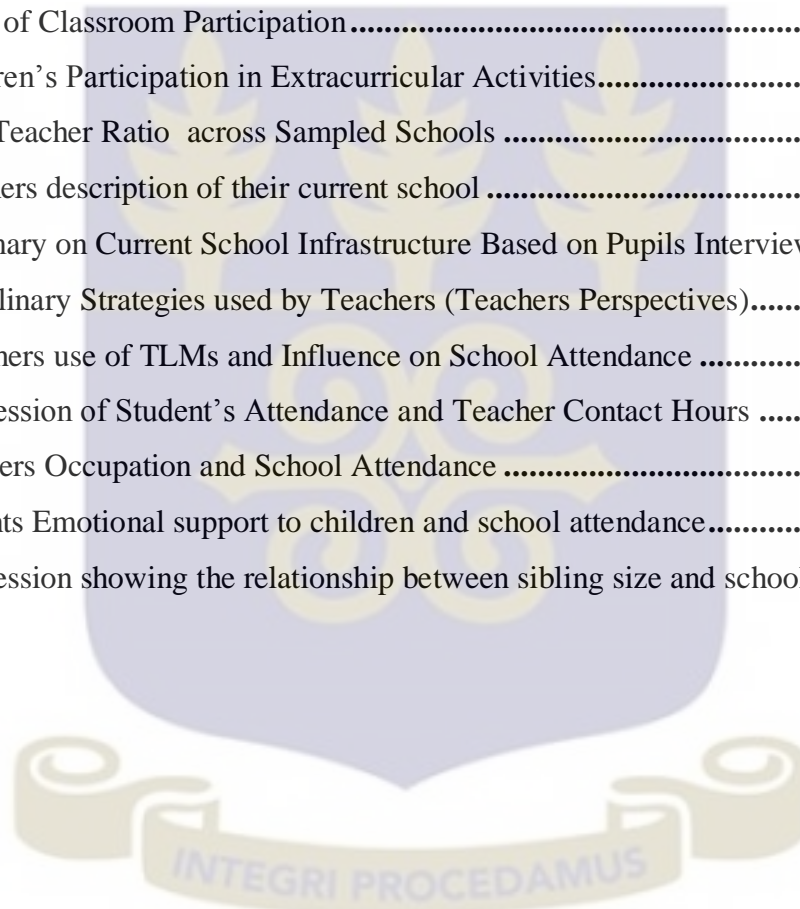
3.0 Introduction .....	33
3.1 Research Design.....	33
3.2 Study Area.....	34
3.3 Target Population.....	36
3.4 Sampling Techniques .....	36
3.5 Data Collection Methods .....	37
3.6 Data Analysis.....	40
3.7 Limitations of the Study .....	42
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION .....</b>	<b>43</b>
4.0 Introduction .....	43
4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents .....	43
4.1.2 Age and Sex Distribution of Respondents .....	44
4.2 Analysis of Findings.....	45
4.3 Perceptions about Patterns of School Participation .....	46
4.4 Conducive School Environment.....	51
4.4.1 Teachers’ Understanding of a Conducive Learning Environment .....	51
4.4.3 Parents understanding of a conducive learning environment .....	56
4.5 Current School Environment and how it measures with National Minimum Standards ....	57
4.5.1 Teachers Perspectives on how their Current Environment Meets National Standards	58
4.5.2 Pupils Perspectives on how Current Environment Meets National Standards.....	61
4.5.3 Parents Perspectives on how Current Environment Meets National Standards .....	65
4.6 Influence of Current School Environment on School Participation .....	66
4.6.1 Teachers Perspectives on the Influence of School Environment on Participation .....	66
4.6.2 Pupils’ Perspectives on the Influence of School Environment on Participation .....	67
4.6.3 Parents’ Perspectives on the Influence of School Environment on Participation .....	69
4.7 Teacher Related Factors and their influence on School Participation .....	70
4.7 .1 Teachers Perspectives on the Influence of School Environment on Participation .....	70
4.7.2 Pupils’ Perspectives on the Influence of School Environment on Participation .....	74
4.8 Household/Family or community related factors and their influence on participation.....	79
4.8.1 Parents Socio Economic Background and influence on School Participation .....	79
4.8.2 Teachers’ Perspectives on Parental Support and Involvement .....	84

4.8.3 Pupils’ Perspectives on Parental Support/ Involvement .....	87
4.8.3 Parents Perspectives on the level of SMC/PTA and Community Involvement .....	95
4.9 Discussion .....	96
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	100
5.0 Introduction .....	100
5.1 Summary .....	100
5.2 Conclusion.....	102
5.3 Recommendations .....	102
REFERENCES .....	105



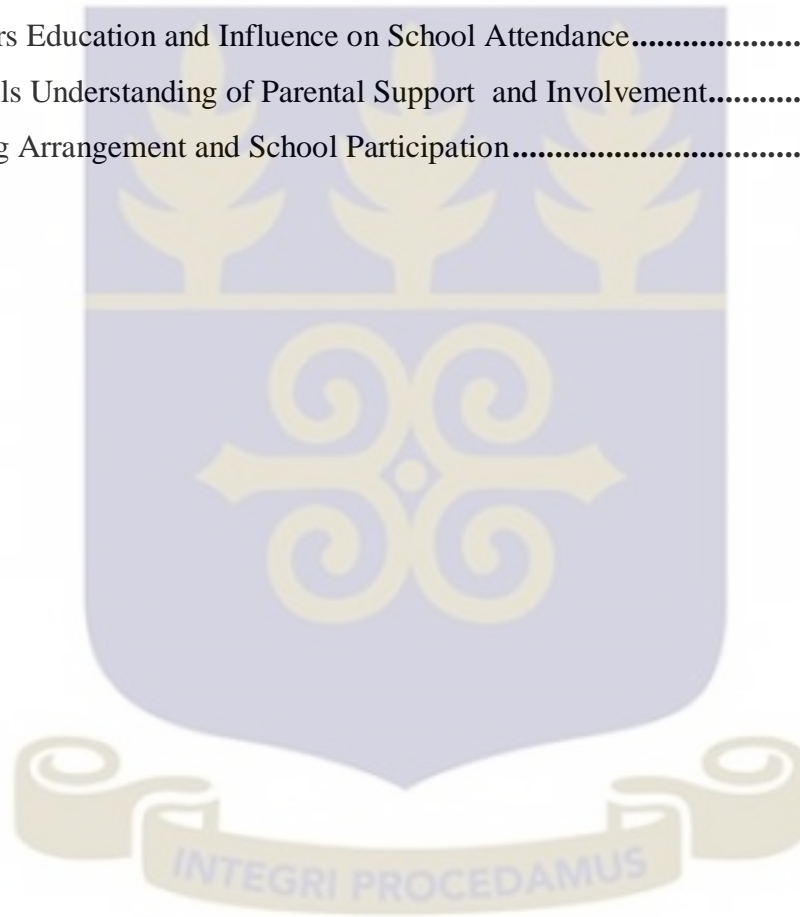
## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents .....	43
Table 4.2: Age and Sex of Respondents .....	44
Table 4.3: Attendance Patterns for Respondents (Pupils) - Second Term, 2014/2015 .....	47
Table 4.4: Level of Classroom Participation .....	49
Table 4.5: Children’s Participation in Extracurricular Activities.....	50
Table 4.6 Pupil Teacher Ratio across Sampled Schools .....	60
Table 4.7: Teachers description of their current school .....	61
Table 4.8: Summary on Current School Infrastructure Based on Pupils Interviews .....	64
Table 4.9 Disciplinary Strategies used by Teachers (Teachers Perspectives).....	73
Table 4.10 Teachers use of TLMs and Influence on School Attendance .....	75
Table 4.11 Regression of Student’s Attendance and Teacher Contact Hours .....	77
Table 4.12 Mothers Occupation and School Attendance .....	82
Table 4.13 Parents Emotional support to children and school attendance.....	91
Table 4.14 Regression showing the relationship between sibling size and school attendance.....	94



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Human Development.....	25
Figure 3.2: Conceptual Framework Adopted from Bronfenbrenners' Bioecological Theory .....	28
Figure 4.1: Thematic Network of Teachers' Perspectives on a Conducive Environment .....	54
Figure 4.2 Physical School Infrastructure and Student Attendance .....	68
Figure 4.3 Mothers' Level of Education and Influence on School Attendance .....	80
Figure 4.4 Fathers Education and Influence on School Attendance.....	82
Figure 4.5: Pupils Understanding of Parental Support and Involvement.....	87
Figure 4.6 Living Arrangement and School Participation.....	93



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that basic education should be free and mandatory. This declaration is also captured in Ghana's 1992 Constitution, the Children's Act, 1998 (Act 950), the Ghana Education Service Act, 2008 (Act 778) and the Ghana Education Strategic Plan (2010-2020). Achieving universal basic education is considered a topmost priority for most developing countries including Ghana.

Ghana has made significant efforts over the last two decades to improve access and the quality of basic education delivery. A number of interventions including the introduction of the capitation grant; school feeding; free uniforms for deprived school children; upgrading of the teacher training colleges; incentive for teachers teaching in the rural areas; one – laptop – per - child project among others have been pursued, and this has resulted in significant improvement in access to education especially at the basic level.

The 2013/2014 Ghana Education Sector Performance Report revealed that, although there have been significant progress in access to basic education in Ghana, there still remain a large number of school aged children who are out of school. The 2013/2014 Education Management Information System (EMIS) statistics revealed an increase in gross enrolment from 86.4% to 107.3% for primary and 70.4% to 82.0% for JHS between 2005/06 and 2013/2014. Again, while net enrolment ratio for primary increased from 68.8% to 89.3% from 2005/06 to 2013/2014, JHS increased marginally from 41.6% to

49.2% for the same period. Gender Parity Index (GPI) for primary stands at 0.99 and JHS is 0.95 for 2013/2014 (MOE, 2006; 2014).

In the area of quality, there has also been slight progress made across Ghana's basic education system, even though the number of trained teachers increased, pupil-teacher ratio and textbook-pupil ratio has not significantly improved over the years (AESR, 2010). The number of trained teachers at public pre-school and basic school levels increased from 130,648 teachers in 2010/11 to 151,376 teachers in 2012/13. The Pupil Trained Teacher Ratio for 2013/14 currently stands at 48:1 for primary and 19:1 for JHS. Also, pupil-core text book ratio for primary school is 4: 1 for primary and 3:1 for JHS (ESPR, 2008; 2013).

The Ministry of Education's (MOE) Annual Education Sector Performance Reviews from 2008 to 2012 suggests there has been little change in relation to educational quality and basic literacy achievement rates despite high investments in the education sector (Annual Education Sector Performance Review, 2008; 2012). Over the last 20 years only 20-25% of children at primary 6 levels (P6) can read at internationally accepted standards (National Education Assessment, 2007).

The World Bank (2010) study on equity and efficiency across Ghana's education sector suggests growing inequities in relation to resource distribution in the country fuelled by ineffective teacher deployment, limited targeting and other resource allocations which favour urban schools as against rural poor schools. This has implications for school participation especially among deprived and under resourced schools.

What this analysis points to is the fact that there are still challenges with providing universal access to basic education for all school - aged children in Ghana. The situation appears to be significant in deprived and resource poor schools. It is therefore vital to understand some of the major barriers to children accessing and remaining in school and appropriate strategies identified to address the situation.

The central focus of this study is to investigate the reasons behind the low participation, and where possible, performance of basic school pupils when both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Ghana's 1992 Constitution make provision for basic education to be free and compulsory for all children irrespective of their background or socio economic status. The study primarily focuses on identifying the school environment, teacher related, and family/community related factors that influence pupils' school participation and performance in school.

### **1.1 Policy and Legal Framework for Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education in Ghana**

In pursuance of the free and compulsory universal basic education, international treaties such as the United Nation's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNESCR) Covenant (1966); the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1990); the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979); the UN Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993); and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) are all instruments that encourage access and equality in education. Ghana's commitment to these international declarations is reflected in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana (1992) Article 25 (1) which states that:

“.....all persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities, with a view of achieving the full realization of that right: basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all”.

Article 38 of Ghana’s 1992 Constitution further requires government to provide access to Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) and, depending on resource availability, to Senior Secondary, Technical and Tertiary education and life-long learning.

The furtherance of this provision led to Ghana’s ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990 and participation in the world summit on children. This led to the passage of the Children’s Act (Act 560) in June 1998. The provision of free compulsory universal basic education is further enshrined in the Ghana Education Service, Act 2008 (Act 778), which was passed in order to provide for the establishment of an educational system intended to produce well balanced individuals with the requisite knowledge, skills, values, aptitudes and attitudes to become functional and productive citizens for the total development and the democratic advancement of the nation.

The Education Strategic Plan (ESP 2010-2020) also provides an overview of the education sector’s policies, targets and strategies for a planned period. The ESP explicitly provides the work programme which presents the policy objectives in terms of targeted outcomes linked to timeframes and institutional responsibilities. The policy and strategy reforms within the ESP are linked to broader development policies and practices,

including the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy II, the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), the report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms and recent reviews and other reports on sectorial development.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Education is not only a human right in itself but it is an essential means of realizing other human rights and its importance, particularly primary education, in advancing economic and social development and in reducing poverty is well documented (Hanushek, 2003; World Bank 2010; RECOUP, 2011). This is also well reflected in Ghana's 1992 Constitution which provides for education to be "free, compulsory, and available to all".

Ghana has made significant strides towards the achievement of the Education for All goals. However, access to and participation in education in Ghanaian society is still inequitable. A considerable number of Ghanaian children remain out of school or are dropping out due to economic, social, cultural, political and other constraints. In 2003 nearly 30% (29.2%) of children aged 6-14 had never attended school. While this figure fell to 16.8% in 2008 (GDHS, 2008), the dropout almost doubled increasing from 2.3% to 4.1% for the same period. Regional, socio-economic and gender disparities continue to exist. For example, while the dropout rate for rural Ghana increased from 2.5% to 3.7% that for urban Ghana increased from 2.0% to 4.7% between 2003 and 2008 (Ghana Demographic and Health Survey, 2008).

Ensuring that all school going age children enrol, remain and complete basic school remains a critical goal for Ghanaian education. Universal primary education coverage is necessary for Ghana to meet any development goals of the future. In order to formulate effective and innovative strategies, it is essential to identify the factors that are associated with non- participation and dropout among basic school children.

It is important to note that, despite the availability of data on school enrolment, dropout and completion as stated earlier, research [on family background, teacher quality, and school related factors that influence school participation is quite limited. . Ultimately what this study seeks is to provide insights that contribute towards reducing this gap in our understanding of school participation dynamics.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The key research objectives guiding this study include the following:

1. To study school environment factors and how they influence children's school participation;
2. To examine teacher related factors and their influence on children's school participation; and
3. To examine household and community related factors and their influence on children's school participation.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the school environment factors that influence children's school participation?
2. To what extent do teacher related factors influence children's school participation?
3. How do household and community related factors influence children's school participation?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

According to several studies (e.g. Hanushek, 2003; RECOUP. 2011), achieving universal basic education is a prerequisite for improved economic growth and development. Yet there are many school aged children who are unable to access and complete basic school in Ghana. Besides, the Ghana government has declared the need for proactive measures in order to get all Ghanaian children in school. It is important to note however that, most of the regular household surveys collect limited information relating to school enrolment and access to schools; as such, attempts to directly relate student participation with household and school resources are limited. Ultimately this study attempts to provide insights on these factors that directly influence childrens' school participation and make recommendations towards reducing this gap.

## 1.6 Organization of the Study

The study is organized as follows: Chapter One gives the background, problem statement and questions/objectives of the study; Chapter Two focuses on a survey of related literature and the theories and concepts that underpin the study; the methodology and data issues are discussed in Chapter Three; and Chapters Four and Five present the findings, discussions and implications; conclusions and recommendations, respectively.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITREATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Chapter two of the study focuses on the theoretical and conceptual literature that underpin the study. This chapter discusses the fundamental theories and concepts that have motivated the research. The literature focuses on the factors that have been identified by other studies to be associated with children's school participation and learning. The conceptual framework explains the ideas, assumptions and concepts that guide the study.

#### **2.1 Educational Reforms in Ghana**

There have been three major educational reforms since 1974 (Oduro, 2000; Anum-Odom, 2007). These reforms are considered significant and a major departure from the educational structure and content after Ghana's independence. They include the Dzobo Education Reforms of 1974; the Junior Secondary School Education (Evans-Anfom) Reforms of 1987; and the Junior High School and Senior High School Education (Anamuah-Mensah) Reforms of 2007. Ghana's education system before 1974 was modelled after the colonial structure and provided several alternatives for Ghanaians to attain formal education.

After much criticism that the colonial system of education over-emphasised training of people to run an administration reliant on other countries, the N. K Dzobo Committee

was set up in the early 1970's to develop an educational system that ensured that all children gained access to formal school with a major focus on science and technological education (MOE, 1975; Centre for Continuing Education, 2002).

The 1974 reforms shortened the period of pre-tertiary education from seventeen to thirteen years; thereby reducing the time spent and costs incurred. Further, the introduction of technical and vocational courses during this period provided more opportunities for school leavers to gain self-employable skills. Although these reforms provided alternatives and opportunities for Ghanaians to attain formal education and practical skills, these reforms did not succeed because the government at that time reportedly lacked the political will to fully implement these reforms (Anum-Odoom, 2007; Oduro, 2000).

In 1987, following concerns and criticisms about the educational system, new educational reforms based on recommendations of the Evans-Anfom Report (1986) were implemented (Ministry of Education, Evans-Anfom Report, 1986). The major feature of this reform in 1987 was to reduce pre-university education from seventeen (17) to twelve (12) years (Ministry of Education, Evans-Anfom Report, 1986). This was described as a major replacement of the old system as the middle schools were eliminated, the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) was replaced by the Basic Education Certificate Education (BECE), and the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary ('O') level and Advanced ('A') level were replaced by the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) (MOE, 1985). The reforms also included the introduction of new

curriculum focusing on skills acquisition, creativity and the arts of enquiry and problem solving (MOE, 1985).

The most significant aspect of this reform was that it was comprehensive and provided opportunities for more school - aged children to access basic education. Also, the introduction of the Continuous Assessment as part of the final examination score was said to have enabled more children to be assessed internally as part of their final examination (CCEUCC, 2002). Although these reforms formed a major access point for children, the reforms according to the Ministry of Education, still faced major challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, inadequate trained teachers and teaching and learning materials which has affected the quality of teaching and learning (Anum-Odoom, 2007).

The most recent educational reforms were implemented in 2007 under the chairmanship of Professor Anamuah-Mensah. These focused on addressing the weaknesses of the 1987 reform in order to meet the current needs of the country. The structure under this reform was very similar to the Anfom structure with the introduction of an additional two (2) years of kindergarten education and apprenticeship training for JHS leavers who were unable to continue in the formal sector. The extension of the three year secondary education to four years to enable students to prepare well for their examination was also introduced under this reform. Expected to address the high failure rates among SHS leavers, this aspect of the reform was only implemented for a few years following complaints of inadequate infrastructure and a change of government in 2008. (MOE, 2002; 2007).

In conclusion, a review of the various educational reforms implemented in Ghana over the last three decades suggests an educational system that has continuously focused on providing the requisite skills and knowledge relevant for the developmental needs of the country. Despite these efforts, several challenges still remain in ensuring that all children have access to universal basic education in Ghana.

## **2.2 Factors Influencing School Participation and Learning**

Learning takes place at different levels and places, at home, school and various other institutions. Therefore, learning is not only a product of formal schooling but also of communities, families and peers. Socio-economic and socio-cultural factors, school environment and inputs as well as community involvement have all been identified to affect school participation and ultimately school achievement (Rothstein, 2000). This section reviews literature related to the specific objectives in this research: school environment factors, teacher related factors, and family/community related factors and their influence on school participation.

### **2.2.1 School Related Factors**

Several school-related factors have generally been identified to be associated with pupils' school participation and learning outcomes. Some of these include school infrastructure, availability of teaching and learning materials, class size, effective supervision, and pupil teacher ratio.

### *School infrastructure*

The school infrastructure, including having sufficient classrooms, equipment, desks and textbooks, is believed to be a factor that has a positive effect on students' participation and performance. Mwamwenda and Mwamwenda (1987) conducted a study in 51 schools in Botswana, from which results showed that students from schools with adequate classrooms, furniture and sufficient availability of books, did better in their overall participation and scholarly performance than students from schools with insufficient school equipment/ equipments. Furthermore, Uline, Tschannen-Moran and Wolsey (2009) discuss the significant influence of schools' cleanliness and maintenance on students' education. The finding suggests effective participation among children in hygienic school environments than their counterparts in less kept school environments (Mwamwenda et al., 1987; Uline et al., 2009).

Another study by Glewwe et al. (1994) points to school infrastructure as being an important factor for improved participation and learning outcomes. In their study that surveyed 1600 households in Ghana testing students' mathematics, reading, and abstract reasoning found that providing blackboards and repairing school roofs that leak, increases school participation and learning per year (Glewwe et al., 1994).

Furthermore, a study by Case et al. (1999) in South Africa on the influence of school infrastructure on student participation and learning found a significant relationship between quality school environment and school participation and learning. The study concluded that poorly resourced schools lower school participation and test scores (Case et al., 1999).

Similar to these views, a study in Kenya by Glewwe et al. (2004) on the impact of flip charts on students' participation and learning found mixed results showing that there is a positive relationship when retrospective estimates are used, but the relationship using randomised experiments was found to be fairly weak ( Glewwe et al., 2004).

### *Class size*

On the issue of class size, the available literature on its influence on student participation and learning remains inconclusive. While Hanushek, 1988 warns that placing too much emphasis on class size as a predictor of participation and learning may be misplaced, Biddle, et al 2002 found that improving quality of learning is possible by reducing class size especially in the early grades. According to Biddle, et al 2002, this was more likely to affect children in developing countries where class sizes are significantly larger than in developed countries.

Similarly, Card, et al. (1992; 1996) and Krueger (2003), in their assessment of participation and learning among primary school children found that lower class sizes have a significant relationship with students' active participation and learning when family background and student ability are controlled. What these different studies point to are the fact that class sizes can have different effects on student learning and participation depending on the variables that are being controlled.

Contrary to these views above, Kasriye's (2009) study on the determinants of learning achievement in Uganda found an insignificant relationship between school resources such as teachers' salaries and class size with childrens' school participation and performance.

The study suggests that the most significant determinant of student participation and learning is family background and parental income and education. These assumptions appear to be true for Ghana where children whose parents, especially mothers with a secondary school education or higher, are more likely to be in school (Kasriye, 2009; UNICEF, 2010).

Other school resources such as capitation grant and school feeding programmes have been found to affect student participation. For example Bjorkman's (2004) evaluation of the effects of the capitation grant on student participation and learning in Uganda found a positive correlation between the two. A similar assessment using randomised experiment in Northern Uganda found take-home rations conditional on school attendance had a positive effect on maths test scores for children aged 11-14 years (Adelman et al., 2008).

In conclusion, despite agreement in educational research that school environment factors are perceived as being key determinants of education participation and learning, some ambiguity in the importance of this factor exists as evidenced in the literature. This may be partly explained by evidence suggesting that educational resources and infrastructure are more important in resource poor schools than more resourceful school settings. What the literature also suggests is that, depending on the variable that is being controlled for, the effect of school environment and resources may differ.

### **2.2.2 Teacher-Related Factors**

The teacher is considered an important factor that influences school participation and performance among pupils. Studies (Jones, 2005; Adam, 2005; and Katz, 2000); reveal that teacher's personality, behaviour and attitude serve as an important model that guides

students' learning, behaviours and attitudes. The following section discusses issues relating to teacher attitude and behaviour, as well as teacher pedagogical and professional competence and their influence on school participation.

### ***Teacher Attitudes and Behaviour***

Teacher attitude and behaviour have been found by several studies to influence students' participation and learning. Begum and Ajmal's (2003) study across 350 government schools in Pakistan found a significantly positive correlation between teacher attitude and student motivation and participation (Begum & Ajmal, 2003). What this means is that the teacher exercises a deeper influence upon pupils' school participation and development. The research argued that, when teachers are able to create a friendly and supportive classroom environment, it creates room for participation among children. This way, the child feels a part of the process and not left out (Begum & Ajmal, 2003).

In a similar vein, a study by Kraft, (2013) using qualitative evidence found a significant correlation between the nature of a teacher's relationship with the child and the child's level of school engagement. The study argues that a child's attitude and participation in school is continuously shaped by what they learn from their teachers and other adults at home. Several other studies have demonstrated that teachers who care for their pupils have a high tendency to positively influence pupils' participation and learning (Battistich et al., 1997; Ryan et al., 2001; Furrer et al., 2003; Kraft, 2013).

Research shows that teachers that are not only pedagogically competent but also provide a classroom environment that is accommodating, warm and enthusiastic remains critical for student participation and learning. Studies show that pupils' attitude towards participation and learning in the classroom is not just related to the technical or pedagogical competence or the professional qualities of the teacher, but it is related, in part, to what the teacher is like as a person. What these studies argue is that teachers' pedagogical and professional characteristics alone are not enough to establish a positive teaching and learning environment (Bousfield, 1940; Feldman, 1986; Basow, et al., 1987; Cravens, 1996; Basow et al., 2000; Best et al., 2000; and Radmacher et al., 2001).

### ***Pedagogical and Professional Competence***

Teachers' use of appropriate pedagogical strategies has been found by several studies to play an important role in students' participation and learning. When teachers are able to identify teaching strategies that are relevant to the needs of students, more students are likely to participate in school. As stated by Zeeb (2004), the alignment of teaching methods with students' needs and preferences significantly influence students' participation and academic attainments. According to Boud et al. (1999), the use of teacher-centred methods where the teacher becomes the main object of attention has the potential to limit student participation. This approach according to Boud et al (1999) is found to involve fewer activities in the classroom making it difficult for children to learn real life challenges based on the application of knowledge learned in the classroom.

Alternatively, the use of child-centred teaching methodology has been found to promote interest and critical thinking among students (Hesson et al., 2007). This teaching method is regarded to be more effective since children do not just receive information, but also participate in the production of the information (Lindquist, 1995). The use of child centred teaching methods such as students working in pairs or small groups, with teachers eliciting information, asking questions, and following up questions creates an environment that motivates children to participate in the classroom (Slavin, 1996; Barrow et al., 2007). This method has been found to be the most relevant teaching strategy for improved student participation and learning (Slavin, 1996; Barrow et al., 2007).

Furthermore, the literature suggests that teachers who are professionally competent have higher expectations of their students; and when teachers' expectations are high for students, it is likely to influence student participation and learning. Rosenthal et al. (1968) observed that teachers who have high expectations for their students to succeed are more likely to challenge these students, hold them to higher standards, and offer them positive feedback in order to improve their participation and learning. Alternatively, when students are aware that teachers expect them to participate and perform well in school, they respond by exhibiting the desired behaviours that are reinforced by the teacher. On the other hand, when teachers do not have high expectations of their students, students equally respond to such low expectations. It is therefore important for teachers to develop high expectations for their students in order to promote effective participation and performance (Rosenthal et al., 1968).

Use of appropriate language of instruction by teachers has also been found to influence children's school participation and learning outcomes especially among minority groups. This is largely the case for early grade levels and for children from ethnic minorities. When teachers are unable to communicate in the language that is best understood by children, their level of participation and engagement in the classroom is likely to be poor. The 2014 Global Monitoring Report confirms that a bilingual approach that combines continued teaching in a child's mother tongue with the introduction of a second language can improve participation and performance in the second language as well as in other subjects (Global Monitoring Report, 2014). This finding is further confirmed by Casely-Hayford et al. (2010) in an evaluation of Ghana's National Accelerated Literacy Programme (NALAP), which found that children who were taught in their mother tongue in the first three years of schooling are more likely to stay in school and perform better in their subsequent years of education (Casely-Hayford et al., 2011; GMR, 2014).

In conclusion, what the literature suggests is that teachers' attitudes and behaviour are just as important as their pedagogical and professional competence when it comes to students' school participation and performance.

### **2.2.3 Parental and Community Related Factors**

This section outlines evidence from literature on the parental/family and community related factors and how they influence school participation among basic school pupils. The literature in this area suggests that the family background of a child plays a major role in their educational participation and performance. Most of the literature that have been identified to be influential for participation and performance relates to parental

socio-economic and educational background, parental support to children's schooling, and parental involvement in school activities. Where the family is located in terms of rural or urban location has also been found to have a great influence on the child's participation and performance in school (Wilms, 2000).

### ***Parental Socio Economic Background***

Parental socio-economic status has been strongly associated with students' participation and performance in school (OECD, 2004; Ramirez, 2010; Hartas, 2011). Research by Ekstrom et al. (1986), Finn (1993), and Rumberger (1987; 2004) found a clear association between the socio-economic status of families and their children's school participation and performance. These studies found that students from higher socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to have adequate study aids at home than students from less advantaged backgrounds. These studies, however, caution that over-emphasizing the relationship between availability of learning aids at home with participation and learning. It warns that not all students who have access to learning materials at home are participating or performing well in school. Having access to materials at home does not necessarily mean that children are using them (Ekstrom et al., 1986; Finn, 1993; Rumberger, 1987; 2004).

Similarly, Hanushek (2003) in his study found parental occupation and income to significantly influence student participation and performance. The study found that children from richer backgrounds were more likely to participate and perform well in

school given that their parents have enough resources to provide for their needs at school (Hanushek, 2003).

### ***Parental Level of Education***

Research by Desforges (2003); Ramirez (2010), and Hartas (2011) found parental level of education to be significantly associated with students' educational participation and performance. These studies reveal that parents with higher levels of education placed more value on their children's education than parents with little or no education. For most of the children that were found to be effectively participating and performing well in school, their parents were willing to do just about anything to keep them in school in order to offer them an opportunity of a better future (Desforges, 2003; Ramirez, 2010; Hartas, 2011). Although the educational level of both parents was found to be significant, mothers' educational level was found to particularly correlate with pupils' participation and performance. In Ghana, this finding is confirmed by the Demographic and Health Survey (2008) which suggests that children whose mothers had at least an SHS qualification were more likely to stay and participate in school than those with no education (Desforges, 2003; GDHS, 2008; Ramirez, 2010; Hartas, 2011).

### ***Parental Involvement in Child's Schooling***

Research has found that parent or family involvement has a significant positive impact on a student's participation and learning especially in their early years of education. According to Kreider (2002) and Marcon (1999), early childhood programmes that include parent or family involvement have significant positive results in helping

especially disadvantaged children (who are at risk of dropping out) to transition to higher levels of education (Marcon, 1999; Miedel et al., 1999; Starkey et al., 2000; Kreider, 2002). These studies suggest that, irrespective of parents' level of education, there exists a significant relationship between parent involvement and children's participation and reading achievements in school (Marcon, 1999; Miedel et al., 1999; Starkey et al., 2000; Kreider, 2002).

Similarly, Christenson et al. (2001) tried to distinguish the kind of parental involvement that was more relevant to student participation. The study found that parental involvement at home such as providing guidance and supervising the child had a more significant relationship with school participation than their involvement in school activities (Christenson et al., 2001). The study added that what parents or families do in the home environment remains significantly more important to student participation and learning than what parents or families do in the school setting (Hickman et al., 1995; Izzo et al., 1999; Trusty, 1999; Christenson et al., 2001). This finding confirms the ideas of Ekstrom (1986), Finn (1993), and Rumberger (1987) who found that students who participate effectively in school and perform better at school receive more parental support and monitoring for after-school activities.

### ***Parental Educational Support to Children***

Another key factor that has proved influential on school participation among pupils is the ability of family to provide educational support such as homework and learning at home. When parents or older siblings are unable to provide support to students' homework and

learning at home, this affects their participation and learning negatively (Sandoval, 2002). The findings disclosed that children's inability to do their homework represents a barrier to their school participation. In addition, Balli et al. (1998), Callahan et al. (1998), and Cooper et al. (2000) who have documented the significance of parental educational support to student participation, cautions that it is not just the support that makes the difference, but it is the type of support that parents are able to provide. For example, an active teaching role by parents is considered appropriate for children in lower grades. For children in higher levels, parental educational support may take the form of giving the child some form of autonomy but not directly being involved in the process (Balli et al., 1998; Callahan et al., 1998; Cooper et al., 2000).

With regards to providing material resources by parents, the World Bank (2013) found that providing appropriate reading materials at home may not be enough on its own to improve children's participation and learning. These materials become relevant when parents are able to support children to use them. In Malawi, a study in selected public basic schools found higher participation levels among children whose parents had received training to support their children's learning (World Bank, 2013).

### ***Community Participation and Involvement in Schooling***

Community participation and involvement in childrens' education is vital as schools do not operate in a vacuum. School participation and performance have been found to be high in schools where parents, families, and communities work together to support learning. Students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer, and are able to transition to higher levels when communities are effectively

engaged with their schools. Many studies have found community involvement as key to addressing the school dropout crisis. This evidence is said to be true for all children irrespective of their parent's education, family income, or background (NEA policy Brief, 2008; Associates for Change, 2013).

Research by Associates for Change (2011) found that community engagement and support was an important way of increasing school resources and accountability in schools. According to the study, School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations (SMC/PTA) and other community members were supporting the school by employing community based teachers, paying them an allowance and making sure that these volunteer teachers were present in school at all times in order to enable their children be in school (Associates for Change, 2011).

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

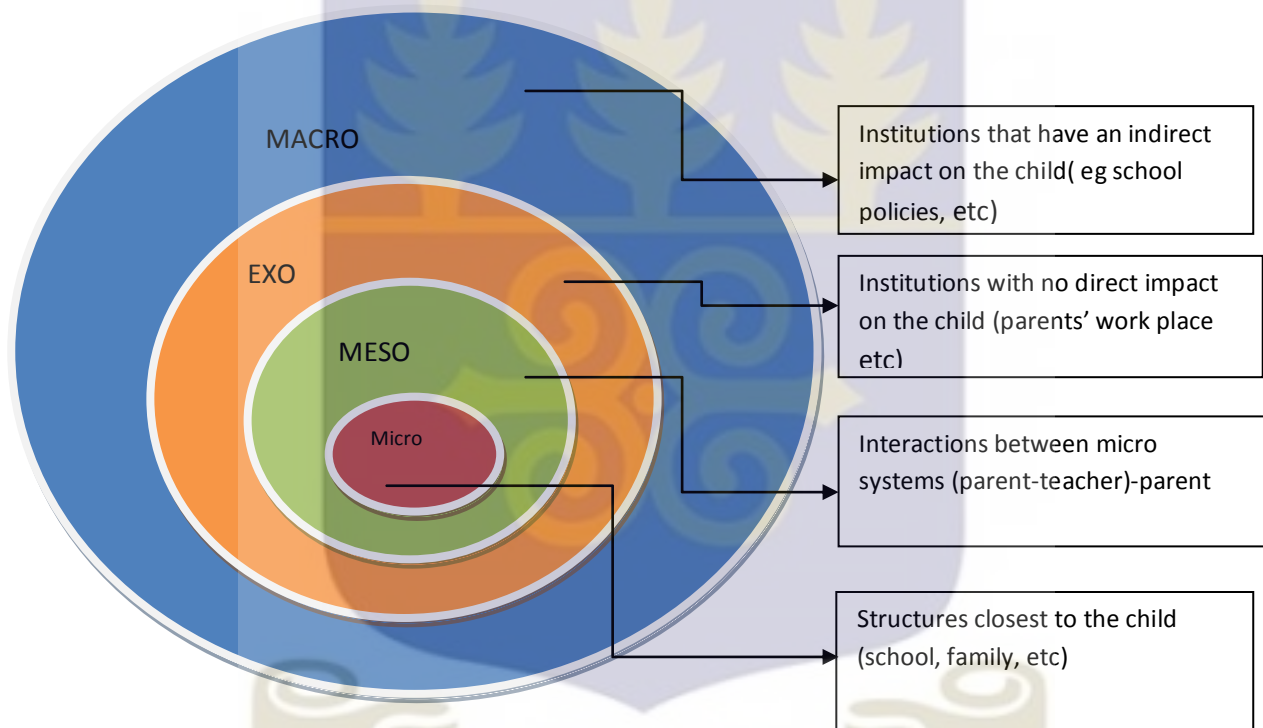
This study uses the ecological framework of children's development by Bronfenbrenner (1979). This ecological model looks at both the proximal and distal environment that influences children's development. The framework principally looks at the family, school, as well as broader community/society environment and how they influence a child's development in various intersecting ways over time (Sanson et al., 2002; Bronfenbrenner et al., 1998; 2006).

Bronfenbrenner's theory (Bronfenbrenner et al., 1979; 1998; 2006) indicates that the various contexts are interdependent and argues that the individual's dispositions, aptitudes, and demands on the environment are all reflected in the process of their development. A child's development in this theory is largely influenced by changes in

their life events either through an imposition from the environment in which they find themselves or through their own experiences (Bronfenbrenner et al., 1979; 1998; 2006).

The ecological framework views development as influenced by five environmental systems, ranging from proximal contexts where direct interactions take place to distal contexts such as culture emanating from the larger society.

**Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Human Development**



Source: Bronfenbrenner, 1979

These five systems include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. The micro system represents the child and his immediate environment such as the home, family school, peers and neighbourhood (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The mesosystem is the relationship and interaction between two or more microsystems where the individual spends most of their time, for instance, the home and the neighbourhood.

Contexts that do not directly affect a child's development are referred to as the exosystem; for example, parents' place of work and social relationships or networks. The culture, attitudes and beliefs that guide how the child is raised is the macrosystem. The chronosystem refers to the pattern and change of the various contexts and events that take place over time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; 2006).

In sum, what the model posits is that the development of the child is as a result of interactions between the various contexts outlined above taking place over a period of time. In the model, one's experiences and location as well as the timing all play a critical role in determining a person's life course.

Within this ecological framework, the study takes a developmental pathways approach, emphasising the route of development from early child care to basic education level. This approach identifies the factors within the life course of a child and how that can lead to good or poor school participation and performance. The various contexts that have been found to influence this life course such as the family, school and home environments are identified and explored.

### **2.3.1 Application of the Theory**

Several studies (Manitoba Centre for Research in Youth, Science Teaching and Learning; Evans et al., 2010; Fisher-Owens, et al 2007; Holt, et al., 2008; Lustig, 2010; and Program Effectiveness Data Analysis Coordinators of Eastern Ontario, 2009) have successfully adopted the Bronfenbrenners' bioecological theory in explaining childrens' educational development pathways. Worth mentioning are studies conducted under the University of Manitoba Centre for Research in Youth, Science Teaching and Learning

(CRYSTAL) programme using the Bronfenbrenner's model as the guiding theoretical framework. The most relevant for this study is the work of Mcvitte et al (2007) on the importance of local environment for promoting student engagement in learning. In this study, the development and implementation of a pilot Grade 10 science curriculum was done based on the opinions of different groups of people at different levels; including elders and town councillors; school leaders, including teachers and administrators; and students. This was done in order to encourage education planners to look beyond the classroom microsystem as there are several factors influencing pupils' participation in science programmes. (Mcvitte et al., 2007)

Other studies by Maxwell et al (2009), and Kajander et al (2006), Lewthwaite et al (2007), all using the Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model theory, identified various contexts that influence childrens' educational development, found it useful in its ability to conceptualize and identify at various levels the potential contributors and inhibitors to educational development.

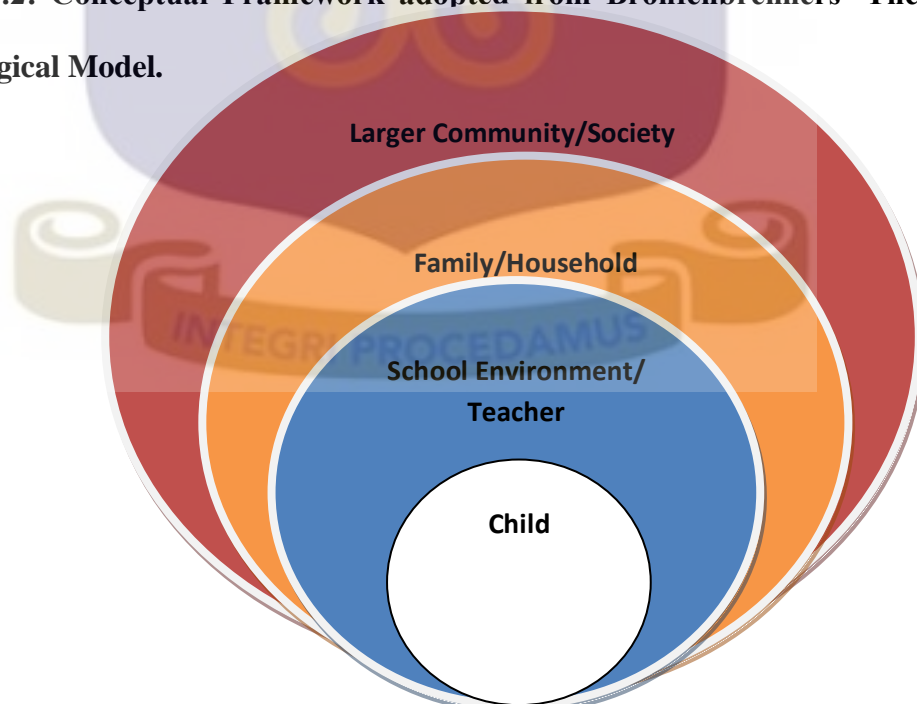
What this suggests is that a child's learning in school is strongly associated with not just what they know before they enter school, or what they are learning at school, but their attitude to learning in the home environment has an impact on their success at school. The relevance of this theory to the study is that it compels the researcher to view pupils' participation and learning outcomes as a phenomenon that is influenced by wider social systems. The interactions between the various social systems influence the experiences of the child and this has implications on the extent to which they participate in school. From the constructs of the ecological theory, school participation among children is inevitably associated with the character of the social system. The ecological theory is, therefore, the

most appropriate theory for studying the factors associated with pupils' school participation and performance. It is the best model because it focuses not just on the immediate environment, but the larger society. Accordingly, the study seeks to position itself within this framework to investigate the factors associated with school participation and performance among children across basic schools within the Accra Metropolitan Assembly.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

Based on the discussion above, a model is proposed within the context of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly to predict children's participation and learning. Testing this model uses data at the individual, school, family and community level to assess their impact on participation and learning.

**Figure 3.2: Conceptual Framework adopted from Bronfenbrenners' Theory of Bioecological Model.**



Source: Authors Construct based on Bronfenbrenner's Model (2015)

The proposed model (Figure 3.2), based on the bioecological model of Bronfenbrenner, recognizes the importance of multi-level environments as well as interactions among them as key to educational development. At the child level, the study focuses on variables such as age, sex, and school days missed. The school level factors focuses on the general school environment comprising the physical environment as well as teaching and learning materials present in the school; whereas teacher level factors looks at the professional qualification, absenteeism, contact hours and pedagogical competence of the teacher. Family/household dimension focuses on the parental socio economic background (education, occupation) and their support for the child's schooling. Finally the community level factors discussed include community support and involvement through the SMC/PTA and other community members. This model (figure 3.2) shows a multi-level conception of the relationship between the variables and incorporates how each of these influences the other.

#### **2.4.1 Concepts and Operational Definitions**

The term *participation* is associated with a number of related words, such as 'taking part', 'involvement' and 'consultation'. Using the dictionary (Merriam Webster) definition of the term differentiates two main interpretations:

- (i) *Participation in the sense of 'taking part in', i.e. 'being present'.*
- (ii) *Participation in the sense of 'having a part or share in something', which is related to notions such as empowerment and 'ownership' and refers to one's sense of being taken seriously and being able to make an impact.*

In the school context, participation is often used to refer to the interactions where teaching and learning is taking place. Similarly, participation sometimes simply means attending school or taking part in a class discussion. Both meanings belong to the first group of interpretation as students are simply involved in pre-designed activities without taking into consideration their real influence. Sometimes, student participation is referred to as the 'voice of the child', based on importance the teacher being able to listen to the student in order to motivate and foster their learning and development. (Simovska, 2007). On other occasions, participation implies power sharing in decision making in the school making sure that the learners' perspectives are reflected in the content and process of learning.- this is to ensure that there is a sense of autonomy, ownership and empowerment with regards to learning (Simovska 2007; 2012).

*Student Participation* according to Simovska (2007) is described with reference to the school environment: whether the school environment promotes inclusiveness, supports relationships, positive social norms and values as well as opportunities for developing skills and competences among children. In addition, participation is expected to nurture students' decision-making and self-awareness skills creating a sense of connection and empowerment among pupils and communities (Simovska, 2007).

Rifkin et al.'s (1988) description of what constitutes participation involves three key characteristics; it must be active, involve a choice and must be potentially effective. They argue that, without a chance for practicality, the issue of choice is meaningless (Rifkin et al., 1988).

The operational definition of school participation as employed in this study draws from both descriptions comprising an overall participation of pupils in everyday school life including being present in school, participating in school activities and events, as well as participating in the classroom.

This kind of participation is possible when schools and teachers create democratic classroom and school communities, which promotes inclusiveness among children. In contrast to the traditional school participation where the student is expected to only receive information from the teacher, this form of participation as described above allows for students to own the learning process which has potential for effective knowledge acquisition and application.

### **Summary**

The literature reviewed presents mixed findings regarding the factors that influence school participation among children. With regards to school environment and resources, most of the literature found a significant correlation between school resources and student participation. There are, however, a few studies that did not conform to this general finding. Teacher related factors that have been found to be critical to student participation and performance, according to the literature, include teacher attitudes and behaviours, as well as teacher pedagogical and professional competence.

Parental and community support, participation, and involvement also remain vital to student participation and performance. Parents' socio economic backgrounds such as education and occupation have been found to significantly correlate with student participation and performance. Mother's education was especially found to be more

important than fathers' education for student participation. Participation and performance was also found to be effective in schools where communities were actively engaged and were providing support to the school. This literature provides an opportunity for the study to test the relevance of these findings in Ghana's situation. The theoretical and conceptual framework shows a multi-level conception of the relationship between the variables and incorporates how each of these influences the other.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

Chapter Three presents the research methodology that was used in the study. In particular, the mixed method research design was adopted for the study and is described in the following sections: research design, study area, target population, sampling techniques, data collection methods and procedures, and data analysis.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study employed a mixed method approach to investigate the factors associated with school participation and performance among children in basic schools within Accra Metropolitan Assembly.

The rationale for using the mixed method is to draw from the strengths and minimize the weakness of both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to enrich the study results. The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods is also underscored by Yin (1994), who stipulates that using multiple sources of data enables one to triangulate evidence in order to increase the reliability of the data. The use of mixed methods also enables cross checking for validity of findings from different research strategies.

In this study, the researcher utilized an ecological perspective to frame the research question and inform the research design. Essentially, the ecological perspective takes into account the influence of environmental factors at multiple levels (i.e., family, school, community) that shape individual behaviour (Bronfrenbner, 1979).

Further, the ecological perspective allowed the researcher to look beyond the commonly cited causes of school participation (i.e., individual characteristics) and considered external factors (i.e., family, school, and community) that might have a significant impact on the educational participation of students (Fraser, 2004). Thus, the ecological perspective provided a more complex understanding of the factors that influence educational participation within different contexts. It is anticipated that the analysis of data derived from this study would allow policy makers to see how the various variables affect student participation.

### **3.2 Study Area**

Accra Metropolitan Assembly was established by the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462). The Assembly has a land area of 137sq km, located on longitude 05 35' and on Latitude 00 06'. It shares boundaries to the East by the La Dade-kotopon Municipal Assembly, South by the Gulf of Guinea, on the West by Ga South and Central Municipal Assemblies, and on the North by the Ga West and La-Nkwatanang Municipal Assembly. (Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2013)

The 2010 population and housing census estimate the assembly's population at 1.7 million covering almost 42% of the total population of the Greater Accra Region. Rural – Urban migration is found to largely account for the metropolitan's growth of 3.1%; higher than the national rate of 2.4%. Accra has a youthful population with 78% being 18 years and above; of which 52% of the total population are females. The dependency ratio is estimated at 60%, meaning that 60% of the population depends on the remaining 40% for their survival. (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010; AMA Composite Budget, 2013)

Accra Metropolis is host of major manufacturing firms, telecommunication and financial, education, health, tourism and other important establishments providing employment opportunities for most of its residents. While Ghana's efforts resulted in the reduction of the nation's population below the poverty line from 51.7% in 1992 to 28.5% in 2006, that of Accra increased from 5% in 1999 to 12% in 2006. (Ghana Living Standard Survey Round 4). Reports estimate an increasing urban poor population lacking access to basic social infrastructure and amenities such as housing, water, and sanitation facilities. (Ghana Living Standard Survey Round 4, 2008; Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2013).

With regards to health, the assembly has two Government Hospitals, 6 Polyclinics, and 10 smaller facilities which are under the Ghana Health Service. Four Quasi-Governmental and a host of private health care providers also offer clinical services including out-patient and In-patient, Public Health Services (Reproductive and Child Health Services, Nutrition, Pharmacy, Laboratory and X-ray. Malaria accounts for about 95.01 per cent of all the Out-patient Department (OPD) cases in the metropolis. (Ghana Health Service, 2010).

Concerning education, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly has a total of 120 kindergartens, 359 Primary Schools and 428 Junior High Schools. The total population across these schools is estimated at over 170, 000 with nearly 10,000 in Kindergarten (KG). Until recently, the assembly as a result of inadequate infrastructure has been practicing the shift system for over a decade. The Accra Metropolitan Assembly has one of the lowest pupil trained teacher ratio at 38:1 for primary and 20:1 for JHS (2012/2013 academic year) compared to a national average of 48:1 for Primary and 25:1 for JHS. Pupil textbook

ratio is also considerably low at 3:1 for both primary and JHS compared to the national average of 3: 1 for primary and 4:1 for JHS level. (EMIS, 2013/2014). The choice of Accra Metropolitan Assembly for this study was influenced by the fact that it is highly heterogeneous, representative of different school contexts, and with diverse parental and family backgrounds. In addition, due to time constraints, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly was selected so that the researcher was able to meet deadlines set for the study.

### **3.3 Target Population**

The target population include pupils, teachers, parents and SMC/PTA members across five sampled schools within the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. Five schools (3 primary and 2 JHS) were targeted for this study. This number was selected from an initial sample of 50 basic schools presented to the researcher by the Accra Metropolitan District Education Office. Based on the target population, a sample of 15 teachers, 40 pupils, 40 parents, 5 SMC/PTA, and 2 District Education Officials were selected for the study. What this means is that, in each school interviews were conducted with 3 teachers, 8 pupils, 8 parents, and 1 SMC/PTA. Interviews were also conducted with the Accra Metropolitan District Director of Education and the Assistant Director in charge of supervision.

### **3.4 Sampling Techniques**

A list made up of a total number of 50 schools was provided by the Accra Metropolitan District Education office. From this list, the researcher using the power sample rule selecting 10% (5 schools) from the total sample. With a total sample of 40 students, 40

parents, 15 teachers and 5 SMC/PTAs that were expected to be selected from the five schools, 8 students, 8 parents, 3 teachers, and 1 SMC/PTA were selected from each school. The systematic random sampling technique was used by the researcher to select a list of 8 pupils from the school register at each school. Using the same approach, parents were also selected from a list provided by the head teacher in each school. In each school, 8 parents and pupils each were interviewed to collect quantitative data. Starting from number one, every other 10<sup>th</sup> pupil from the register, and parent were selected to be part of the sample. This method was used to ensure that the sample was represented of the population being studied. Teachers were also sampled randomly selecting teachers from the teachers' log book. Officials interviewed at the Accra Metropolitan Education Office were purposively sampled because they were in the position to provide important information on education policy and its implications for children's school participation. Overall the study covered five basic schools (2 JHS, and 3 Primary Schools) and 102 respondents comprising of students, parents, teachers, SMC/PTA and District Education Officials.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

A number of data collection methods were used to gather data from a range of participants. These included semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and key informant interviews. The quantitative data was collected using a questionnaire.

### *Semi-Structured Interviews*

Semi-structured interviews were used as a primary strategy for data collection. These were used in conjunction with focus group interviews, field notes, document analysis, and other techniques to enhance triangulation (Patton, 2002). In particular, qualitative, face-to-face interviews with pre-specified, open ended questions provided focus and structure while allowing for flexibility and scope to probe beneath the surface of the responses (Patton, 2002). Each question was directly linked to one or more of the three research questions.

An interview guide was used to give the interview a focus. The interview guide was organized in a way that allowed participants to broadly describe their own perceptions/experiences of how home, school, and community environment influence school participation and academic performance. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the resulting data was analyzed using thematic networks as described in the analysis section below.

### *Questionnaire*

A questionnaire was developed using the key research questions as a guide. The questionnaire enabled the researcher to gather information from respondents on a number of coded responses ranging from school environment factors, teacher related factors and home/family related factors that have been found by literature to influence school participation. A Likert-type questionnaire enabled respondents to choose from a variety of codes.

### ***Focus Group Interview***

Focus group discussions were conducted with pupils as well as SMC/PTA members. These focus group discussions enabled the researcher to obtain participants' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of the influences on school participation in a social context as they listen to and respond to the views of others.

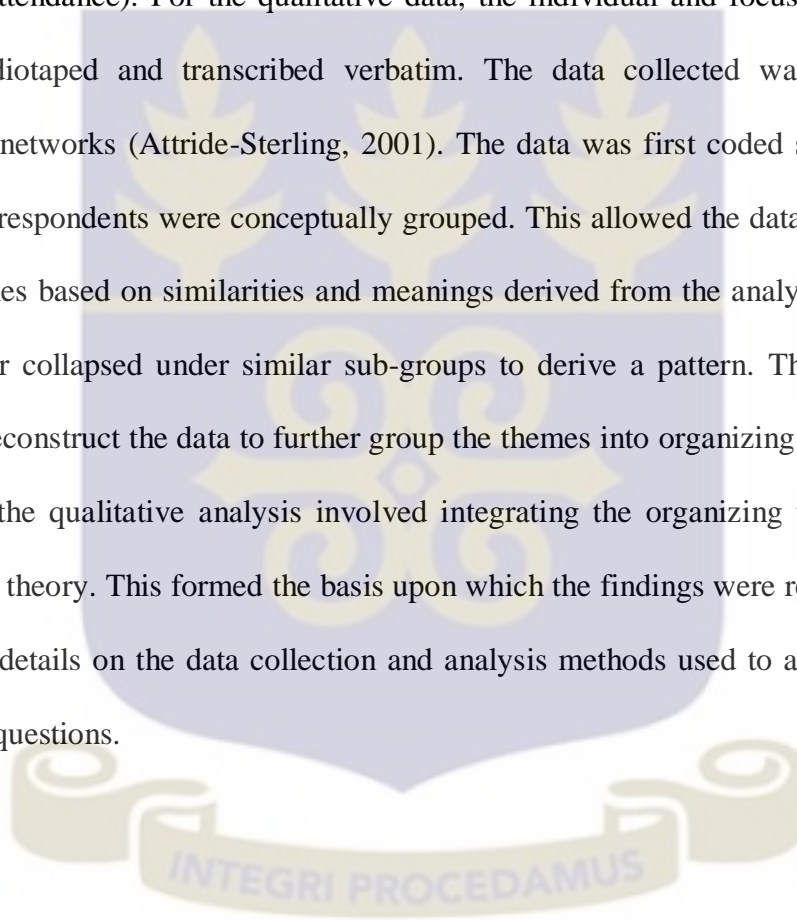
### ***Data Collection Procedure***

For the qualitative data which was gathered using individual interviews and focused group discussion, a digital audio recorder was used during each interview. After the completion of each interview, the established digital files were then transcribed into a secure Microsoft word document. Once the digital file was successfully transcribed and confirmed for accuracy, the analysis was conducted using the transcript.

For the quantitative data, a questionnaire which set out systematically structured questions based on the variables under study was administered to respondents with the help of the interviewer. The Likert-type questionnaire provided respondents a series of options to choose from, and in some cases, respondents were expected to cite reasons for their choice. School records such as student enrolment, staff information and school attendance were collected in each school with the help of the head teacher. Other information on text books and other teaching and learning materials were also gathered in each school with the support of the head teacher.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected using the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency distributions, graphs, means and standard deviation. Cross tabulation, analysis of variance and linear regressions were also used to establish the combined influence of the independent variables in predicting the dependent variable (school attendance). For the qualitative data, the individual and focus group interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. The data collected was analyzed using thematic networks (Attride-Sterling, 2001). The data was first coded so that statements from the respondents were conceptually grouped. This allowed the data to be categorised into themes based on similarities and meanings derived from the analysis. These themes were later collapsed under similar sub-groups to derive a pattern. The researcher then tried to reconstruct the data to further group the themes into organizing themes. The final stage of the qualitative analysis involved integrating the organizing themes to form a grounded theory. This formed the basis upon which the findings were reported. Table 3.1 provides details on the data collection and analysis methods used to answer the various research questions.



**Table 3.1 Data Collection and Analysis Methods Used in the Research**

Objectives	Core Variables	Data Collection Methods	Analysis Method
1. To study school environment factors and their influence on children’s school participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School infrastructure and facilities</li> <li>• Teaching and learning materials</li> <li>• Pedagogical tools</li> <li>• Compound security and personal safety</li> </ul>	Direct interviews with teachers Direct interviews pupils Direct interviews parents Questionnaire	Direct and focused group interviews were analyzed using thematic networks that involved transcribing the data, coding and arranging responses into themes and further restructuring them to get predominant themes and the nuances that arise from the transcripts. Findings of the research were written out based on these themes.  For the questionnaire, the data was entered into an SPSS data entry template developed by the researcher. Using the school attendance as the independent variable, cross tabulation was conducted to see the level of influence of the various dependent variables on school attendance. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA and regressions were also conducted.
2. To examine the teacher related factors and how they influence children’s school participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher training background and capacity</li> <li>• Pupil teacher ratio</li> <li>• Contact hours</li> </ul>	Direct interviews with teachers Direct interviews with head teachers	The process described above was used to analyse this research question
3. To investigate household and community related factors and how they influence children’s school participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental /guardian characteristics</li> <li>• Parental support for school children</li> <li>• Community involvement in school activities</li> </ul>	Questionnaire Direct interviews with parents FGD with SMC/PTA FGD with pupils	The process described above was used to analyse this research question

Source: Authors Construct, 2015

### ***Credibility***

The credibility of a study is largely predicated on triangulation. As a result, the researcher as much as possible, compared and cross-checked the consistency of information derived at different times and by different means. For example, observations and field notes were compared with interviews and other documents to corroborate what participants reported.

### **3.7 Limitations of the Study**

The study focused on a small sample size due to time and resource constraints. The results may not have implications for other populations especially in remote rural areas. Also, the research was limited by the fact that observations and interviews with these participants only occurred for a short period of time. Hence results may differ when populations of this nature are observed over time. Lastly, the measurement of educational participation and performance has often been criticized because of the potential limitations it presents to researchers. It is important to note that these limitations do not weaken the findings of this study but serve as a starting point for future research.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter looked at the research methodology for the study. It discussed the choice of methodology and justification for the research design, sampling procedures or techniques, data collection sources and instruments. It also discussed the data analysis process and ethical principles as used in conducting the research.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the findings. The first section presents the demographic characteristics of the research participants and the second section presents the results/findings of the research focusing on the research questions set out in Chapter One.

#### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 102 respondents participated in the study. Eighty respondents comprising 40 pupils and 40 parents responded to a questionnaire. Fifteen in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers, five focused group discussions were held with pupils and SMC/PTA members across the five sampled schools. In addition, two in-depth interviews were conducted with the District Director and Assistant Director (Supervision) at the Accra Metropolitan Education Office. Table 4.1 illustrates the distribution of respondents.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Pupils	40	40.8%
Parents	40	40.8%
SMC/PTA	5	4.9%
Teachers	15	15.3%
GES/MOE Officials	2	2.04%
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2015

#### 4.1.2 Age and Sex Distribution of Respondents

The table below show the age and sex distribution of respondents. For pupils, the majority of respondents (21 out of 34 pupils) in primary schools were between 11 -13 years, and at the JHS level majority (14 out of 16 pupils) were between 14-16 years old. The average age for pupils was 13years for primary and 15 years for JHS. There was an equal representation of boys and girls at both JHS and primary school level. With regards to parents, the majority were aged within 25-30 years (12) and 51-60 years (11). Fifteen teachers were also interviewed. Table 4.2 below illustrates the age and sex distribution of respondents.

**Table 4.2: Age and Sex of Respondents**

Item	Cable and Wireless Primary	Bubuashie '2' Primary	Odorkor '5' Primary	Odorkor Maclean JHS	Awudome JHS	Total/Mean Age
<b>Pupils</b>						
<b>Age Range</b>						
11-13 Years	6	6	7	1	1	21
14-16 Years	2	2	1	7	7	19
<b>Average age</b>	13 Years	13 Years	12 Years	15Years	15 Years	13 Years
<b>Gender Distribution</b>						
Female	4	4	4	4	4	20
Male	4	4	4	4	4	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Parents</b>						
<b>Age Range</b>						
25-30 Years	4	2	2	3	1	12
31-40 Years	2	2	1	2	2	9
41-50 Years	2	0	2	3	1	8
51-60 Years	0	4	3	0	4	11
<b>Average Age</b>	32 years	42 years	44 years	36 years	46 years	42 Years
<b>Gender Distribution</b>						
Female	4	4	4	4	4	20

Male	4	4	4	4	4	20
Total	8	8	8	8	8	40
<b>Teachers</b>						
<b>Age Range</b>						
25-30 Years	0	0	0	1	0	1
31-40 Years	2	1	1	1	1	6
41-50 Years	0	1	1	0	2	4
51-60 Years	1	1	1	1	1	5
Average Age	39 years	45years	42years	37years	46 years	42 Years
<b>Gender Distribution</b>						
Female	3	3	2	2	2	12
Male	0	0	1	1	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2015

#### 4.2 Analysis of Findings

Analysis of the findings was done using qualitative and quantitative approaches. Qualitative analysis using data from in-depth and focus group interviews was done from three different perspectives; parents, pupils and teachers. The analysis focused on patterns and understanding of school participation; the school environment; teacher and family related factors and their influence on childrens school participation. Quantitative analysis which used data from pupils and parents questionnaire was conducted using cross tabulations, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and regression analysis. Findings from the quantitative analysis were used to buttress those of the qualitative findings where necessary. Pupils' attendance data which was used as a measure of participation under the quantitative analysis was categorised into low, average and high attendance. On the basis of the GES guidelines, pupils were said to have achieved low attendance if they attended school 70% or lower, average attendance represented attendance of up to 80%, and 90%

and above represented high attendance. These were arrived at by calculating the proportion of student attendance for the school term under review.

#### **4.3 Perceptions about Patterns of School Participation**

Children's school participation was described by teachers to mean three key things; being present in school, taking part in sports or extracurricular activities (football, gender/debating clubs, "ampe", etc) and making contributions in the classroom (class exercises and assignments, responding and asking questions, group work, and discussions). *"School participation means that the child comes to school, makes contributions in the classroom, and also take part in extracurricular activities such as sports, club activities."* (TR 8, 41 Years, Female) For pupils, participation was defined by the majority to mean taking part in the classroom and interacting with their colleagues and teachers in the school. It also meant taking part in sports and other games in school according to pupils. *"School participation means coming to school every day and doing your work in the classroom"* (R3, 12 Years, Female). *"When we talk about school participation it means you come to school, you answer questions in class, and you also interact with your friends and teachers in school"* (R9, 14 Years, Male)

Parents' views on school participation largely focused on being physically present in school. Not much emphasis was placed on classroom participation and other extracurricular activities as is the case for teachers and pupils.

*"Participation means going to school every day, not absenting yourself from school"* (PR 12, 47 Years, Female)

*” As for school participation, it is when the child goes to school all the time”  
(PR7, 52 years, Male)*

Based on the various interpretations of school participation by teachers, parents and pupils, the research measured pupils’ school participation using childrens school attendance (using class register); classroom participation (using in-depth interviews) and participation in extracurricular activities also assessed using in-depth interviews with pupils and teachers, and parents. The following section presents a detailed analysis of pupils’ participation levels using school attendance, classroom participation and participation in extracurricular activities.

### ***Pupils’ School Attendance***

Using data from pupils attendance register, participation levels can be described as high among the majority of pupils. The average attendance for primary school pupils was 84%, 88% and 96% of the expected attendance for the school term for Odorkor ‘5’ Primary, Bubuashie Primary, and Cable/ Wireless Primary School. At the JHS level, average attendance was 79% for Odorkor Maclean JHS and 95% for Awudome JHS. Table 4.3 provides details on attendance among pupils in the five sampled schools.

**Table 4.3: Attendance Patterns for Respondents (Pupils) - Second Term, 2014/2015**

<b>School</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Total school Days</b>	<b>Average Attendance (%)</b>
<b>Cable and Wireless Primary</b>			
Female	6	57	55.25
Male	6	57	55.25
<b>Total Average Attendance</b>			<b>55.25 (96%)</b>
<b>Bubuashie ‘2’ primary school</b>			
Female	5	60	51
Male	5	60	55.25

<b>Total Average Attendance</b>			<b>53.1 (88%)</b>
<b>Odorkor 5 Primary School</b>			
Female	4	65	53.75
Male	4	65	56.5
<b>Total Average Attendance</b>			<b>55(84%)</b>
<b>Odorkor Maclean JHS</b>			
Female	JHS 1	70	58
Male	JHS 1	70	53.75
<b>Total Average Attendance</b>			<b>55.8 (79%)</b>
<b>Awudome JHS</b>			
Female	JHS 3	70	66.5
Male	JHS 3	70	67.25
<b>Total Average Attendance</b>			<b>66.8 (95%)</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2015

### ***Classroom Participation***

With regards to classroom participation, interviews with pupils show that the majority were participating in a range of activities in the classroom. At the primary school level, childrens' ideas of participation include doing exercises and assignments, group work, and discussions.

*“In class, I do exercises and I also answer questions in class” (R1, 12, Female)*

*“I like group work, especially when we are debating for the teacher to give us marks” (R8, 12, Male)*

At the junior high school level, more pupils were found to be engaged in discussions and group work as a means of participation.

*“For me, the time I contribute a lot in class is when the teacher divides us into groups for us to do some work. Sometimes too when the teacher asks to read and discuss about a certain story, I take part a lot” ( R10, 15 Female)*

The data from childrens interviews again show that, majority in JHS’s (70% and 60%) were participating in the classroom using more than one activity. Overall, few pupils were reportedly taking self initiative (reading, going to the library, or learning from each other) while the teacher was not present in classroom. Table 4.4 below shows the details of classroom participation among pupils.

**Table 4.4: Level of Classroom Participation**

School	Group Work	Discussions	Questions and Answers	Exercises and Assignments	Taking self initiative	More than 2 activities
Cable and Wireless	21%	16%	17%	43%	3%	54%
Bubuashie ‘2’ Primary School	12%	11%	19%	50%	8%	47%
Odorkor ‘5’ Primary	13%	9%	30%	46%	2%	53%
Odorkor Maclean JHS	27%	40%	23%	7%	3%	60%
Awudome JHS	33%	14%	19%	23%	11%	70%

Source, Field Survey, 2015

### ***Extracurricular Activities***

With regards to pupils’ participation in extracurricular activities, interviews reveal that majority of pupils participated in both sports activities (football, volleyball, “ampe”, etc) gender clubs, and debating clubs and related activities.

*“For extracurricular activities I play volleyball, and sometimes netball. I am also a member of the gender club, we have meetings and peer education periods” ( R10, 15, Female)*

*“ Ohhh I play football and also I go for earth club meetings” (R9, 14, Male)*

Table 4.5 below provides details of extracurricular activities participation patterns among children sampled children

**Table 4.5: Children’s Participation in Extracurricular Activities**

School	Sports/Games only	Clubs only ( Gender, debate , etc )	Both Games and Clubs
Cable and Wireless Primary School	24%	17%	59%
Bubuashie ‘2’ Primary School	17%	0	83%
Odorkor ‘5’ Primary	19%	7%	74%
Odorkor Maclean JHS	12%	8%	80
Awudome JHS	2%	7%	91%

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Parents, pupils and teachers understanding of school participation was explained using school attendance, participation in classroom activities, and extracurricular activities such as sports and games. The findings suggest a high level of school attendance ranging from 79% to 96% among children. Participation in the classroom and in extracurricular activities was found to be higher among JHS pupils compared to primary level pupils as evident in table 4.5 above.

#### **4.4 Conducive School Environment**

This section discusses various perspectives on teachers, pupils and parents understanding of a conducive environment and how it compares to their current school environment. The various themes that emerge from these perspectives are discussed in relation to their influence on children school participation.

##### **4.4.1 Teachers' Understanding of a Conducive Learning Environment**

Teachers understanding of a conducive learning environment clustered around four main themes; the physical school environment, availability of teaching and learning materials, pedagogical tools and strategies used by the teacher, and level of parental involvement and support. The following diagram illustrates the key themes.

##### ***Physical Infrastructure***

The physical environment was the dominant theme that describes a conducive school environment according to teachers. The physical environment was used to refer to well ventilated and lit classrooms, furniture, cupboards, staff common room, toilets, urinals as well as a playground in the school. a canteen and a fence wall were also mentioned as part of the physical infrastructure that makes a conducive learning environment.

*“A conducive environment must have adequate classrooms with good ventilation, TLMs, libraries, urinals and toilets, furniture, staff common room and a canteen.” (TR4, 40, Female)*

*“The school structure is good, enough ventilation, furniture and TLMs”(TR 14, 54, Female)*

Twelve (12) of the fifteen teachers interviewed described a conducive school environment using the physical infrastructure. These respondents argue that when the physical infrastructure is not good, a school cannot be described as a conducive learning environment.

### ***Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials***

The availability of teaching and learning materials was also described by teachers to be part of a conducive school environment. These teaching and learning materials were mainly described by teachers to include textbooks, chalk, cardboards, and teacher guides. Computers and projectors were also stated as teaching and learning materials expected to be present in a conducive school. Ten (10) of the fifteen teachers interviewed identified textbooks, story books, exercise books, teacher guides, cardboards, and chalk as the teaching and learning materials that are needed in a conducive school. A minority (3 teachers) mentioned the availability of computers and projectors.

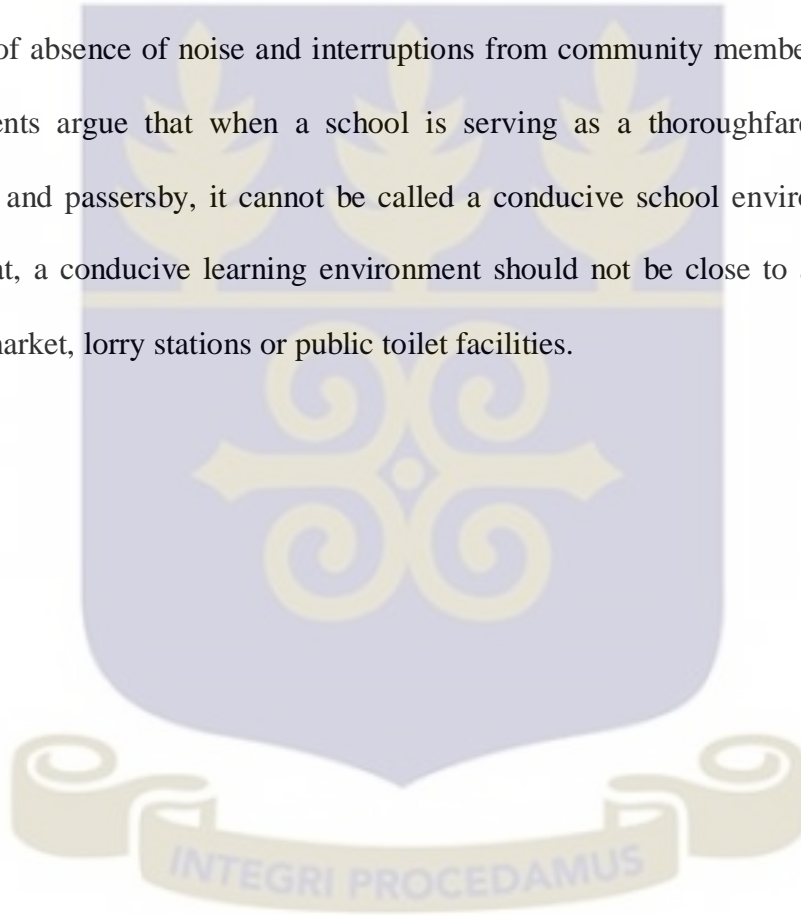
### ***Professionally Trained Teachers***

The presence of professionally trained teachers was also identified by a minority of teachers (5) as a component of conducive school. Their understanding of a professional teacher was described as any teacher who has received at least teacher certificate ‘A’ training from any recognized college of education. Their view was that, when a school

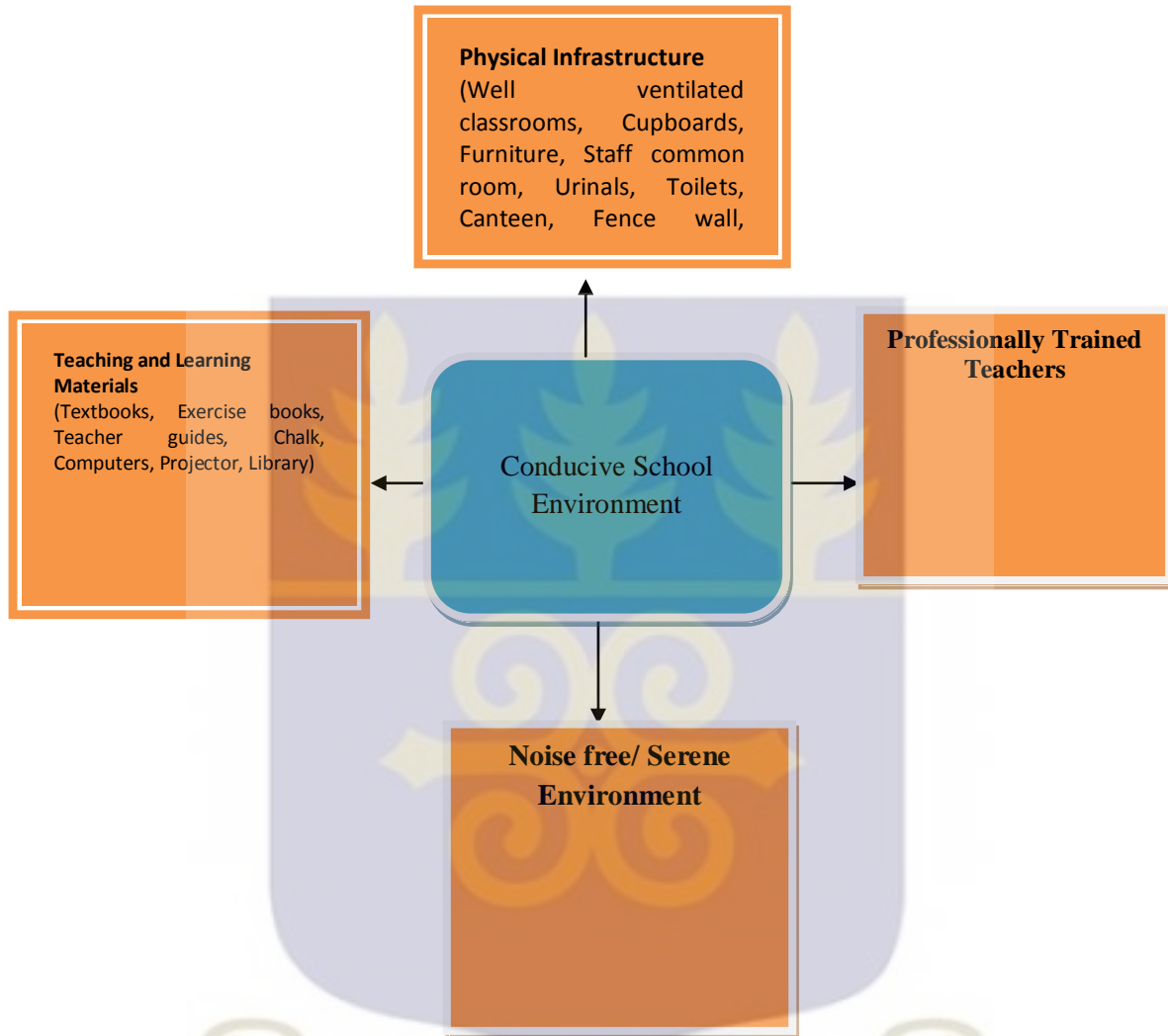
has well trained teachers who are able to prepare lesson notes and follow their scheme of work, then that school environment can be described as conducive. .

***Less noise/Serene Environment***

Another theme that emerged from teachers interviews describing a conducive environment was the presence of a noise free or serene environment. This was described in terms of absence of noise and interruptions from community members and passersby. Respondents argue that when a school is serving as a thoroughfare for community members and passersby, it cannot be called a conducive school environment. Teachers added that, a conducive learning environment should not be close to any public places such as market, lorry stations or public toilet facilities.



**Figure 4.1: Thematic Network of Teachers' Perspectives on a Conducive Learning Environment**



Source: Authors Construct, 2015.

#### **4.4.2 Pupils Views on a Conducive Learning Environment**

Three main themes similar to those expressed by teachers emerged from pupils understanding of a conducive learning environment. These include physical

infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, and a cordial relationship between teachers and pupils.

For most of the pupils (12), the physical infrastructure should include nicely painted school block, good ventilated classrooms with no leakage, enough furniture and cupboards, toilet and urinal facilities, staff common room for teachers, a library, a canteen, as well as computer and science laboratory.

*“Good classrooms with no leakage. Computer lab, library, and science lab, enough chairs and tables, cupboards, toilets, urinals and computers. There is light and fans in the classrooms, a staff common room for teachers and the playground is not dusty” (R4,14 , Female)*

With regards to teaching the teaching and learning materials, pupils mentioned textbooks, (one for each child) exercise books and storybooks.

*“Should have a lot of textbooks and story book, not three people using one textbook like here” (R8,12, Male)*

The cordial relationship was explained by pupils to mean being able to approach the teacher in the classroom and outside the classroom without feeling intimidated or frightened. This was however a minority view from pupils.

*“In a good school, the children can talk to the teacher whenever they have a problem, the teachers don't make the children to fear them” (R6,13years, Male)*

#### 4.4.3 Parents understanding of a conducive learning environment

Parents' description of a conducive learning environment focused largely on the physical infrastructure, good teachers, as well as teaching and learning materials.

Physical infrastructure was described to mean the availability of big and spacious classrooms, enough furniture for all children and toilet/urinals for children.

*“When the children have good school building and good classrooms, then it a good school” (PR7, 29, Female, Hairdresser)*

*In fact, look at that other uncompleted block where children are using as classrooms, this is not good. Good schools have nice buildings and big classrooms with proper chairs for children” (PR12, 43 Years, Petty Trader, Male)*

Parents' description of good teachers focused on their level of training; whether trained or untrained; saying that in a conducive school environment, there are trained teachers and not pupil teachers.

*“I also think that there are no pupil teachers in a good school, all the teachers are trained teachers”. (PR8, 50 Years, Unemployed, Female)*

*“A conducive school should include good classrooms, furniture and good teachers, I mean trained teachers not pupil teachers” ( PR3, 32 Years, Petty Trader, Female)*

Teaching and learning materials identified by parents as part of a conducive learning environment include textbooks, exercise books, storybooks and computers.

*“Apart from the school building and where the children will go to private, they should also have books to learn”. (PR4, 44 Years, Driver, Male)*

#### **4.5 Current School Environment and how it measures with National Minimum Standards**

Interviews with the Accra Metropolitan Education Director of education revealed that the minimum standards for basic school infrastructure established by the Ghana Education Service includes a (well ventilated classroom block (six classrooms for primary school, and 3 classrooms for JHS); a store room for teaching and learning materials, a staff common room for teachers; head teachers office; separate urinals and toilets for boys, girls and teachers; source of water within not more than 250 metres radius of the school premises; a maximum class size of 40 pupils with 20 dual desks or 40 mono desks, and an outdoor play area. As much as possible, facilities in the school are expected to be disability friendly according to the minimum standards.

In order to measure the current school environment against these national standards, pupils and teachers were asked to describe their current school environment. Based on these descriptions, comparisons were made to assess how these schools met the national minimum standards.

#### **4.5.1 Teachers Perspectives on how their Current School Meets the National Minimum Standards**

Teachers' description of their school environment congregated four main themes. They include physical infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, qualified teachers, and serene/ noise free environment.

##### ***Physical Infrastructure***

Under the physical infrastructure theme, the dominant code was well lit and ventilated classrooms. By this they referred to classrooms that were spacious and had two windows each on both sides of the classroom, with no more than 40 pupils in the classroom. Nine out of the fifteen teachers felt that their classrooms were well ventilated with enough lighting. The second most dominant code was that there were enough seating places for children. Twelve out of fifteen teachers interviewed mentioned that there were enough seating places for children. These seating places comprised mainly dual desks where two or three children were reportedly sharing each desk. Only a few teachers (4) indicated that they had classrooms that were leaking, overcrowded and poorly lit/ventilated. Another three (3) teachers indicated that an uncompleted wooden structure was being used as classrooms. Overall, the majority (9) of teachers interviewed mentioned that although their schools did not have the best of infrastructure, they feel, it meets the national infrastructure minimum standards for basic schools.

### ***Teaching and Learning materials***

Although teachers were concerned that they lacked adequate teaching and learning materials, the average core textbook to pupil ratio across the sampled schools were within the national average of 3:1 for JHS and 4:1 for primary schools (EMIS 2012/2013). Majority of teachers (12) indicated that they did not have enough teaching and learning materials in their schools. For core textbooks, twelve (12) out of fifteen (15) respondents indicated that 3 pupils were sharing each of the 3 core textbooks, and the remaining three respondents said that two children shared a core textbook. There was no respondent who said that they had adequate textbooks for children in their school. All respondents mentioned that there were enough teacher guides for all teachers in all subject areas. There were only three (3) teachers who mentioned that they had computers, an ICT laboratory and a projector in their school. All these teachers were from one school (Awudome, JHS). In general, given a national average for pupil to core textbook ratio of 3:1 for JHS and 4:1 for primary,(EMIS 2012/2013) , one can conclude that all five schools were within the national average. One of the five schools actually exceeded the national average by obtaining a pupil - core textbook ratio of 2:1.

### ***Professionally Trained Teachers***

This theme emerged from seven out of the fifteen teachers interviewed. They indicated that all teachers teaching in their school were professionally trained teachers with a minimum qualification of Certificate 'A'. Overall the trained teacher pupil ratio across the primary schools exceeded the 2012/2013 national average of 1:48. That of the JHSs however fell below the national average of 1: 19. Odorkor '5' Primary School had the

least trained teacher pupil ratio of 1:23 with Bubuashie '2' primary school having the highest of 1:30. Table 4.6 below provide the details of trained teacher pupil ratio across the sampled schools.

**Table 4.6 Pupil Teacher Ratio across Sampled Schools**

School	Trained Teachers	Untrained Teachers	Total # Teachers	Enrolment for Boys	Enrolment for Girls	Total Enrolment	PT R	PTT R <sup>1</sup>
Cable and Wireless Primary School	12	2	14	170	185	355	1:25	1:30
Bubuashie '2' Primary School	11	0	11	130	165	295	1:27	1:27
Odorkor '5' Primary School	12	1	13	137	140	277	1:21	1:23.
Odorkor Maclean JHS and Primary	13	0	13	139	184	323	1:25	1:25
Kaneshie Awudome '1' JHS	13	0	13	151	179	330	1:25	1:25

Source: School Records, 2015

### *Noisy/Serene Environment*

This theme did not emerge as being dominant among respondents. Overall, six of the fifteen respondents described their current school environment under this theme. Four described their school as noisy and the other two described their school as serene. The environment was said to be noisy when it was not walled, used as a thoroughfare or closed to a public place such as market, road or public toilet. A serene environment was described as one that had a wall and gate, and not close to any public place.

<sup>1</sup> The 2012/2013 national average for trained teacher to pupil ratio is 1: 48 for primary and 1:19 for JHSs

**Table 4.7: Teachers description of their current school**

Theme	Main Codes
<b>Physical Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good ventilated classrooms, leaking classrooms, uncompleted wooden structure as classrooms, overcrowded, poorly ventilated and lit classrooms,</li> <li>- Enough furniture, inadequate/broken desks</li> <li>- Separate toilets and urinals for boys, girls and teachers</li> <li>- No Toilet</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching and learning materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not enough textbooks ( 3 pupils sharing one textbook, 2 pupils sharing a textbook)</li> <li>- Not enough story books in the library</li> <li>- Enough teacher guides for all teachers</li> <li>- Computers, projector</li> </ul>
<b>Professionally Trained Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Well trained teachers</li> <li>- All teachers are trained</li> </ul>
<b>Serene and Noise Free</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Noisy school environment</li> <li>- School compound used as thoroughfare</li> <li>- Serene environment</li> </ul>

Source: Field Survey, 2015

#### **4.5.2 Pupils Perspectives on how Current School Environment Meets National Minimum Standards**

Pupils' description of their current school environment clustered around two main themes: inadequate physical infrastructure; and inadequate teaching and learning materials.

For the first theme, most pupils (11) reported that they did not have adequate and well ventilated classrooms. Pupils from these schools also complained of inadequate seating places where, three or sometimes four pupils shared a dual desk. Toilet and urinal facilities were also reportedly being shared among boys and girls. A few respondents (4) indicated that they had leaking classrooms. Most of respondents (10) did not consider their play area to be hazard free. A good number of pupils (8) described their play area as either dusty, had gravel or close to the road which was potentially dangerous to their health. Overall, a minority of pupils (5) said that they had the physical infrastructure required for a conducive learning environment. They had well ventilated and lit classrooms with at most 40 pupils, enough furniture for every child, separate toilets for boys, girls and teachers, ICT, science laboratory as well as a projector.

The situation with teaching and learning materials was similar to that of the physical infrastructure. Most pupils (13) were reported to be sharing textbooks (2-3 pupils per textbook), with very few story books available in the school. Only a few pupils (4) mentioned the availability of other teaching and learning materials such as cardboards, manila cards, and word cards. A minority of respondents (4) mentioned the availability of computers, pre-technical skills equipments (e.g sets square, callipers, etc) and projectors as available in their school.

Although the results from pupils interviews show that the majority did not feel they had adequate teaching and learning materials, especially textbooks, the situation appears to be

slightly better than the national average of 1:4 for primary schools, and 1:3 for JHSs  
(based on 2012/2013 EMIS Statistics)



**Table 4.8: Summary on Current School Infrastructure Based on Pupils Interviews**

School	Classrooms	Furniture	Library	Staff Common Room	Playground	Storage for TLMS	Latrines/Toilet	Urinals	Hand washing Facilities	Water Source (within 250 M)	ICT/Science Lab	Other Facilities
<b>Cable and Wireless Primary School</b>	Inadequate (poor ventilation)	2:1 <sup>2</sup>	Not available	Not Available	Available with gravel	Headteacher office	Available but not separate for boys and girls	Available, separate for boys and girls	Not Available	No	No	
<b>Bubuashie '2' Primary School</b>	inadequate (poor ventilation)	2:1	Not available	Not Available	Available but sandy	Headteacher office	Available but not separate for boys and girls	Available, separate for boys and girls	Not Available	Yes	No	
<b>Odorkor '5' Primary School</b>	inadequate (leakages and poorly ventilated)	3:1	Not available	Not Available	Available but dusty	Headteacher office	Not Available	Available, not separate for boys and girls	Not Available	No	No	
<b>Odorkor Maclean JHS</b>	Inadequate (cracks and potholes, poorly ventilated)	3:1	Not available	Not Available	Available but dusty	Headteacher office	Not Available	Available, not separate for boys and girls	Not Available	No	No	
<b>Awudome JHS</b>	Adequate (meets GES minimum Standards)	2:1	Available with inadequate books	Available	Available	Available	Available, separate for boys, girls and teachers.	Available, separate for boys and girls	Not Available	Yes	Yes	<b>Projector</b>

Source: Field data, 2015

<sup>2</sup> The 2012/2013 national average for pupil to seating place is 7:1 for both primary and JHS

#### **4.5.3 Parents Perspectives on how Current School Environment Meets National Minimum Standards**

Parents' description of their childrens' current school largely focused on physical infrastructure and availability of teachers as well as teaching and learning materials. The majority of parents felt that their schools did not have the necessary physical infrastructure that makes a conducive school. Some of the parent in describing the school condition of their wards made the following comments: *“Just look at the school, the school compound is very dusty and the school block is dirty. Even the classrooms leak whenever it rains, there are also children seating under this uncompleted building, you can't call this a conducive school”* (PR6, 43Years, Female)

With regards to teachers, all SMC/PTA members (15) indicate that they had enough and well trained and committed teachers who were doing their best. The availability of teaching and learning materials was however described by SMC/PTA as a huge challenge for their schools. They mentioned that, their schools did not have enough textbooks, exercise books and other storey books. The opinions of some of the SMC/PTA members are contained in the following comments:

*“As for reading materials, we lack a lot of them. They are just not enough. Sometimes we the parents have to buy textbooks for our children”* (P4, Male, 39 Years)

In summary, teachers, pupils and parents descriptions of their current school environment show that majority of schools had adequate physical infrastructure, trained teachers and teaching and learning materials available in their schools. Comparing these indicators with the national average show a positive picture. Pupil teacher - ratio, pupil - textbook ratio and pupil to seating places across all five schools exceeded the national average

#### 4.6 Influence of Current School Environment on School Participation

This section discusses teachers, pupils and parents perspectives on the influence of school environment on student participation.

##### 4.6.1 Teachers Perspectives on the Influence of School Environment on Participation

Teachers' views on the effects of school environment on participation were identified and grouped into negative and positive effects. Under positive effects, the physical infrastructure such as access to well ventilated and lit classrooms; furniture, toilets and urinals were explained by teachers to be factors that make it possible for children to study in comfort without any hazards. The majority of respondents (9) felt that when children have access to these infrastructural facilities, they are likely to participate more and even perform better in school. The opinions expressed in this regard are illustrated here.

*“How can children participate effectively when three or four of them are crammed unto one dual desk? They can't even write properly” (TR7,, 32 Years , Female)*

On teaching and learning materials, respondents pointed out that, effective teaching and learning cannot take place without appropriate and adequate teaching and learning materials. According to the majority (12) of teachers, when there are enough teaching and learning materials, it encourages children to take part in the learning process. A female teacher noted that *“When there are no teaching and learning materials, children are just sitting down and receiving information” (TR4, 40 Years, Female)*. With regards to the general school environment, a serene and noise free environment was found to promote effective participation. Majority of respondents indicated that the presence of a serene and noise free environment makes it possible

for children to learn and play without fear of being harmed. It was remarked by respondents that school compounds used as thoroughfare or football pitch, or close to noisy places such as markets, or lorry parks can pose potential harm for children's participation. The views expressed with respect to the general school environment include the following:

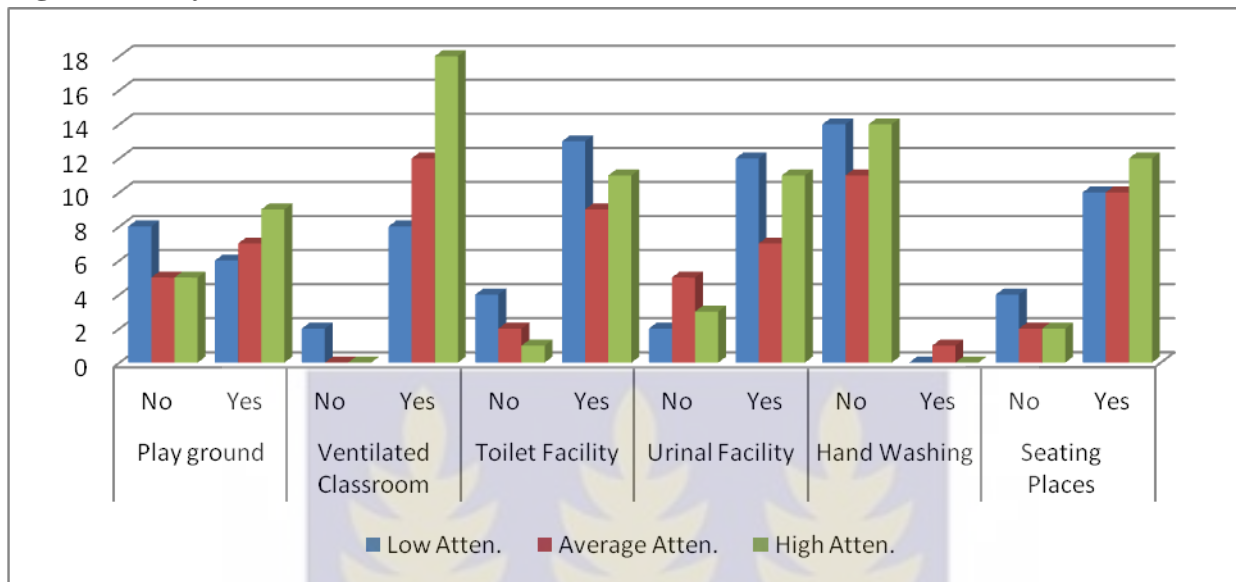
*“When you talk about a conducive school it is when the school is free from outsiders, the place is quite and there is no market or any noisy place close to it” (TR 11, 37, Female)*

#### **4.6.2 Pupils' Perspectives on the Influence of School Environment on Participation**

Discussing the influence of the current school environment on pupils participation, pupils stated that having poorly lit and ventilated or overcrowded classrooms does not allow them to concentrate in class. As a result, this can affect their performance in school. For some of the pupils, especially the girls, not having a toilet facility in the school meant that when they are menstruating, they have to stay home or whenever they need to use the toilet they have to go home, and most of them do not return to school afterwards. For other children (7) the school compound or playground when dusty or stony makes it difficult for them to participate in sports and other games during break. Also the use of the school compound as a thoroughfare by community members was found by pupils to be a source of nuisance for their participation.

Based on the views of pupils, findings from quantitative analysis confirm the significance of physical infrastructure on school attendance as can be seen in figure 4.3 below.

**Figure 4.2 Physical School Infrastructure and Student Attendance**



Source: Field Data, 2015

The figure above depicts key physical infrastructure identified by pupils to have some level of influence on their school attendance. The general finding is that, the availability of well ventilated classrooms, toilet facilities and seating places had the most significant influence on childrens school attendance.

With regards to the current situation of teaching and learning materials and their influence on student participation, students felt that the inadequate supply of TLMs in their schools makes it difficult for them to understand what is being taught in class. Pupils argued that when they have to share a textbook or a computer, which was found to be happening with most of the children (13), a lot of them are unable to pay attention in class. Selected pupils who share the view of the majority of respondents stated that “

“...as for the computer lessons, we are just listening, we don't have the opportunity to use the computer, and this makes the lesson sometimes boring” (R6, 13 Years, JHS 1).

*“When we don’t have TLMs it doesn’t make learning interesting. Especially science, when there are no materials for practical lessons, the teacher will be teaching and we just be sitting and listening, but we don’t understand, hence we cannot contribute in class” (R3, 15 Years, JHS 3)*

#### **4.6.3 Parents’ Perspectives on the Influence of School Environment on Participation**

With regards to the physical environment, parents pointed out that, children are affected by what they see. According to parents, when a school environment is clean, nicely painted with good classrooms, have furniture and a good playground, they don’t have to tell the child to go to school. Children will be willing to go to school by themselves. However, the majority of parents felt that their schools did not have the necessary physical infrastructure that makes a conducive school, and so it has some influence on their childrens school attendance.

*“Just look at the school, the school compound is very dusty and the school block is dirty. Even the classrooms leak whenever it rains, there are also children seating under this uncompleted building, you can’t call this a conducive school” (PR6, 43Years, Female)*

*“The last time it rained, I came home from the market and my daughter was in the house, I asked her why she is home and she said because it was about to rain, and that when it rains their class is leaking” (PR2, 37 Years, Petty Trader)*

With regards to teachers, all SMC/PTA members (15) indicate that they had enough well trained and committed teachers who were doing their best. The availability of teaching and learning materials was described by SMC/PTA as a huge challenge for their schools. They mentioned that, their schools did not have enough textbooks, exercise books and other storey books.

*“ As for reading materials, we lack a lot of them. They are just not enough. Sometimes we the parents have to buy textbooks for our children” (P4, Male, 39 Years)*

In conclusion, teachers identified key school environment factors that influence childrens participation to include the well ventilated and lit classrooms, TLMs, serene and noise free environment, and the availability of trained teachers. For pupils, the most important school environment variables that are significant to their participation and performance include classrooms, teaching and learning materials, toilet facilities, and a playground. Lastly, parents’ views are that the availability of a nice school building can attract children to school.

#### **4.7 Teacher Related Factors and their influence on School Participation**

Teacher related factors and their influenced on pupils school participation was discussed among pupils, and teachers. The main teachers’ related factors identified by pupils and teachers include use of pedagogical tools and strategies, teachers’ professional qualification and experience, teacher commitments, attitudes and behaviour, teachers’ use of disciplinary practices, and class size. The discussions on these factors are presented from the perspective of teachers and pupils

##### **4.7 .1 Teachers Perspectives on the Influence of School Environment on Participation**

###### ***Pedagogical Strategies and their Influence on Participation***

Pedagogical tools and strategies identified by teachers to encourage participation among children include creativity, group learning, activity based learning, use of TLMs and use of discussions. Other strategies identified include giving feedback and use of drama and role plays. Creativity

and activity based learning is described by teachers was a strategy where children are given the opportunity to put in practice what they are learning. Group learning was also described by teachers as allowing children to work in pairs or groups in order to encourage interaction and knowledge sharing among them. The use of TLMS as a strategy was described by teachers as providing textbooks, cardboards, or manila cards and other materials with which children can see what they are being taught. According to teachers, using these strategies enables the teacher to involve children in the classroom; and when children are made part of the lesson, they are more likely to participate in the classroom.

### ***Teacher Commitment, Attitudes and Behaviour and their Influence on Participation***

Interviews with teachers reveal that, teachers level of commitment, attitudes and behaviour have significant influence on pupils school participation and performance in various ways. According to teachers, since children spend most of their day with the teacher, their attitude towards participation can be influenced by the teacher's attitude and behaviour. The findings show that teachers that exhibit warm, friendly and enthusiastic attitudes are more likely to encourage participation among pupils in the classroom. Also the majority of teachers agreed that, children are more likely to participate and perform better in class when their teachers have high and positive expectations of them.

### ***Teachers' Experience and Professional Qualification and how it influence school participation***

Analyses of teachers' interviews show that teachers' professional qualification and years of experience has an influence on children's school participation. According to twelve of the fifteen teachers interviewed, when teachers are well trained they are able to deliver their lessons using the most appropriate teaching methodology and thereby their ability to engage pupils in the

classroom. According to these teachers, because of their experience and expertise, they are able to choose teaching approaches based on the needs of the various children in the classroom. By so doing, they are able to involve all children in the classroom. A teacher stated that

*“When teachers are well trained, they are able to choose teaching strategies appropriately, and as a result they are able to involve the children in the classroom” (TR 4, 42 Years, Female)*

A minority of teachers (n=3) did not agree to this assertion. They argued that professional qualification was not significant, saying that some of the best teachers they have observed especially at the lower primary levels were untrained teachers. One of such teachers argued that;

*“Professional qualification does not always matter, because some untrained teachers or teachers with no or lower qualifications are seen as better teachers at encouraging participation than even masters degree holders” (TR13,41years, Male, Primary)*

### ***Disciplinary Practices and Control Strategies and influence on participation***

Interviews with teachers show that the majority of teachers still resort to caning as the first disciplinary option although it has been stated in the GES code of conduct for teachers as the last resort. According to teacher interviews, as many as 12 out of 15 teachers were using the cane as their first disciplinary option. Although the majority of these teachers agree to the fact that the use of corporal punishment could have negative effects on children’s participation, they believed that using the cane was the most efficient way to correct children in the school.

*“When a child misbehaves, the first thing I do is cane him/her, although this can intimidate them and affect their participation; it is the only punishment these children understand. (TR 10, 42 Years, Male)*

Although the GES code of conduct recommends alternative disciplinary practices such as reprimand, loss of points to the groups which the pupil belongs, withdrawal of privileges, and social isolation, very few teachers (n=3) were found to be using these strategies as their first disciplinary strategy.

**Table 4.9 Disciplinary Strategies used by Teachers (Teachers Perspectives)**

School	Soft reprimand	Loss of points to the groups which the pupil belongs	Withdrawal of privileges, eg preventing a pupil who likes games to go out and play	Social isolation	Corporal punishment
Cable and Wireless Primary School	0	0	0	0	3
Bubuashie '2' Primary School	0	1	0	0	2
Odorkor '5' Primary School	0	0	0	0	3
Odorkor Maclean JHS	1	0	0	0	2
Awudome JHS		0	1	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>

Source, Field Data, 2015

### ***Pupil - Teacher Ratio and influence on participation***

The pupil teacher ratio represents the proportion of pupils to teachers in a particular school. Pupil teacher ratio has been identified by teachers to have significant influence on school participation and performance among children. Results from teacher interviews reveal that when there are

large numbers of children in a class, it becomes difficult and sometimes impossible for teachers to manage and involve all children in the classroom. According to a teacher

*“when this happens, teachers’ attention is drawn mostly to those children who are making the effort to participate – and slow learners are likely going to be left behind”*

(TR 10, 42 Years, Male).

#### **4.7.2 Pupils’ Perspectives on the Influence of School Environment on Participation**

##### ***Pedagogical tools and strategies and how they influence participation***

Pupils identified pedagogical strategies that encourage participation in the classroom to include group work (n=7), use of teaching and learning materials (n=9), demonstrations (n=6), discussions (n=6). All these approaches require that the child is involved in the teaching process. Pupils explained that they are unable to participate when it is only the teachers who do the talking. According to respondents, for example, when they are engaged in group work, all of them are striving to come out best, by participating. Concerning the use of teaching and learning materials, majority of pupils explained that teaching and learning materials make it possible for them to visualize what they are being taught; and this way, they are able to make contributions in class.

*“When the teacher also put us in groups, we are always trying hard to come out best, so you see all members of the group trying to participate”. ( R7, 14 Years, JHS 3)*

*“When the teacher comes with teaching and learning materials we are able to visualize what she is teaching and we can participate well. But when the teacher is just talking,*

*and talking and talking, we get bored and we don't understand, this does not encourage us to participate”(R5, 15 Years, JHS 1)*

The quantitative data from pupils' views also suggests that teachers' use of TLMs had a significant influence on their school attendance as can be seen

**Table 4.10 Teachers use of TLMs and Influence on School Attendance**

Does teachers' use of TLMs encourage your participation in the classroom?				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Total
School attendance	low attendance	8	6	14
	average attendance	11	1	12
	High attendance	11	3	14
Total		30	10	40

**Source: Field Data, 2015**

From table 4.10, thirty out of forty (30 out of 40) pupils strongly agreed to their participation being influenced by teachers' use of TLMs. Out of this 30, 11 each recorded high and average attendance.

#### ***Teacher commitment, Attitudes and Behaviour and their Influence on Participation***

Interviews with pupils reveal that teachers' attitudes and behaviours have significant influence on their participation in school, especially in the classroom. According to pupils, when teachers exhibit friendly and cordial attitude towards them, they are able to ask questions and participate effectively in the classroom.

***Pupil - Teacher Ratio and influence on participation***

The views expressed by children with regard to the influence of pupil teacher ratio on their participation were similar to those of the teachers. According to most of the pupils, when they are many in the class, the teacher is unable to call on most of them to respond to questions or engage in other activities in the classroom. Pupils also argue that, when class sizes are large, the teachers are unable to give and mark exercises' and assignments. The views expressed by some of the pupils are captured in the following comments:

*“When we were in primary six, we were about sixty in class. The teacher hardly gave us assignments and class tests. But now in JHS, we are just 35, so our teacher is able to give us a lot of class tests, and he marks all of them” (R4, 14 years, JHS 1)*

***Teacher Absenteeism and Childrens' Attendance.***

Teacher absenteeism was found to be fairly low across all sampled schools. However, quantitative analysis of the influence of teacher absenteeism on pupils' attendance shows a significant relationship. Details of this relationship are presented in table 4.11.

**Table 4.11: Teacher Absenteeism and School Attendance**

	<b>0 Day</b>	<b>1 Day</b>	<b>2 Days</b>	<b>3Days</b>	<b>Total</b>
Low Attendance	3	5	1	1	10
Average Attendance	5	6	0	1	12
High Attendance	12	4	1	1	18
Total	20	15	2	3	40

**Source: Field Data, 2015**

The overall data from the table show fairly low rates of absenteeism among teachers. The data also show that 12 out of 20 pupils who maintain their teacher had not been absent from school the week preceding the data collection recorded high attendance.

### ***Teacher Contact Hours and Influence on School Attendance***

Analysis of teacher contact hours using quantitative data from pupils' questionnaire has shown an important correlation with school attendance. Measuring the influence of teacher contact hours on school participation, multiple correlation and analysis of variance were used. The model summary table (4.12) depicts a multiple correlation coefficient of 0.645 and the R-square of 0.416. What this means is that, given this sample, the predictor variable (hours spent by teachers in class within the week preceding the data collection) can explain up to 41.6 % of the variance in the dependent variable (pupils attendance). The ANOVA also shows that given a computed F statistic of 27.095, there is an observed significance level of less than 0.000. This suggests that there is a significant relationship between pupil's attendance and hours spent by teacher in class. The Beta coefficient is shown to be positive and statistically significant at a 0.001 level. Thus, the higher the hours spent by teachers in class, the higher the students attendance (Beta = 6.805,  $t = 5.205, p < .001$ ).

**Table 4.12 Regression of Student's attendance and the Number of Hours Spent in Class by Teachers**

<b>Model Summary</b>						
Model		R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
dimension0	1	.645a	.416	.401		6.663
<b>ANOVA(b)</b>						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.

1	Regression	1202.717	1	1202.717	27.095	.000
	Residual	1686.783	38	44.389		
	Total	2889.500	39			
<b>Coefficients(a)</b>						
<b>Model</b>		<b>Unstandardized Coefficients</b>		<b>Standardized Coefficients</b>		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	31.903	4.982		6.403	.000
	Hours teacher spend in Class	6.805	1.307	.645	5.205	.000

Source, Field Data, 2015

### *Disciplinary Practices and Influence on Participation*

Interviews with pupils confirm the views expressed by teachers regarding the use of disciplinary strategies. According to pupils, whenever they do anything wrong like coming to school late fighting, absenting oneself from school, dressing inappropriately, or fail to do their homework, the teacher will use the cane on them. According to pupils, they find the use of the cane unpleasant, and use all possible means (sometimes dodging school) to try to avoid being caned. Sometimes in an attempt to avoid being caned, pupils reportedly miss out on participating in school.

*“When you dress inappropriately, fight, or fail to do your homework, the teacher will cane you. So sometimes when some people are unable to do their homework, they don’t come to school at all”. (R4, 14 years, Female)*

In summary, key teacher related factors identified by teachers and pupils to influence school participation include the use of pedagogic strategies (group work, discussion, demonstrations)

and TLMs. Pupil teacher ratio often defined in terms of class size was also found to have a significant influence on pupils participation; where large class sizes makes it difficult to involve slow earners, and teachers are likely to give fewer exercises and assignment. Other major teacher related factor that was found to influence pupils' participation was teacher contact hours; and teacher commitment, attitudes and behaviour. Lastly, the use of corporal punishment was found to be rampant among teachers even though they recognise the negative effects corporal punishment had on children's participation. Very few teachers were found using alternative disciplinary strategies such as reprimand, and isolation.

#### **4.8 Household/Family or community related factors and their influence on participation**

The qualitative analyses of household and community related factors and how they influence childrens school participation focused on parental educational background, parental support to childrens' schooling and SMC/PTA /community involvement in school activities. While the qualitative focused on parental support and involvement, parental educational and occupational background and influence on school attendance was assessed using quantitative data from parent' and pupils questionnaire. These are discussed from the perspectives of teachers' pupils and parents.

##### **4.8.1 Parents socio economic background and influence on school participation**

###### ***Mothers Level of Education and Childrens School Attendance***

Mothers' level of education has been found by several studies to play a significant role in childrens' school participation and performance (Ramirez, 2010; Desforges, 2003; and Hartas.,

2011). Mothers’ level of education in this study was found to have a fairly significant influence on childrens school attendance as shown in table 4.13.

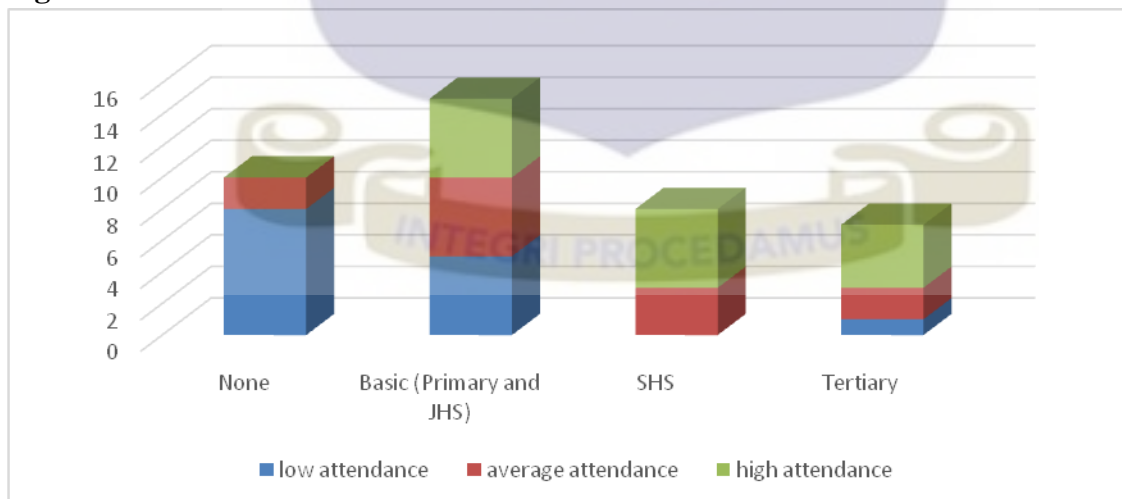
**Table 4.13 Mothers’ Level of Education and Influence on School Attendance**

		None	Basic	SHS	Tertiary	Total
School attendance	low attendance	8	5	0	1	14
	average attendance	2	5	3	2	12
	high attendance	0	5	5	4	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>40</b>

Source: Field Data, 2015

Table 4.13 show variation in pupils’ attendance levels based on their mother’s level of education. From the data, eight out of ten children whose mothers had no form of formal education recorded low attendance. Out of eight children whose mothers had an SHS qualification, five recorded high and three, average attendance. Only one out of seven children whose mothers had tertiary level of education recorded low performance as shown in figure 4.5

**Figure 4.3 Mothers’ Level of Education and Influence on School Attendance**



Source: Field Data, 2015

***Fathers Level of Education and Childrens' school Attendance***

Similar to mothers' education is the relevance of fathers level of education to childrens' school attendance and participation (GDHS, 2008; Hartas, 2007). Findings from this research confirm this observation. Table 4.4 provide details of how fathers level of education influence childrens' school attendance.

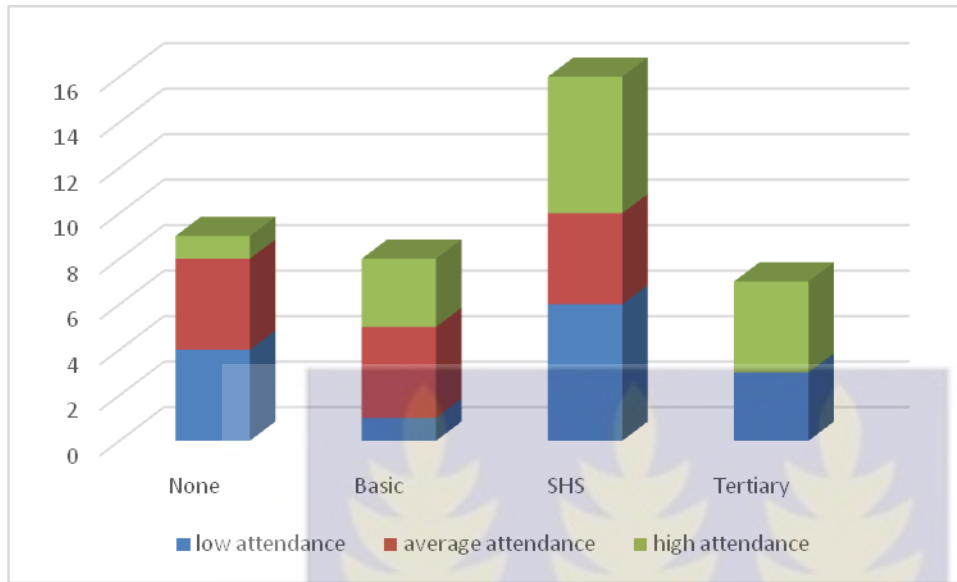
**Table 4.14 Fathers Level of Education and school Attendance**

		None	Basic	SHS	Tertiary	Total
School attendance	low attendance	4	1	6	3	14
	average attendance	4	4	4	0	12
	high attendance	1	3	6	4	14
Total		9	8	16	7	40

Source: Field Data, 2015

The data from table 4.14 show that, 23 out of 40 fathers of pupils had an SHS education or higher. While 8 had basic education, 9 had no formal education. Out of a total of 16 children whose fathers had an SHS qualification, 6 each recorded average and high attendance. Four (4) out of nine children whose fathers had no education recorded low and average attendance each. The relationship between pupils' whose fathers had attained a tertiary qualification and their school attendance did not appear to be very significant. Whereas, 4 of 7 of such children recorded high attendance, 3 had low attendance as shown in figure 4.4.

**Figure 4.4 Fathers Education and Influence on School Attendance**



Source: Field Data, 2015

***Mothers Occupation and Influence on School Participation***

Pupils and parents’ questionnaire reveal that mothers’ occupation had an important influence on their school attendance. The figures in table 4.15 provide the statistics.

**Table 4.15 Mothers Occupation and School Attendance**

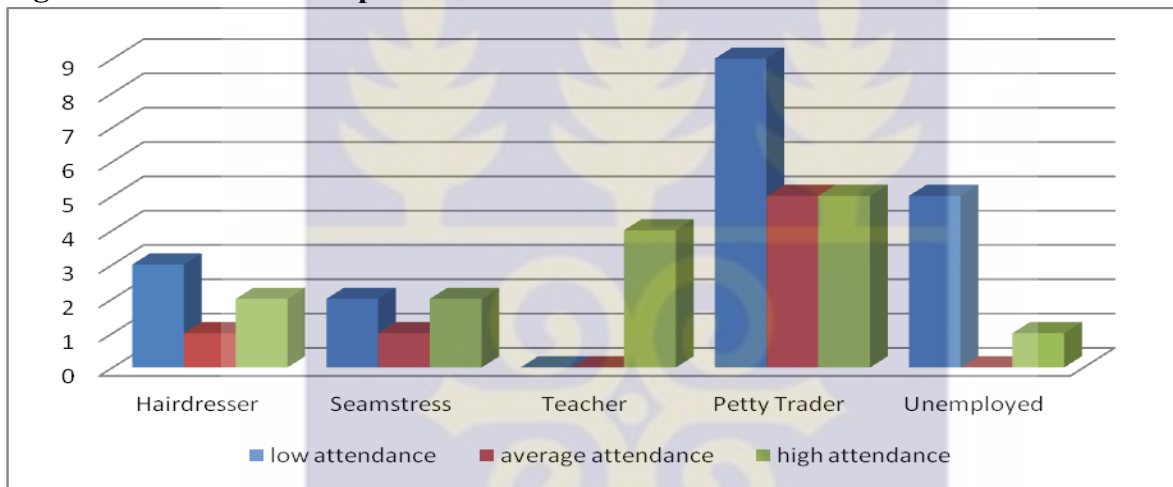
	Hairdresser	Seamstress	Teacher	Petty Trader	Unemployed	Total
low attendance	3	2	0	9	5	14
average attendance	1	1	0	5	0	12
high attendance	2	2	4	5	1	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>40</b>

Source: Field Data

Table 4.15 shows that occupation of pupils’ mothers ranged from petty trading (19), seamstress (5), hairdressing (6), and teaching (4). Six (6) children reported having mothers who were

unemployed. The data further indicates that, majority of children (9 of 19) whose mothers were petty traders, hairdressers (3 of 6) and unemployed (5 of 6) recorded low attendance. All children whose mothers' were teachers recorded high attendance. From this analysis, one can conclude that mothers' occupation has an influence on childrens school attendance. Figure 4.7 presents a pictorial view of this relationship.

**Figure 4.5 Mothers' Occupation and School Attendance**



Source: Field Data, 2015

***Father s' Occupation and School Attendance***

Findings from this research using quantitative data from pupils and parents suggest an important correlation between fathers' occupation and pupils' school attendance. The data suggests a high attendance among pupils whose fathers' worked in the formal sector compared to children whose fathers were engaged in petty traders.

**Table 4.16 Fathers Occupation and School Attendance**

School Attendance*Father's occupation Cross tabulation				
School attendance	Petty Trader	Formal Work (Teacher Civil Servant etc)	Other (Tailor, Mechanic, Driver, Barber, mason)	Total
low attendance	10	1	3	14
average attendance	11	0	1	12
high attendance	4	3	7	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>40</b>

Source: Field Data, 2015

Overall the majority of pupils' fathers were engaged in petty trading (25). Only four pupils' fathers worked in the formal sector, with eleven engaged in others occupations such as tailoring, mechanics and driving. The analysis show that, the majority of pupils' whose fathers' were engaged in petty trading recorded low (10) very few recorded high attendance (4). The data further suggests high attendance among children whose fathers were engaged in formal work as can be seen in table 4.16. This creates an impression that pupils' whose parents are engaged in formal work are likely to achieve high attendance than pupils whose fathers are engaged in informal petty trading.

#### **4.8.2 Teachers' Perspectives on Parental Support and Involvement and how it influences school Participation**

Teachers' definition of parental support and involvement was explained under three main themes; material support, emotional support and guidance, and support with home learning/homework. Material support was described to mean provision of material resources such as school supplies (books, uniforms, shoes etc), and food. Emotional support and guidance was explained in relation to monitoring pupils' activities at home, and encouraging them to learn. Support with home learning involved helping children with their homework and after school

studies. Parental involvement was explained to mean participating in SMC/PTA meetings, open days or just visiting the school to check on their children.

Interviews with the majority (n=10) of teachers revealed that provision of material support by parents for childrens' education was very poor. The teachers indicated that because most of the children were not living with their biological parents, they are not receiving the best support in terms of material provisions from their guardians. Children as described by teachers were mostly serving as house helps who were living with other family members or guardians. According to the majority of teachers (10), most of these parents/guardians are not willing to provide the basic material needs in order for children to participate effectively in school.

*“Because most of the children do not have the necessary emotional and financial support, they come to school hungry and unhappy. How can they learn?”(TR7, 32, Female)*

*“Because most of the children here are not living with their biological parents, but serving as house helps, their guardians do not care about them. They don't even provide them the basic needs such as books, uniforms or even food” (TR14, 54 Years, Female)*

The effects of this attitude according to teachers can lead to poor participation as children cannot effectively participate in school without the necessary material resources. Teachers explained that in an attempt for children to get these materials by themselves, they can end up on the streets.

*“There are these two girls in JHS 1, they sell pure water at Kaneshie before they can get money to buy their books or even buy food. So sometimes they don't come to school, or*

*they come late when they go to sell water in the morning before coming to school”*  
(TR13, 41years, Male, Primary)

Concerning emotional support and guidance, the majority of the teachers (8) felt that most of the children were not doing well in school because their parents and guardians were not giving them the needed emotional support and guidance. Eight out of fifteen respondents felt that most parents/guardians are not interested in their children’s education. According to the teachers, for most of the parents/guardians, especially guardians, keeping these children in school is a requirement from their family and not because they are happy to do it.

*“Most of the children come to school traumatized, they do not even believe in themselves. They need their parents/guardians to talk to them and to encourage them to do well in school”* (TR8, 41 Years, Female)

With respect to parents supporting their children’s learning at home/ homework, teachers describe that only a few parents were supporting their children’s learning at home. This according to teachers was happening among few parents who had some reasonable level of formal education or parents with other educated adults in the household.

Concerning parental involvement in children’s schooling, teachers reveal that very few parents were participating in school activities such as SMC/PTA meetings, open days and speech and prize giving days. As a result, teachers felt that the majority of parents were unaware of their childrens progress in school. Overall, teachers felt that only about a few parents across the sampled schools were actively participating in their childrens school activities.

Regarding the effects of parental involvement in school activities on childrens participation, teachers (n=9) agreed that, the majority of the children who were usually absent, slept in class or

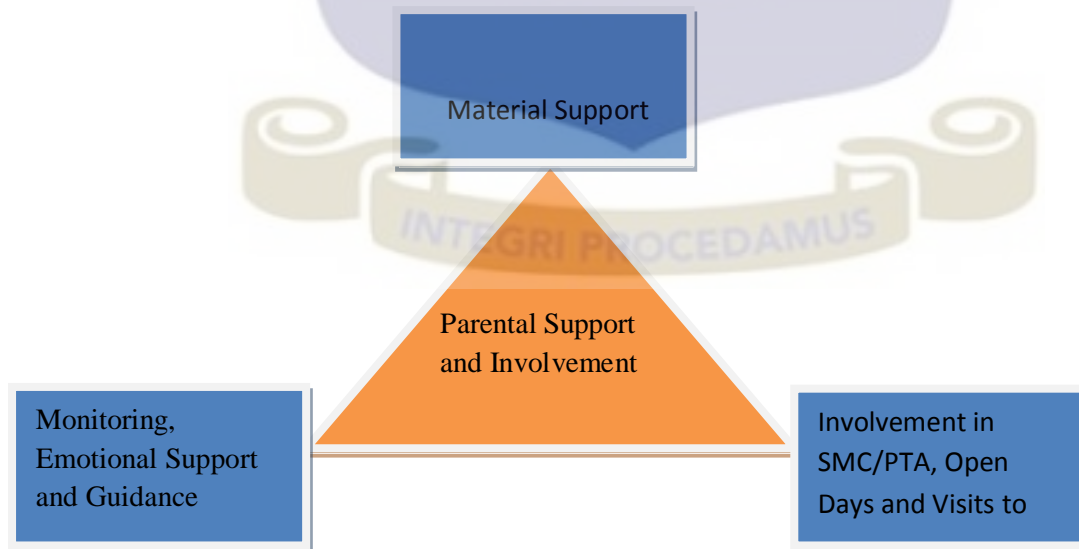
lacked concentration are pupils whose parents never participate or even visit the school to check on the progress of their children. Teachers complained that, even when they personally invite such parents to the school, they do not show up. The following are some of the views put forward by the teachers on parental involvement.

*“We’ve observed that, most of the children who usually absent themselves from school or sleep in the classroom are pupils whose parents never show up in PTA meetings or open days. For those parents who come to the school, we are able to discuss their childrens issues, and then we can come together and help the child” (TR7, 32 Years, Female)*

#### 4.8.3 Pupils’ Perspectives on Parental Support/ Involvement and Influence on Participation

Parental support and involvement was understood by pupils in three main ways, providing material resources, monitoring, guidance and emotional support to pupils and participating in SMC/PTA/open days and visiting the school.

**Figure 4.6: Pupils Understanding of Parental Support and Influence on their Participation**



Source: Authors Construct, 2015

***Material Support***

Material support was explained by pupils to include school supplies such as books, uniforms, food, shoes and teaching and learning materials required to participate effectively in school. For the majority of pupils (n=9), their parents are able to provide the needed material resources for them to participate in school. This appears to contradict the views of teachers stated earlier in this analysis. The minority (n=6) who argue that their parents were not able to support their material needs indicate that they sometimes come to school without books, pens or even food. The effect of this as identified by pupils, can lead to poor concentration in class, truancy and eventually dropout. For children who were reportedly receiving the needed material support from their parents, they said it encouraged them to learn.

Findings using quantitative analysis confirm this assertion as can be seen in table 4.17 which shows that the majority (29 out of 40) of pupils material needs were being provided for. Consequently, pupils whose material resources were being provided recorded high attendance compared to those whose material needs were not provided.

**Table 4.17 Parents Material support and child's school attendance**

<b>School Attendance</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Low Attendance	3 (7.5%)	4 (10%)	4 (10%)
Average Attendance	3 (7.5%)	4 (10%)	5 (12.5%)
High Attendance	8 (20%)	7(17.5%)	2 (5%)
Total	14	15	11

Source: field data, 2015

***Emotional Support, Monitoring and Guidance***

Interestingly, monitoring and guidance was identified by pupils to be an important aspect of parental support that had a major influence on their participation. Pupils reported that, they feel

good and tend to be serious with their schooling when their parents show them emotional support such as getting to know them well, asking questions about how they feel and what bothers them.

The opinions expressed include the following:

*“When I go home and my parents look at my exercise books or ask me questions when I don’t feel happy, that means they care about me.” (R3, 13 years, P6, Female)*

Children also explained that when parents or other adults in the home are available to support their homework, they feel happy and supported. Pupils felt that there are times one just need someone to guide them at home, if they don’t get that, they don’t feel motivated to learn. Unfortunately majority of pupils interviewed were not receiving this kind of support.

*“Sometimes, I just need someone to guide me with my homework, if there is no one to help me, and I am not able to do it by myself, I just leave it until I go to school the next day”. (R15, 15 years JHS 1)*

*“When we vacate, we send our report cards home, we also send out exam papers too. But some of us, our parents just don’t care; they don’t even have time to look at our report cards or exam papers”. (R15, 16 years, JHS 3)*

According to pupils, emotional support and guidance also meant that they are given less after school responsibilities in order to enable them study at home. However, interviews with pupils indicated that they were engaged in after school responsibilities including sweeping (n=8), fetching water (n=7), washing of cars (n=4) cooking (n=10), taking care of younger siblings (n=5) and selling on the street (n=9). These household responsibilities have been revealed by pupils as having varied influences on their school participation. For most of the children (12),

when they perform such responsibilities, they get tired at night and are unable to study or do their homework. As a result, they are caned at school for not turning in their homework. This according to most of the children affects their participation. There are other times when children (8) have reportedly missed school because of household chores.

*“Two girls from my class even stopped coming to school because of their work in the house. The teachers were always caning them because they were always coming to school late and they never did their homework”. (R15, 15 Years, JHS 1).*

*“I used to suffer a lot myself. My auntie with whom I stayed used to maltreat me a lot. She will not give me food, and I will sell water till late in the night. When that happens, I cannot learn or even concentrate in school. Even it got to some time I almost stopped coming to school. But things are better now”. (R6, 13 years, JHS 1, Male)*

The quantitative analysis confirms this finding showing that most (29 out of 40) pupils were not receiving the needed emotional support from their parents/guardians. The majority of (6 of 9) pupils who received emotional support and guidance from parents recorded high attendance, whereas only 11 out of 29 whose parents were not emotionally supporting them had low attendance as can be shown in table 4.18.

**Table 4.18 Parents Emotional support to children and school attendance**

<b>How would you rate parents Guidance and Emotional Support?</b>			
School Attendance	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Low Attendance	1 (2.5%)	2 (5%)	11 (27%)
Average Attendance	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	10 (25%)
High Attendance	6 (15%)	0 (0%)	8 (20%)
Total	9	2	29

Source: field data 2015

### ***Involvement in SMC/PTA Meetings, Open Days, and Visits to the School***

Attending PTA/SMC meetings and open days were also identified by pupils to be important ways through which parents can support their school learning and participation. Most of the children felt that when their parents are in constant touch with their teachers and school, they do not have the luxury to misbehave in school because their teachers will report them. A reasonable number (8) of children interviewed indicate that their parents do not attend regular SMC/PTA meeting or open days. Six (6) of the children revealed that their parents have never attended PTA/SMC or open days or visited their school.

*“The only activities my parents are involved in are PTA meetings and sometimes open days. But the last time we had an open day was when we were in class three, now in JHS 1 Even the PTA meeting, the last time it was held is over a year now. So, as for school activities, I cannot say they have been involved much”.* (R8, 13 Years, JHS 1)

*“Sometimes I just wish my parents will come to the school to time to check on me, but they don’t do that. Even PTA meetings or Open days, they won’t come: (R1, 12 Years, P6)*

Speaking on the influence of parental involvement on their school participation, children stated that when parents fail to attend SMC/PTA meetings/open days, they are unable to understand their challenges and successes within the school. As a result, children can misbehave without their parents' knowledge.

Findings from the quantitative analysis corroborate the significance of parents' participation in SMC meetings and its influence on school attendance as shown in table 4.19. The data depicts high attendance among pupils whose parents' were actively engaged in SMC PTA activities

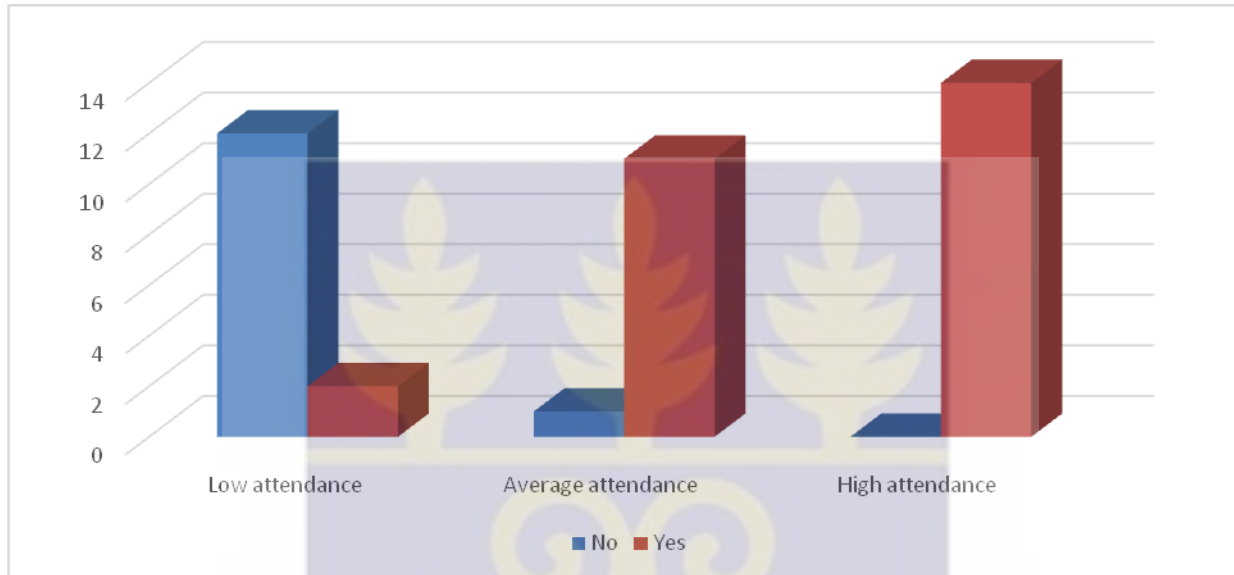
**Table 4.19 Parents' participation in SMC/PTA and attendance of children**

School Attendance*	How would you rate parents PTA/SMC attendance		
School Attendance	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Low Attendance	0	4	10
Average Attendance	3	2	7
High Attendance	7	2	5
Total	10	8	22

Source: Field data 2015

### ***Living Arrangement and School Attendance***

The influence of childrens living arrangement using quantitative data from pupils' questionnaire also proved significant for their school attendance. As many as 12 out of thirteen pupils who were reportedly not living with their biological parents recorded low attendance, compared to only 2 of 27 who were living with their biological parents' as depicted in??

**Figure 4.7 Living Arrangement and School Participation**

Source: Field Data, 2015

This confirms the qualitative findings which revealed that pupils who lived with guardians either than their biological parents were more likely to absent themselves from school. This could also mean that parental influence has a great impact on childrens school participation and attendance.

### ***Sibling Size and School Attendance***

This variable measures the number of pupils' brothers and sisters in school and how it influences their school attendance. From the model summary table, which shows a multiple correlation coefficient of 0.645, and R-square of 0.006, reflects that using this sample, sibling size can explain up to only 0.6 % of the variance in the dependent variable (pupils' attendance). The

ANOVA table showing a computed F statistic of 0.245 and an observed significance level of .624, means that there is no significant relationship between pupil's attendance and number of siblings' they had. Also the Beta coefficient which is shown to be positive is not statistically significant at 0.05 level. Thus, number of siblings has no impact on pupils school attendance (Beta = 0.344, t = 0.495, p > 0.05 ) as shown in table 4.20.

**Table 4.20 Regression showing the relationship between sibling size and school attendance**

Model Summary						
Model		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
dimension0	1	.0800	.006	-.020	8.692	
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.475	1	18.475	.245	.624a
	Residual	2871.025	38	75.553		
	Total	2889.500	39			
Coefficients(a)						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)		56.176	2.570		21.855	.000
How many of your siblings are in school?		.344	.695	.080	.495	.624

Source: Field Data, 2015

#### 4.8.2 Teachers Perspective on Level of SMC/PTA and Community Involvement in Schooling

Findings from teacher interviews show that very few SMC/PTA meetings are being organized. Teachers disclosed that when they call for SMC/PTA meetings, most parents do not show up. For those parents who attend, the main issues that are discussed according to teachers include assessment of pupils' attendance and performance in school, assessment of teachers' performance and commitment, how communities can get involved and help to improve the general condition of their schools. A few SMC/PTA members were also found to be engaged in the development and implementation of the School Performance Improvement Plans (SPIPs).

*“Most of the parents don’t come for SMC/PTA meetings, but for those who come, we discuss issues concerning pupils performance and how it can be improved” (TR 13, 31 years, Male)*

Describing the effectiveness of SMC/PTA support and involvement in childrens schooling, the overall impression among teachers was that, SMC/PTA’s and communities were not actively involved in their childrens’ schooling and this had negative consequences on childrens participation and performance.

#### **4.8.3 Parents Perspectives on the level of SMC/PTA and Community Involvement and Influence on School Participation**

Interviews with SMC/PTAs confirm low level of participation in children’s schooling. They argue that because majority of the parents were busy with their work and businesses, they hardly find time for school activities. This finding is confirmed by the quantitative data from table 4.21 depicting that more children whose parents are involved in SMC/PTA activities are more likely to have high attendance as shown in table 4.21

**Table 4.21 Parents’ participation in SMC/PTA and attendance of children**

School Attendance* How would you rate parents PTA/SMC attendance	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Low Attendance	0	4	10
Average Attendance	3	2	7
High Attendance	7	2	5
Total	10	8	22

Source: Field data 2015

SMC/PTA activities according to parents were geared towards creating an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning in schools. According to most of the SMC/PTA interviewed, their support to the school include the payment of levies to purchase teaching and learning materials, repair damaged furniture, and sometimes building toilets and urinals for the school.

Parents believe that, providing this kind of support will motivate both teachers and pupils to participate and perform well in school.

Summing up, key household and community factors identified by teachers, parents and pupils to influence pupils' participation focused on three main areas; parents education and occupation; parental support which was categorised into material support, emotional support and guidance, and parental support in home learning/homework; and SMC/PTA involvement in childrens' schooling.

Both parental educational and occupational background was found to have significant influence on childrens' participation. The general impression among teachers, pupils and parents themselves regarding parental support was that; it was low in two aspects; except for the views of pupils that differed regarding parental provision of material support; with the majority saying that their parents were providing the needed material resources for them to participate in school.

The component which looked at SMC/PTA involvement in children schooling shared similar results; low SMC/PTA/community involvement across most schools. These according to respondents have a damning effect on childrens' participation and performance.

#### **4.9 Discussion**

Based on the first objective, the findings showed that physical infrastructure including the availability of well ventilated and lit classrooms, TLMs, serene and noise free environment and the availability of trained teachers have significant influence on childrens' school and classroom participation. Other physical infrastructure that proved vital especially from the perspective of children was the availability of toilet facilities and a play area. Confirming these findings are

studies by Trembley et al., 2011 and Roselyn et al., (2013) showing that the availability of appropriate and adequate classrooms and teaching and learning materials affect student participation and performance.

Findings from this study regarding teacher related factors such as the use of pedagogic strategies (group work, discussion, demonstrations) and TLMs, pupil teacher ratio (class size) and teacher commitment, attitudes and behaviors confirms studies by Abadzi (2002; and Odhiamo, 2008) which found teacher ability to use appropriate pedagogic strategies described as “joyful learning” to improve student participation and performance in school. Also, this study corroborates findings by Mosha (2004) in his study confirming the importance of teachers’ qualification and competence in enabling teachers to effectively identify and use appropriate teaching methodologies as well as teaching and learning materials. (Mosha, 2004).

As has been found in this study, the effect of class size on student participation and performance confirms the ideas of Fabunmi, et al (2007) who found that schools with smaller class sizes perform better in terms of participation and performance. Similarly, Saeed et al (2007) and Trembly et al (2001) and Kraft (1994) found a significant correlation between class size and students’ achievement indicating that large class size is uncondusive for serious classroom participation and academic work.

With regards to the impact of teaching and learning materials on student participation found by this research, Omari et al. 1995; Neke et al, 2004) confirms that, the availability of teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, teachers’ guides, maps, blackboard, charts, chalk, science equipment and atlases facilitates the teaching and learning process. (Omari et al. 1995; Neke et al, 2004). Further, Heyneman et al 1981, in a study conducted in ten less industrialized countries

showed significant relationships between the use of textbooks and school participation and performance. Concluding that, the absence of sufficient teaching and learning materials hamper the teaching and learning process leading to poor and unsatisfactory participation and academic performance of students.

Findings from the third objective identifying the influence of household and community factors such as parental education and occupational background; parental support; and parental involvement in child's schooling confirms studies by Schiller et al (2002); Acheampong, 1992; Johnson et al (2001) and Fertig et al (2002) which all found that parents with more education are better placed to provide their children with the material and academic support for them to succeed in school. However, findings on the influence of sibling size on participation appears to conflict studies by (Asikhia, 2010; Parcel et al 1994; and Downey, 1995) which found that the higher the sibling size, the more difficult it becomes for parents to provide for their basic needs in school, and this subsequently affects their participation and performance. According to these studies, children from larger families are more likely to have unfavorable home environments and high levels of behavioral problems and consequently low participation and performance. Finally, parental involvement as found by this research corroborates the findings of (Grolnick et al., 1987; Reynolds et al., 1994; and Houtenwille et al., 2008) which suggest 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.

In relating this study to Bronfenbrenners' bioecological theory, findings from this study confirmed that childrens behavior regarding their school participation and performance is influenced not just by what is happening at the school or classroom level, but also at the home

and wider community level. This indicates that in order to improve school participation among children, there is need to ensure that support and resources are available from all levels affecting childrens' participation.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises the key findings drawing on both qualitative and quantitative analysis on factors associated with pupils' school participation. Conclusions and recommendations based on the findings are also presented in this chapter.

#### 5.1 Summary

This study examined the factors associated with school participation among pupils within the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Study school environment factors and how they influence children's school participation
2. Examine teacher related factors and their influence on children's school participation
3. Investigate the household and community related factors and their influence on children's school participation

The research was informed by Bronfenbrenner's theory of bio ecological development. The theory argues that the development of a child is influenced by the interaction of various contexts including the family, school and community. Thus, different kinds of children's participation behaviour is influenced by what is happening within these various contexts. Using this theory, quantitative and qualitative data was gathered from a total of one hundred and seven respondents across five basic schools within the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. The sample included 40 parents and pupils each for the quantitative data, fifteen in-depth interviews with teachers, and

five focus groups' discussions with pupils and SMC/PTA (comprising a total of 15 respondents for parents and pupils respectively). Also two in-depth interviews with District Education Officials at the Accra Metropolitan Assembly were conducted.

### ***Understanding and Trends of School Participation***

Participation according to respondents had three meanings, school attendance, taking part in classrooms activities (e.g group work, assignments/exercises and asking/ responding to questions), and engaging in extracurricular activities (sporting and club activities). The general trend of participation was high among the majority of pupils in all three aspects.

### ***Key School Environment Factors and Their Influence on Participation***

Key conclusions drawn from the various respondents show that physical infrastructure including the availability of well ventilated and lit classrooms, TLMs, serene and noise free environment and the availability of trained teachers have significant influence on childrens' school and classroom participation. Other physical infrastructure that proved vital especially from the perspective of children was the availability of toilet facilities and a play area.

### ***Teacher Related Factors and Influence on School Participation***

Key teacher related factors identified by teachers and pupils to influence school participation include the use of pedagogic strategies (group work, discussion, demonstrations) and TLMs, pupil teacher ratio (class size) and teacher commitment, attitudes and behaviours. Other factors identified include teacher absenteeism; contact hours and use of disciplinary practices and strategies.

### ***Household and Family Related Factors and their Influence on School Participation***

Household and community factors identified by respondents to influence pupils' participation include parental education and occupational background; parental support (material support, emotional support and guidance, support in home learning/homework); and parental involvement in child's schooling (SMC/PTA meetings, open days and visits to the school). The general impression among teachers and parents were that the low parental support and involvement was affecting childrens' attendance and participation in the classroom.

### **5.2 Conclusion**

Overall, school environment, teacher related and home/community factors were all found to have interrelated influence on childrens school attendance, participation in classroom and extracurricular activities. The key school environment factors influencing childrens participation include the physical infrastructure, teaching and learning materials and the availability of well trained teachers. Main teacher related factors include the use of pedagogical strategies, teacher commitment, behaviour and attitudes, use of disciplinary practices; absenteeism; contact hours and class size. At the household level, key variables identified include parental background (education and occupation); parental support (material, emotional, and support with homework) and SMC/PA and community involvement in childrens schooling.

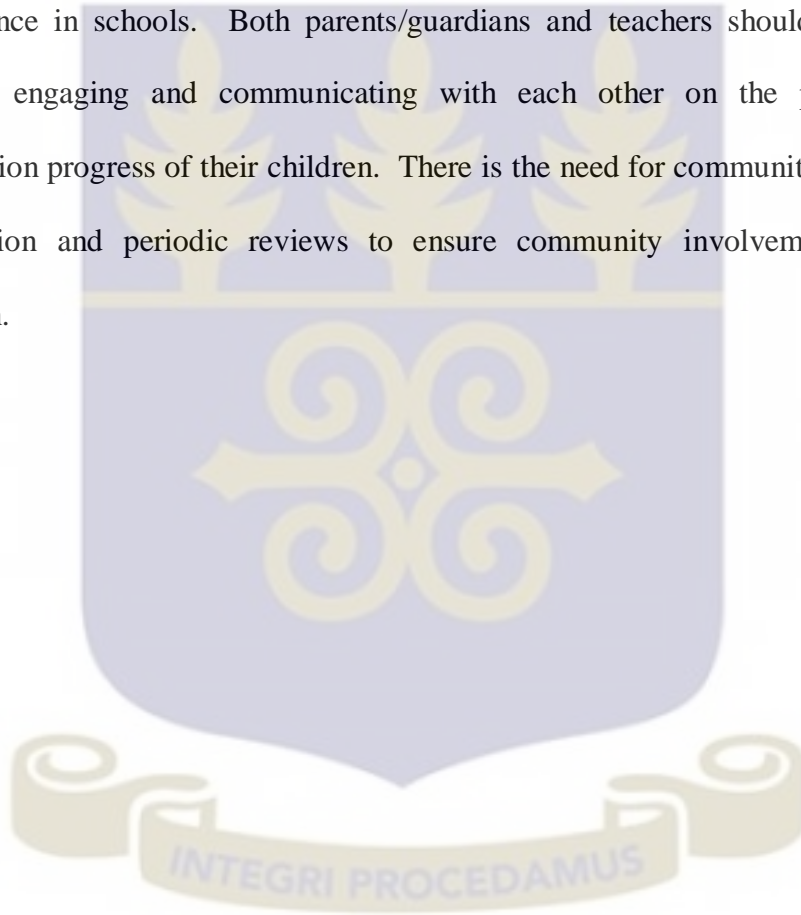
### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study seeks to suggest the following recommendations in order to improve school participation among children in Ghana;

- Educational materials especially the supply of textbooks must be done regularly in order to reduce the pupil textbook ratio especially for core subjects. The Ministry of Education's policy that requires that textbooks are supplied every five years need to be reviewed. Also districts should be encouraged to supply reading materials that supplement the efforts of the government.
- Although minimum infrastructure standards for basic schools exist at the Ministry of Education, these are hardly adhered to. There is the need for the institutionalization of more effective standards where the Ministry of Education ensures that, these standards are adhered to.
- Given the fact that pupils' classroom participation depended largely on teachers' use of appropriate and participatory teaching and learning practices, there is the need for education policy makers to encourage teachers to use teaching methodologies and strategies that are participatory and responsive to the needs of all children in order to improve classroom participation. There is also the need for improved communication between teachers and pupils both in and outside the classroom.
- The study found the use of corporal punishment to be predominant among teachers which has negative consequences for childrens participation. Based on this finding, the study recommends the enforcement of Ghana Education Service regulation that limits the use

of corporal punishment by encouraging the use of alternative disciplinary practices among teachers.

- Also based on findings, the study recommends an increased SMC/PTA and community collaboration, support and involvement in order to monitor pupils' participation and performance in schools. Both parents/guardians and teachers should find alternative ways of engaging and communicating with each other on the performance and participation progress of their children. There is the need for community/parent/guardian sensitization and periodic reviews to ensure community involvement with pupils' education.



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**ANEXURES'**

**Instrument 1: Interview with Head Teacher**

My Name is Rukayatu Adam, a student from the University of Ghana Legon, and specifically the Centre for Social Policy Studies. The purpose of this study is to **Assess the Factors that Influence School Participation among Basic School Pupils**. This is a partial fulfilment of a Master of Arts Degree Programme in Social policy Studies. I therefore solicit your consent to participate in this study. I assure you that the confidentiality of your responses is fully guaranteed. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Region**.....

**District**.....

**Location**.....

**Section A. Personal Information**

<b>1. Sex</b>	
<b>2. Age</b>	
<b>3. Level of Education</b>	
<b>4. Professional Qualification</b>	
<b>4. Years of Experience</b>	
<b>5. Years at current post</b>	

**Section B: School environment and influence children’s school participation?**

**Section A: School Environment**

6. What makes a conducive school environment?

8b. what are your views on the current school environment?

7. What effects does the school environment have on children’s participation?

8. How old is the school compound?

9. What is the size of the student population?

Primary      Boys      Girls

JHS                  Boys                  Girls

10. Average Class size Primary (        )        JHS (        )

11. How many teachers do you have in this school? Trained(        ) Untrained(        )

12. Indicate the infrastructure and facilities that are available in the school.

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Accessible Yes/No</b>	<b>Functional Yes/No</b>	<b>Separate for Boys and Girls  Yes/No</b>
Latrines/Toilet				
Urinals				
Hand washing Facilities				
Water Source ( within 250 meters)				
Water Storage Facilities				
Dustbins				
Outdoor facility (playground, football pitch etc)				
Storage facilities for books and Other TLMS ( Store room, cupboard etc)				
Library				
Computer Laboratory				
First Aid Kit				

13. Indicate how many classrooms each class has from Primary 1 to 6 and JHS 1 to 3

a.P1                  b.P2                  c.P3                  d.P4                  e.P5                  f.P6                  g.JHS1                  h.JHS2                  i.JHS3

14. Does every class have its classroom? Does every stream have its classrooms?
13. Describe the condition of school infrastructure and classrooms and their effect on school participation? (probe for building building materials, ventilation, size of classrooms, seating arrangements, electricity and lightening)
14. Describe school policies for maintaining school infrastructure and physical environment?
15. What effect does the school infrasture and physical environment have on school participation among children?

### **Section C: Pedagogical Tools**

16. Does each child have a copy of the core textbook? If no, how many pupils on average share  
a. Math's textbook.....b. english textbook....., c. science textbook.....?
17. How many teacher guides are available for teachers use? ( ask whether every teacher has a field guide
18. What other teaching aids are available in this school? Probe for demonstration materials, audiovisuals, ICT, etc)
19. What pedagogical tools have you found to encourage school participation and performance among pupils at your school?

### **Section C. Compound Security and personal safety**

20. What provision is made by the school to ensure that children properly disciplined and protected (probe for specific rules and regulations against violence, bullying and sexual harassment)

### **D. Monitoring and Supervision**

21. What systems are in place to assess pupil's progress and learning challenges at school?

### **Parental Support and involvement**

22. What role do parents play to ensure that children participate effectively in school?
23. Do you see parents/SMC of children from your school playing their role effectively? If yes, how, if no why not?
24. What contribution does the community make to improve school participation in your school?

**Instrument 2: Individual Interview with Teachers**

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**Region**.....

**District**.....

**Location**.....

**Section A: Personal Information**

<b>1. Number</b>	<b>15. Years of Experience</b>
<b>2. Years at current post</b>	
<b>3. Sex</b>	<b>16. Name of School</b>
<b>4. Level of Education</b>	<b>17. Professional Qualification</b>

**Section A: School Environment**

18. What makes a conducive school environment?

8b. what are your views on the current school environment?

19. What effects does the school environment have on children’s participation?

**Section B. Teacher Capacity**

20. On average, how many hours do you spend in a day teaching in the classroom?

21. How many days did you absent yourself from school last week?

**Section D: Student-Teacher Relationship**

22. How would you describe the way teachers interact with pupils in the classroom and outside the classroom?

23. How do teachers encourage participation among children in the school?

24. What is the nature of absenteeism among pupils in the school?( what are the causes)

25. What strategies do you have in place to address pupils' low participation and poor performance in school?

**E. Parental Support for School Children**

26. How would you describe parental support to pupils in your school? Probe its effect on school participation?

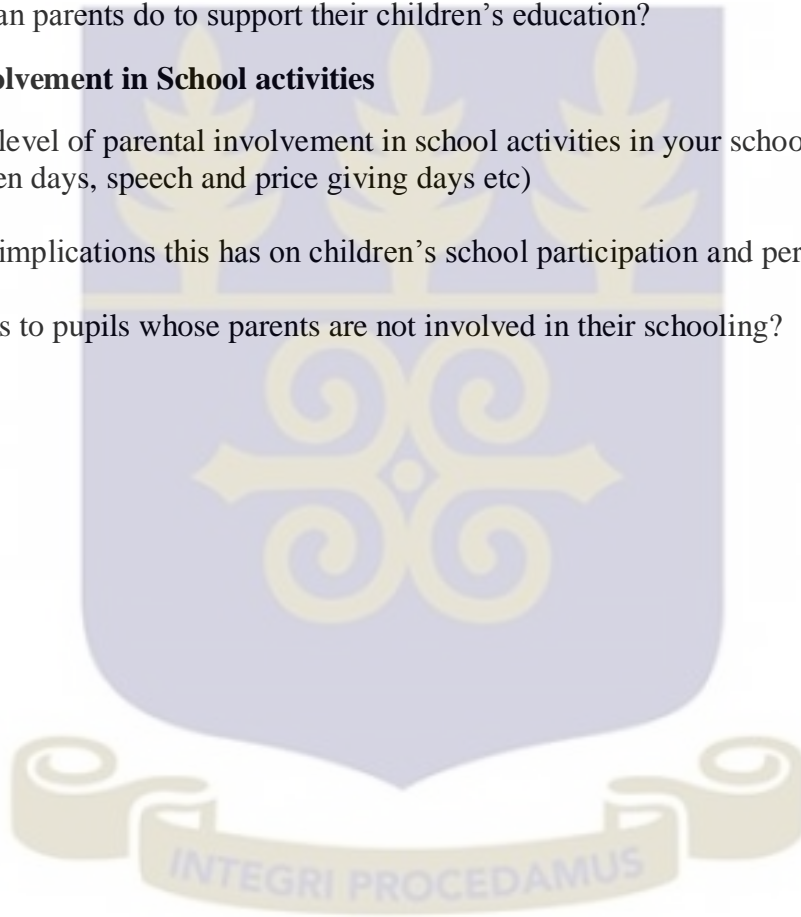
27. What more can parents do to support their children's education?

**F. Parental Involvement in School activities**

28. Describe the level of parental involvement in school activities in your school (probe for PTA meetings, open days, speech and prize giving days etc)

29. Describe the implications this has on children's school participation and performance?

30. What happens to pupils whose parents are not involved in their schooling?



**Instrument 3: Individual Interview with Parents**

My Name is Rukayatu Adam, a student from the University of Ghana Legon, and specifically the Centre for Social Policy Studies. The purpose of this study is to **Assess the Factors that Influence School Participation among Basic School Pupils**. This is a partial fulfilment of a Master of Arts Degree Programme in Social policy Studies. I therefore solicit your consent to participate in this study. I assure you that the confidentiality of your responses is fully guaranteed. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Region**.....

**District**.....

**Location**.....

**School**.....

**Household and community related factors and their influence on children’s school participation.**

**A. Parental/Guardian Characteristics**

1. Name	
2. Age	
3. Sex	
4. Level of Education	
5. Occupation	
6. Number of Children	
5. Name of Child’s School	

**Section A: School Environment**

6. What makes a conducive school environment?

8b. what are your views on the current school environment?

7. What effects does the school environment have on children’s participation?

**B. Parental Support for School Children**

8. Describe parental support needed to improve school participation and performance of pupils’ in school? (probe for material, emotional, learning eg home work, reading etc)

9. How are you able to provide these for your child in school?

10. What do you think parents can do in order to support and sustain their children's interest in school?

**B. Parental Involvement in Child's Schooling**

11. Describe how parental involvement in school activities affects school participation and performance among pupils? (probe: give some examples)

12. Are you involved in any school activities? Give specific example and how you are involved?

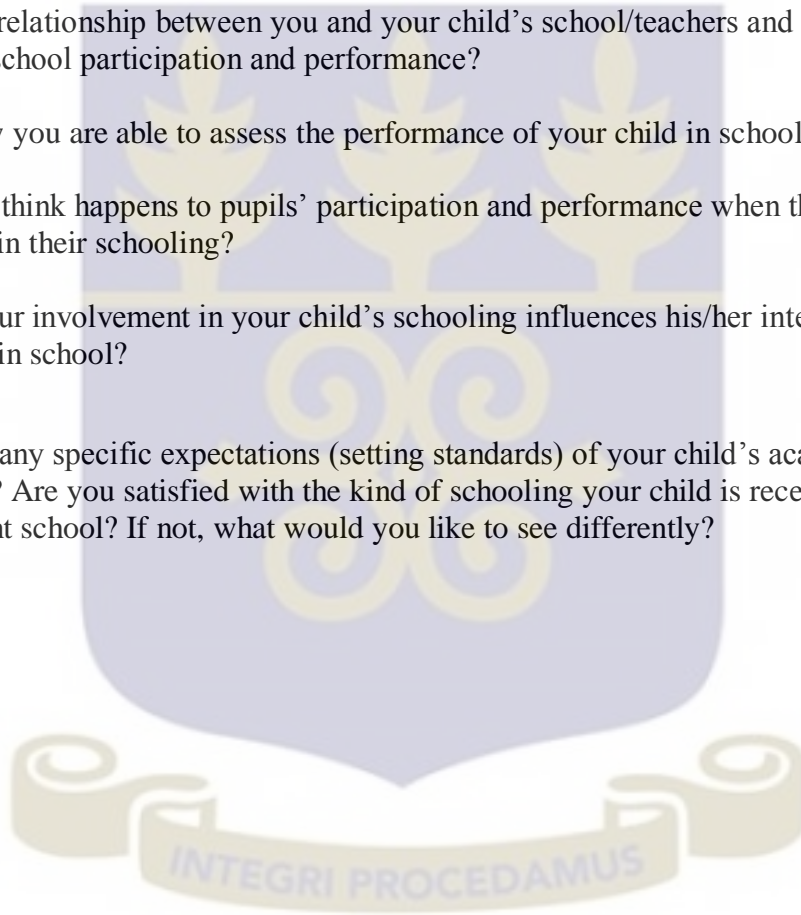
13. Describe the relationship between you and your child's school/teachers and how it affects your child's school participation and performance?

14. Describe how you are able to assess the performance of your child in school?

15. What do you think happens to pupils' participation and performance when their parents are not involved in their schooling?

16. How does your involvement in your child's schooling influences his/her interest and participation in school?

17. Do you have any specific expectations (setting standards) of your child's academic achievement? Are you satisfied with the kind of schooling your child is receiving from his/her current school? If not, what would you like to see differently?



### Questionnaire for Parents

My Name is Rukayatu Adam, a student from the University of Ghana Legon, and specifically the Centre for Social Policy Studies. The purpose of this study is to **Assess the Factors that Influence School Participation among Basic School Pupils**. This is a partial fulfilment of a Master of Arts Degree Programme in Social policy Studies. I therefore solicit your consent to participate in this study. I assure you that the confidentiality of your responses is fully guaranteed. Thank you for your cooperation.

#### A. Demographic Information

1. Identity
2. Name of School \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sex            a. Male                            b. Female
4. Age
5. Occupation    a. Trader                            b. Farmer                            c. Civil Servant  
                          d. other(specify) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Level of education    a. None    b. Primary    c. JHS    d. SHS                            e. Tertiary                            e.  
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Number of children            a. Boys                            b. Girls
8. Number of children attending school
9. Do you belong to any social group or association?  
                          a. Religious organization                            b. occupational groups,                            c. women's  
                          group    d. social clubs                            e. others specify

#### B. Perception of school environment

10. What makes a conducive school environment? ( allowed to choose more than one option)    a.  
playground            b. classrooms                            c. toilets                            d. urinals                            e. hand washing  
facilities    f. seating places                            g. Others, specify
11. My child's school is a conducive place for learning.    .a. Strongly agree    b. Agree    c. Disagree

#### D. Parental Support

12. I participate in school activities    a. Strongly agree                            b. Agree                            c. Disagree

13. I am able to provide all material needs for my children at school. a. Strongly Agree b. Agree  
c. Disagree

14. I provide emotional support to my children. a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree

15. I provide guidance for my children at home. a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree

16. I support my children's studies at home. a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree

**E. Parental Involvement in Child's Schooling**

17. Parental involvement in school activities improves school participation and performance.  
a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree

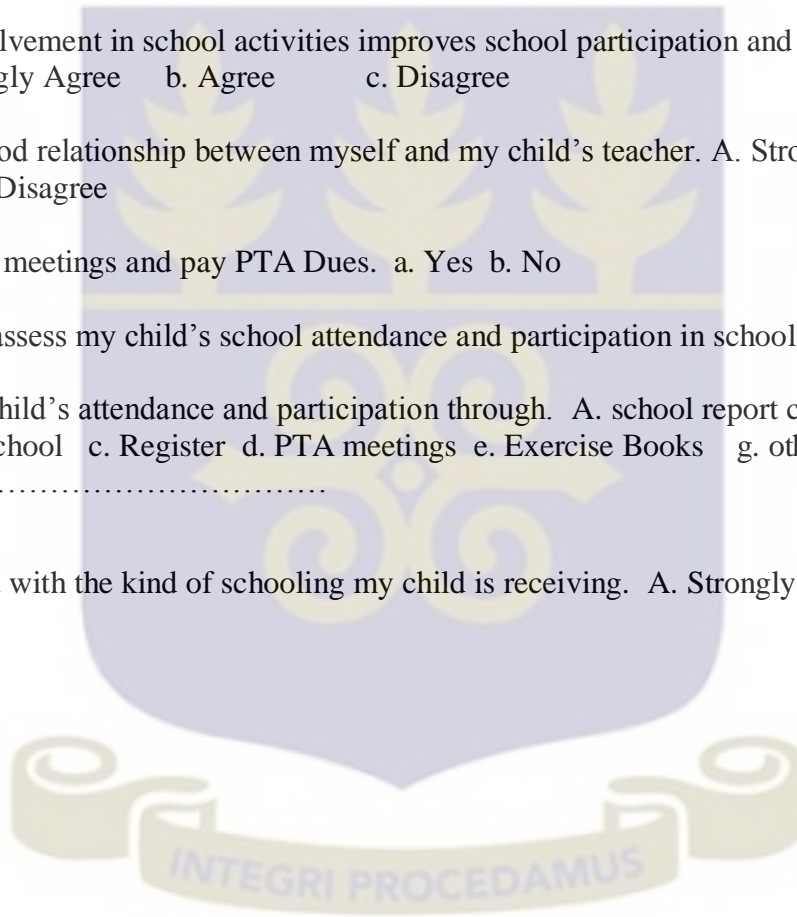
18. There is a good relationship between myself and my child's teacher. A. Strongly Agree  
b. Agree c. Disagree

19. I attend PTA meetings and pay PTA Dues. a. Yes b. No

20. I am able to assess my child's school attendance and participation in school. A. Yes. B. No

21. I assess my child's attendance and participation through. A. school report card b.  
visiting the school c. Register d. PTA meetings e. Exercise Books g. others  
(specify).....

22. I am satisfied with the kind of schooling my child is receiving. A. Strongly Agree b. Agree  
c. Disagree



**Instrument 4: Focused Group Discussion with SMC/PTA/Community Members**

My Name is Rukayatu Adam, a student from the University of Ghana Legon, and specifically the Centre for Social Policy Studies. The purpose of this study is to **Assess the Factors that Influence School Participation among Basic School Pupils**. This is a partial fulfillment of a Master of Arts Degree Programme in Social policy Studies. I therefore solicit your consent to participate in this study. I assure you that the confidentiality of your responses is fully guaranteed. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Region**.....

**District**.....

**Location**.....

**Section A. Personal Information**

Age	Sex	Occupation	Education	Number of CHN

**Section B. Community Involvement and Support to the School**

1. How would you describe the relationship between the community and the school/teachers?
2. Does the school have an active SMC/PTA? Describe the activities of the SMC/PTA in the school?
3. Describe how the involvement of the SMC/PTA/Community has affected school participation and performance among pupils in the school?
4. Are there role models in the community to coach and model young children in the school? Give examples of role models and what they have been doing encourage pupils’ participation and performance in school?
5. Are there Community values about education? How helpful are these values in improving participation and performance?

6. How would you describe parental participation in decision making in the school?
7. Does the school have activities to develop and maintain partnerships with families/community members in the school? Give specific examples.
8. What are the key challenges militating against parental involvement and support of pupils education in your school?
9. What do you think communities can do in order to improve children's participation and performance in school?





b. English textbook..... c. Science Textbook.....

16. I have reading materials at home a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Disagree

17. Teachers use of TLMs increase my interest in school? A. Strongly agree b. Agree  
c. Disagree

1. How many hours does your teacher spend teaching in class each day? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. How many days has your teacher been absent from school last week? 1 2 3 4 5

#### **D. Parental Support**

18. My parents participate in PTA/SMC and other school activities a. Strongly agree  
b. Agree c. Disagree

19. My parents/guardians provide all material needs for me at school a. Strongly Agree b.  
Agree c. Disagree

20. My Parents/guardians provide emotional support for me. a.Strongly Agree b. Agree c.  
Disagree

21. I have parents/guardians/siblings that support my studies at home. a. Strongly b. Agree  
c. Disagree

#### **E. Parental Involvement in Child's Schooling**

22. My parents/guardians participated in all SMC/PTA meetings last term?  
a. Strongly Agree b. Agree c. Disagree

23. My parents/guardians have never attended PTA meetings? A. Yes b. No

24. There exist good relationship between my parents and teacher. A. Strongly Agree b.  
Agree c. Disagree

25. My parents assess my performance in school using. A. school report card b.  
visits to the school c. Continuous Assessment d. PTA meetings e. others (specify)