

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**FACTORS AFFECTING BASIC SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF ST. GREGORY BASIC SCHOOL,  
GOMOA BUDUBURAM.**



**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**2022**

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**A dissertation in the Department of Educational Administration and  
Management, Faculty of Educational Studies, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies, in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Educational Administration and Management)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**SEPTEMBER, 2022**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

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

**Student's Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

### Supervisor's declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba.

**Supervisor's Name: PROF. SAMUEL ASARE AMOAH**

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

## DEDICATION

To my mum, Madam Grace Naa Aku Addo who sacrificed a lot to help me achieve this, to my late father, Mr. John Harry Woode; I know you are proud of this achievement where you are, to my dear husband, Mr. Samuel Tetteh Jnr. and everyone who encouraged me along the way; I am very grateful. What God cannot do, does not exist!



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was a great learning experience being supervised by Prof. Samuel Asare Amoah, who gave me all the needed assistance to successfully complete this thesis. His instructions, suggestions, and constructive criticism were extremely helpful. I am appreciative to my family, friends, colleagues and loved ones who encouraged me through and through to see to it that I successfully complete this work.

I gratefully acknowledge all individuals who contributed directly or indirectly to the completion of this work. In compiling this thesis, I referred to a wide range of textbooks, websites, articles, and other materials, all of which are clearly outlined in this study. I am grateful to the authors of the works mentioned.

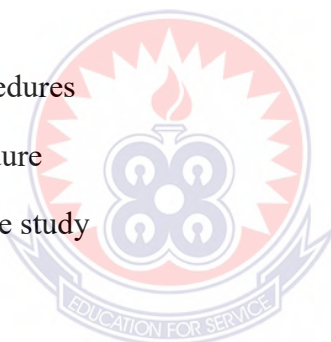


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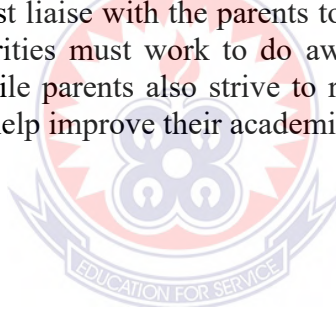


## GLOSSARY

|      |  |
|------|--|
| BECE | Basic Education Certificate Examination                |
| ESP  | Education Sector Performance                           |
| FGD  | Focus Group Discussion                                 |
| GPA  | Grade Point Average                                    |
| ICT  | Information Communication and Technology               |
| JHS  | Junior High School                                     |
| NOUN | National Open University of Nigeria                    |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PISA | Program for International Student Assessment           |
| PTA  | Parent Teacher Association                             |
| SDG  | Sustainable Development Goals                          |
| SES  | Socio-Economic Status                                  |
| UN   | United Nations   |

## ABSTRACT

The essence of this research was to study the various factors that affect the academic performance of students in St. Gregory Basic School in Gomoa Buduburam in the Central region of Ghana. The study employed the qualitative approach and made use of one-on-one interviews and a focus group discussion. In all, a total of ten respondents were involved in this study. Specifically, the study focused on some administrative factors such as educational resources, teacher absenteeism and the role of the parent teacher association. Environmental factors considered in this study were class size, distractions and pupil teacher ratio. In addition, psychological factors such as how teachers motivate students and allow for class participation given are also discussed. The analysis procedure was largely based on the recommendation of Braun and Clarke (2006) which stresses a flexible yet detailed analytic technique, hence, a thematic analysis approach was adopted. Themes were chosen and organized into a theoretical framework, which meant that coding was done with specific problems in mind. The study found that insufficient resources in the school was influencing the academic performance of students negatively. In addition, the punctuality of teachers in the school positively affected the academic performance of students. More so, the large class sizes also affect the academic performance of the students negatively. Lastly, distractions from their home and school environment negatively affect the academic performance of students. From the findings, the researcher gave recommendations that the school authorities must liaise with the parents to provide the needed resources for the school, school authorities must work to do away with all distractions from the school's environment while parents also strive to reduce all forms of distractions at home for the students to help improve their academic performance.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Across the globe, several studies have identified a variety of factors that affect students' academic performance at different educational levels. In Southwestern Asia, a study by Alani and Hawas (2021) in a University revealed that environmental factors such as the serenity of the school environment and administrative factors such as the skills and teaching techniques of teachers were the major factors influencing their academic performance. Another study in Nepal by Duwal and Khonju (2020) showed that teaching methods and students' attendance at school were the main factors influencing the academic performance of students.

In South Africa, Sikhwari, Maphosa, Masehela and Ndebele (2015) conducted a study that found that inadequate educational resources, poor teacher- student relationship, lecturers' conduct and poor time management were the factors influencing the academic performance of students. Okeke (2015) also conducted a study in Nigeria which revealed some major findings such as; Parents have high expectations for the academic achievement of their adolescents, there was a positive relationship between parental expectations and academic achievement of their adolescents. Parents attribute the academic achievement of their adolescents to effort (internal) and luck (external) causes. There was also a significant relationship between parental attributions and academic achievement of their adolescents.

In Ghana, several studies including that of Amua-Sekyi and Nti (2015), Adane (2013), Michael, Daniel and Steffi (2011), Etsey, Amedahe and Edjah (2005), have shown that the school environmental factors identified include a limited number of teachers with high academic qualification, inadequate teaching and learning materials,

and misuse of contact hours with pupils. The teacher factors that were found to contribute to the low academic performance were incidences of lateness to school and absenteeism, inability to complete the syllabi and inadequate homework assigned to pupils. The pupil characteristics found significant were incidences of lateness to school and absenteeism, lack of assistance with studies at home and use of local language in the classroom. Home conditions or parental support variables causing pupils to perform poorly academically were their inability to provide textbooks and supplementary readers, low level of interaction with children's teachers, and low involvement in the Parent Teacher Association. This study sought to ascertain which factors under the administrative, psychological, environmental and socio-economic factors applied to students in St. Gregory Basic School.

For over decades, researchers have made progress in clarifying and extending the "Performance" concept. However, scholarly advances have been made in specifying major predictors and processes associated with performance (Kim & Connerton, 2020). When conceptualizing performance, one must differentiate between an action (behavioral aspect) and an outcome aspect of performance. The behavioral aspect refers to what an individual does. It encompasses behaviors such as teaching basic reading and writing skills to elementary school children. Not every behavior is subsumed under the performance concept, but only behavior that is relevant to goals set (Siddiq, Rathore, Clegg, & Rasker, 2020)

Academic performance, according to Pizarro (as cited by Lamas, 2015), is a measure of the indicative and responsive capacities that convey, in an approximated fashion, what a person has learnt as a result of a process of education or training. Academic performance centers on a variety of areas which include how well a student performs with regard to grades or scores acquired from tests conducted in various subject areas,

the intellectual ability, and skills acquired during that time frame. Several scholars believe that academic performance is the consequence of learning, which is motivated by the teacher's instructional activity and created by the student (Lamas, 2015). It is also the attainment of set educational goals and usually measured using the grade-point-average (GPA). Academic performance entails the student's ability to cope through his/her studies and accomplish assigned tasks. It also looks at how well a teacher is able to achieve academic goals and objectives set for a given period of time. Academic Performance entails certain vital factors such as the quality of the instructional design, accuracy of information provided and alignment with set educational targets, quality of delivery, existence of motivation, engagement of students and ability of students to transfer or make use of what they have learnt.

A student who wants to pass an exam will set some goals, such as using free time to study or research on content(s), demonstrating a drive to succeed. At the end of the time period, an evaluation will be conducted to determine whether or not the goal was met. Thus, performance is defined by a judgmental and evaluative process rather than by the action itself. Moreover, only actions that can be scaled, that is, measured are considered to constitute performance (Campbell et al as cited in Sandhu, Iqbal, Ali & Tufail, 2017). Academic performance is usually evaluated based on how well a student performs in a test or in an examination. It is worth noting that a student's performance is affected by so many factors. The outcome aspect refers to the consequence or result of the individual's behavior.

The above-described behaviors may result in outcomes such as pupils' reading proficiency and ability to read and write efficiently. In many situations, the behavioral and outcome aspects are related empirically, but they do not overlap completely. The

outcome aspects of performance depend also on factors other than the individual's behavior. A typical example of this is a tutor who goes all out in teaching students how to perfect their reading and writing skills (a behavioral aspect of performance). However, one or two of his pupils could possibly not improve their reading and writing skills. This could be as a result of their intellectual deficits and a couple of other factors (outcome aspect of performance) (Mahler, Grossschedl & Harms, 2018). In order to place such students at par with their colleagues, they may require more attention and there will be the need to consider other factors which might be serving as a hindrance to achieving the set goals. In practice, it might be difficult to describe the action aspect of performance without any reference to the outcome aspect. This is on the basis that not any action but only actions relevant to the goals set constitute performance (Van Dessel, Hughes, & De Houwer, 2019).

Increasing the academic performance of students and ensuring their professional development in educational institutions are among the primary objectives of the education system. Teachers are among the greatest contributors to the success of students and the sufficiency of adequate professional development (Wang & Kuo, 2019). Teachers as influencers of students' academic performance have a great role to play in the future of every society and they are an integral part of the educational system we can never do away with. It is due to these reasons that most people now advocate for the education of teachers in every nation (Leal Filho, Shiel, Paço, Mifsud, Ávila, Brandli & Caeiro, 2019). Examining the negative factors that affect teacher candidates to be educated as qualified and finding solutions to that regard would make individuals in the future who become teachers become more productive for themselves, for their students, and their societies (Eratli Sirin & Sahin, 2020).

Academic performance affects the lives of the students greatly (Koç, Terzioğlu, & Kayalar, 2018) for this reason, educational institutions all around the world consider it an important target to improve students' academic performance. When parents take their wards to school, they expect them to perform well and tangible evidence of this is through their academic performance. Academic performance is of great importance not merely to determine the extent the students have learned in an educational program but sometimes to evaluate whether the students will attain the academic milestones they seek and, in some cases, the milestones their families expect them to attain. When students perform well academically, it can boost their self-confidence and can cause them to aim at attaining greater heights.

The learning process is one of the vital activities in the life of the child. How well a student learns can be connected with academic performance, and performance influences the life satisfaction of children as well as all humans (Fomina, Burmistrova-Savenkova, & Morosanova, 2020). Academically, there are two groups of students as generally perceived; those who improve performance wise and those who do not. There are several factors that contribute to why the academic performance of a student will or will not improve. Some of these could be from the individual as a student, from homes, from schools and other external factors such as peer influence and psychological factors.

In the pursuit to ascertain the factors that affect students' performance studies by Adane (2013), Tery (2019) and Mula (2020) grouped these factors under administrative, socio-economic, psychological and environmental factors. Administrative factors focused on how the administration of the school affected the academic performance of students in the school. In relation to this, the respondents in Adane (2013), Tery (2019)



and Mulaa's (2020) study centered on concerns regarding educational resources, parent teacher association and school facilities.

Socio-economic factors centered on the type of houses students lived in, the number of rooms in the house, supervision from parents at home, access to a study area, a table and chair for effective learning, whether they live with one or both parents, their parents' level of education and the profession of their parents (Tery, 2019).

Also, psychological factors according to (Mulaa, 2020) included how teachers motivate students and how they allow students to contribute in the teaching and learning process. On the other hand, environmental factors focus on factors influencing students' performance which are things around them mostly in their school and home environments that have a tendency of influencing their studies and performance one way or the other.

Academic success in achievement scores at all levels of the educational ladder can be attributed to a myriad of individual, family, school, and community-level factors. For example, research has found that students with high levels of support and expectations regarding academics have a greater likelihood for academic success compared to students not receiving the support and expectations. In a study conducted by Ayodele (2000) and Vandiver (2011) the findings showed that a positive relationship exists between the availability of facilities and student academic performances. Examples of these facilities include classroom furniture, libraries, and recreational equipment among others.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Quality education, although a very complex and quite difficult concept to define has one of its key components being academic performance (World Health Organization,

2000). The academic performance of Junior High School (JHS) students in Ghana has been declining since 2009. Their general performance in the Basic Education Certificate Exams (BECE) declined from 62.16% in 2009 to 50.21% in 2010. It decreased again from 49.12% in 2010 to 46.93% in 2011 (West African Examination Council as cited by Baafi, 2020).

In later years, academic performance continues to decline for example, the National Educational Assessment (NEA) report cited by the (Ghana National Commission on Children, 2014) observes that 40% of pupils in both third and sixth grade failed from 2008-2014, the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) pass rate had drastically declined from 62.18% to 50.2% in 2009 and then to 49.12% (NEA Report as cited by Cummiskey, Kline, Amy & Varly 2012). Again, the chief examiner's report on standards of papers for the 2015 BECE in Integrated Science showed students' inability to apply scientific knowledge to physical phenomena. A year later, the chief examiner's report for 2015/2016 revealed that the entire results of suspected candidates from 321 schools were withheld for suspected examination misdeeds. Much more, according to the Ministry of Education (2018), repeat rates are as high as evidenced by the fact that Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) revealed 50% of pupils who were unable to recognize a single word. This dismal performance of pupils at the national level in Ghana is not different from the performances of pupils at the local level or for individual schools. Specifically, for the St. Gregory Basic School which was founded in 2001 in Gomoa Buduburam, the performance of students has been declining.

According to the school records of St. Gregory Basic School assessed in 2021, the performance of students in the Basic Education Certificate Examination has shown a

decline in performance. In the year 2009, sixty- five percent passed while thirty-five percent failed out of one hundred and five students who sat for the examination. In the year 2010, a hundred students sat for the examination and forty percent failed while sixty percent passed. One hundred and nine students were registered to write in the year 2011 and fifty percent passed while fifty percent failed. The next year, sixty- three students wrote the examination and fifty-five percent passed while the others failed. Thirty-nine students sat for the examination in the year 2013 and fifty passed while the others failed. Seventy-five percent of sixty- four students who sat for the examination in 2014 passed while twenty –five percent failed.

In the year 2015, the results from the examination showed that only thirty percent passed out of sixty-nine students, in 2016 only twenty percent out of sixty-one students, in 2017, forty percent passed out of sixty-nine students. In the year 2018 with one hundred and ten students and 2019 with ninety-four students, forty-five percent passed each year but in 2020 only thirty percent passed out of one hundred and eighteen students who sat for the examination.

Several studies have found that improvement in the academic performance of students in a basic school such as St. Gregory Basic School is dependent on environmental, personal, social, psychological, and economic factors (Singh, Malik & Singh, 2016; Ali, Haider, Munir, Khan, & Ahmed, 2013; Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). Most of these studies tend to focus on a single variable or focus on limited factors that contribute to academic performance. Although some studies (Sign, Malik & Sign, 2016; Ali, Haider, Munir, Khan, & Ahmed, 2013; Mushtaq & Khan, 2012) have been conducted to assess the academic performance of students worldwide, there is lack of sufficient studies conducted especially using qualitative method since most of these previous studies used

quantitative and mixed methods to ascertain how a combination of these factors affect students' academic performance.

In interacting with the Head teacher of the school, he revealed that no study has been conducted in the school to ascertain the factors contributing to the academic performance of students in the school. The researcher thus saw the need to address this gap in literature. The current study therefore sought to ascertain factors that contribute to the academic performance of pupils in the St. Gregory Basic School.

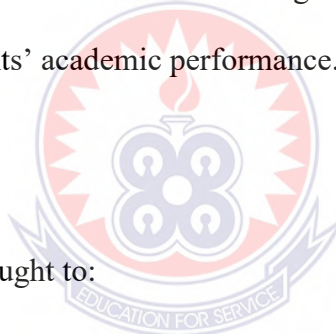
### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that have been attributed to causing poor academic performance of students in St. Gregory Basic School and to find out how these factors affect students' academic performance.

### **1.4 Research objectives**

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain administrative factors that affect students' academic performance in St. Gregory Basic School, Gomoa Buduburam.
2. To find out how environmental factors affect the academic performance of students in St. Gregory Basic School, Gomoa Buduburam.
3. To probe how socio-economic factors affect the academic performance of students in St. Gregory Basic School, Gomoa Buduburam.
4. To determine how psychological factors affect the academic performance of students in St. Gregory Basic School, Gomoa Buduburam.



## 1.5 Research Questions

Generally, this research sought to answer one broad question; what factors affect academic performance?

The research study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What administrative factors affect the academic performance of students in St. Gregory Basic School, Gomoa Buduburam?
2. Which environmental factors affect the academic performance of students in St. Gregory Basic School, Gomoa Buduburam?
3. What socio-economic factors affect the academic performance of students in St. Gregory Basic School, Gomoa Buduburam?
4. Which psychological factors affect the academic performance of students in St. Gregory Basic School, Gomoa Buduburam?

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

The study seeks to provide answers to questions about factors influencing students' performance in St. Gregory Basic School. It also seeks to unravel how the various factors play a role in either improving or negatively influencing the performance of the student.

The research was a case study that delved into the critical issues and deep connections between the various factors for imperative relationships to be revealed. Practically, the study would bring out useful insights or strategies on which to build, modify or improve the academic performance of pupils in St. Gregory Basic School in particular and Ghana in general. On the other hand, the study is important for educational stakeholders

including researchers, politicians, heads of schools, teachers, and parents of students as well as educational planners in planning for improving the performance of students.

Institutionally, the study would also be significant to the St. Gregory Basic School community in that their investment in education is expected to translate to promoting quality education and improved students' performance. The findings add to the existing body of knowledge on determinants of academic performance.

Theoretically, the research demonstrates how the utilization of the tenets of the system theory in terms of inputs, outputs and the principle of interdependence can explain the combination of factors that affect students' academic performance.

### **1.7 Delimitation of the Study**

Delimitation centers on the scope, or boundaries of the research. Geographically, the study is delimited to St. Gregory Basic School, Gomoa Buduburam which is located in the Central region of Ghana. Several factors affect students' academic performance, but the study focused on administrative, psychological, environmental and socio-economic factors.

Methodologically, this research is a case study of St. Gregory Basic School, a public school that comprises students of both high and low socioeconomic statuses.

The case study is to enable the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of the problem through a close study of St. Gregory Basic School.

### **1.8 Limitation of the Study**

Limitations deal with the issues that are sometimes beyond researchers' control but affect the methodology/outcome of the research (Simon, 2011). In this study, one main limitation was the Coronavirus pandemic which delayed most of the processes involved in carrying out fieldwork. The pandemic brought about a nationwide closure of schools and other institutions. Even after schools resumed, there were several protocols to follow before being granted permission to visit the school. The researcher, however, through determination was able to conduct this study successfully.

Another limitation of the study was that most of the old students had relocated to different communities as at the time this study was being conducted and were also without any contact numbers to be reached on.

### **1.9 Operational definition of Terms**

**Academic Performance:** This refers to the academic success attained by a pupil or a student in his/her educational development process. It consists of reading, writing, speaking, knowledge, analyses, evaluation, calculation, application, synthesis, and understanding of academic instructors' academic concepts.

**Resources:** All “material and non-material factors” that help in the achievement of set institutional goals

**Performance:** To perform is to take a complex series of actions that integrate skills and knowledge to produce a valuable result.

### **1.10 Organization of Study**

The study was presented in five different chapters. Chapter One focuses on the introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the

study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitation of the study, and the study's organization. Chapter Two of this study reviews the literature on students' academic performance while in Chapter Three, the researcher's methodology is described.

This comprises the research design, population, and sampling, instruments used in collecting data, data collection procedure, and the data analysis procedure. Chapter Four of this study brings to bear how data collected is analyzed. The Fifth chapter is made up of the summary, findings, suggestions, recommendations, and conclusion.





## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the review of literature related to the study, that is, the factors that affect the academic performance of students. The subtopics of the review are generally factors that affect the performance of the student. These factors include administrative, socio-economic, environmental as well as psychological factors. These factors are illustrated in the conceptual framework for the study.

#### 2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted for this study was derived from the System Theory input-output model developed by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1956. The theory, according to Koontz and Wehrich, (1988) postulates that an organized enterprise does not exist in a vacuum; it is dependent on the environment in which it is established. They add that the inputs are received by the organization, which then transforms them into outputs.

In the context of factors affecting students' academic performance the input includes all the factors that come into play in a student's life that have an effect on their academic performance. The study considers the system inputs as the administrative factors such as the availability of educational resources, teacher punctuality, the role of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and school facilities. It also focuses on system components such as environmental factors which include class size, distractions and student-teacher ratio. The socio-economic factors as system inputs include home environment, supervision from parents, parents' jobs and level of education. The psychological factors are how teachers allow for class contribution, motivation from teachers and punishments.

As conceptualized in this study, the students as inputs in terms of the system theory are admitted into the school, from different social-economic backgrounds, who get into the school system (including teachers and school management) that transforms them through the process of teaching and learning. The student's output is conceptualized as their academic performance. However, the socio-economic background and the environmental variables affect the psychological status of the student. According to the input-output model, it is assumed that when all the interconnected input variables are positive, then the output which is the academic performance will also be positive. It is prudent to assume that the reverse is also true. Theoretically, the interplay of factors such as students' school environment, parental influence, teacher student relationship, environmental variables, socio-economic background and the psychological status of the students serve as complementary and interdependent elements that systematically affect students' academic performance.

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

According to Bernardin and Russell (as cited in Mohanty, 2014), performance can be defined as the account or record of outcomes produced on a specified job function or activity during a specified time period by individual workers such as a teacher, nurse and accountants. Samsonowa (2012) indicated that performance relates to two terms: effectiveness and efficiency; effectiveness as an indicator of the degree of goal attainment, and efficiency as an indicator of the resources consumed to achieve the level of achievement.

The performance of those engaged in the production of tangible products in the business sector is usually rated based on the number of goods and services produced or provided over a given period of time. The measurement of performance in the business

realm is relatively simple in comparison to the educational setting, which engages in the production of human resources by providing them with the necessary or required knowledge in a variety of fields. Business performance is measured by the products produced at the end of the day, week, month, or year, whereas performance in education is measured by the services rendered in relation to the application of strategies, knowledge and skills based on teaching and learning. Academic performance within the context of this study refers to students' learning outcomes in the BECE administered by West Africa Examination Council (WAEC). Hence, the scores obtained by students in the BECE are the measures of academic performance of the pupils of St. Gregory Basic School.

Academic performance is of great importance to the stakeholders of education in every nation. Academic performance is also known in other contexts as school readiness, academic achievement and school performance. Ampofo (2019) has shared that some schools of thought are of the opinion that it should be the major focus of every educational institution. Other schools of thought have also vouched for support from other institutions in the society such as the family to support schools in academic performance (Linn & Miller, 2005) since the school alone cannot do it all. The use of academic performance to determine one's success in school dates as far as the Victorian era (Bell & Waters, 2018).

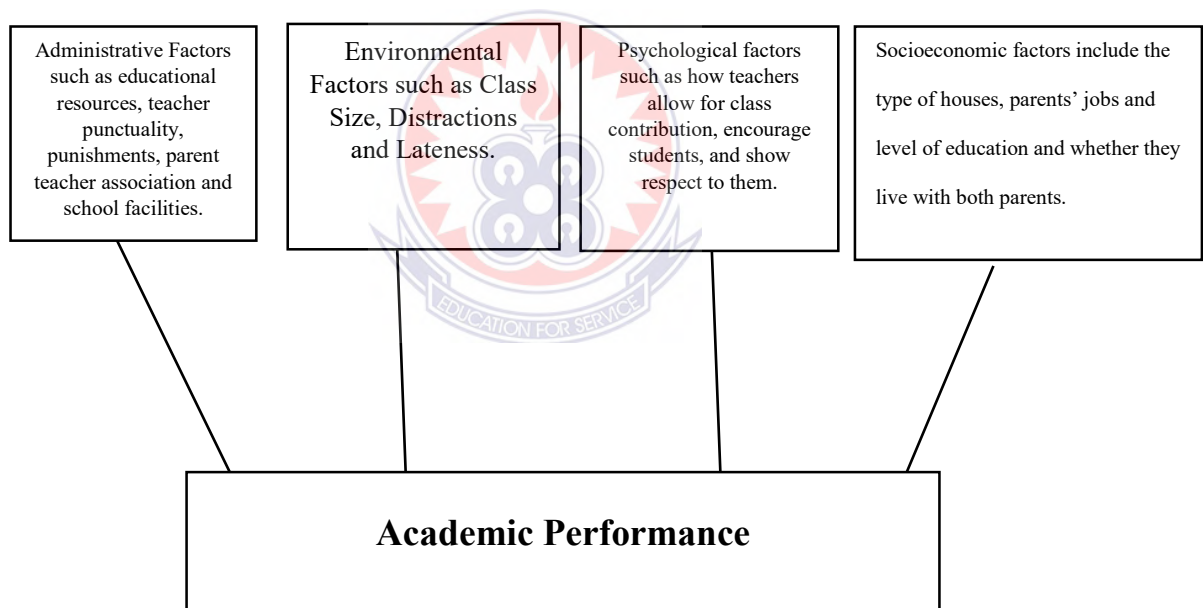
Several authors agree that academic performance is the result of learning, which is prompted by the teacher's teaching activity and produced by the student. Academic performance can be defined as the ability of an individual to excel in a given academic field or assignment and involves being able to replicate and apply what has been taught. Martinez (as cited in Lamas, (2015) defines academic performance as "the product

given by the students and it is usually expressed through school grades" from a humanistic perspective. Caballero et al. (2007) on the other hand argues that academic performance entails meeting the goals, achievements, and objectives established in a program or course that a student is enrolled in. Torres and Rodríguez (as cited in Lamas, 2015) supports these definitions by adding that academic performance is the level of knowledge shown in an area or subject compared to the norm, and it is generally measured using the grade point average.

From the definitions above, it is evident that academic performance involves the student achieving set goals after knowledge has been acquired through the learning process in the classroom. The student usually has to prove himself or herself through the grades that will be attained in an examination set by the teacher or tutor. The authors above also come to a common ground on the fact that the grades of a student are a reflection of the knowledge that has been acquired. Academic performance in university populations and school performance in regular and alternative basic education populations have traditionally been agreed upon. It is widely recognized that the quality of teachers and teaching lies at the heart of all schooling systems intending to offer quality education and influence acceptable academic performance.

The academic performance of students is a function of interconnected factors that contribute to the students' performance. Some of the factors studied for the purpose of this research are the administrative factors, socio-economic factors, environmental factors and the psychological factors. In as much as these stated factors lead to the performance of students these same factors may also lead to the poor performance of the student when they are not oriented in the right direction.

A conducive environmental condition may have a good reflection on the performance of the student, on the other hand when the variables in the environment are poor, it may have a recurring negative effect on the performance of the student. The same applies to the socio-economic, administrative, as well as the psychological factors. Even though these four factors individually affect the performance of the student, they may have effects on one another as well. For example, the administrative variables may affect the environmental variables while the socio-economic factors may affect the psychological variables and vice versa. A conducive environment affects the motivation and the esteem of the student to perform positively and this could constitute the psychological makeup of the student.



Source: Author (2022)

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework for the study.

## **2.4 Administrative Factors That Affect Pupils' Performance.**

Administrative factors in this section of the review relates to educational resources, teacher absenteeism, punishment on students, the role of Parent-teacher Associations and school facilities.

### **2.4.1 Educational Resources and Academic Performance**

Usman (2016) defines resources as all “material and non-material factors” that help in the achievement of set institutional goals. Education is of great importance for the development of every nation and considered an essential investment in every nation. Educational institutions or schools are established to achieve set goals with the help and availability of the needed resources. The availability of resources is however not enough, as there should be adequacy of resources, proper management and utilization of resources to enhance effective teaching and learning (Usman, 2016).

According to Musgrave (2017) and Usman (2016), the four main goals of a school are Cognitive, Moral/Value, Integrative and Social mobility. The cognitive goal of education is to provide the individual with scientific knowledge to enable a progression in technological advancement. Education is thus to enable the individual to find solutions to everyday problems. The moral or value goal of education is to equip the individual with values that enable them to live amicably with everyone and get involved in activities that help bring development to the society.

This implies that the individual must be a part of the change they wish to see. The integrative goal of education is to train every student right from their time in the classroom to the outside world on how to live amicably and cooperate well with others. Social mobility goal of education has the motive of training the individual such that they are able to overcome all obstacles in their pursuit of social advancement.

In order to achieve all these goals, there is the need to provide the necessary resources without which these goals will be a dream hoped for. When the needed resources are provided, teachers are able to achieve what they set out to do which makes them very productive. When teachers are productive, it will affect the academic performance of students because they will also be able to understand what is being taught very well. Okendu (2012) has added that the ability of the school's administration to make good use of the human and material resources brings about effective teaching and learning. One therefore stands to reason that if the administrative structure of the St. Gregory Basic School lacks these four basic goals, academic performance will be poor.

A study conducted by Savasci and Tomul (2013) on the relationship between school resources and academic performance showed that there was a significant relationship between the availability of school resources and the academic performance of students. They opined that the availability of school resources could bridge the gap created by socioeconomic factors that affect the academic performance of students. If a school such as St. Gregory Basic School has the needed resources all students need to understand what is being taught, it gives all students the equal platform to learn and understand. This however, does not completely do away with the lingering effects socio-economic factors have on the students. Other studies are also of the view that the effect of educational resources on the academic performance of students depends on the rate of development in the country. According to Fuller and Clarke (1994); Heyneman and Loxley, (as stated in Savasci & Tomul ,2013), the school has more effect on the academic performance of students in developing countries while socio-economic factors affect the academic performance of students in developed countries.

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) (as cited by Usman, 2016) observes that educational resources can be grouped into the following categories; material or physical, financial, time, human, information communication and technology resources. Material resources can simply be defined as the physical things that enhance teaching and learning. Examples of these are the classrooms, sickbay, school buses, laboratories, staff common rooms, libraries, and washrooms. In this study, the respondents raised concerns about the absence of a facility like the science laboratory which according to them was making teaching and learning difficult. In order to ensure the appropriate use and longevity of these physical resources, Asabiaka (as cited in Alao & Ukpong, 2020) suggested that there should be preventive, routine, emergency repairs, and predictive maintenance which will directly or indirectly also help in the efficient use of financial resources. It can be argued that if the St. Gregory Basic School falls short of the basic facilities listed by NOUN (2009) academic performance will decline. Financial resources comprise the monetary aspect used in the successful running of the institution. It can be referred to as the backbone that supports all other components of the institution. The respondents in this study also share how a facility like their Information Communication and Technology (ICT) laboratory had many faulty computers. There is the need for sufficient funding to repair or purchase new computers for the laboratory. Time resource is the time allocated to achieve set objectives. The appropriate use of the time given is the only tool that can help in the realization of set goals and objectives (Ugwulashi, 2012). During the Coronavirus Pandemic when this study was conducted, the St. Gregory Basic School was running a shift system where some students came in the morning and others at midday. It can be assumed that this was done to help achieve the set goals and objectives amidst the pandemic. It can also



be said that this was done to make up for the lost time where school children had to stay at home for almost a year due to the pandemic.

Human resource refers to the “human” component of the institution; the people who actually get the work done. This comprises the staff, students, parents and other affiliated social groups or stakeholders. The punctuality of teachers who form a part of the human resource in the school and how most teachers come to school punctually and on time have an effect on academic performance. Information Communication and Technology (ICT) resources have become a necessity for every school in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These resources include computers and access to the internet among others. Students in St. Gregory Basic School where this study was conducted appear not to have a functioning ICT laboratory, internet access and this obviously will negatively affect their academic performance.

#### **2.4.2 Teacher Absenteeism and Academic Performance**

Absenteeism can be defined as the practice of being constantly absent from a given place at an expected time. Miller (2012) and Hanushek (2014) conducted studies that have shown the important role a teacher plays when it comes to academic performance of students. In the United States of America, a study conducted by Norton (as cited by Porres, 2016) showed that 71% of schools involved in the study had the issue of teacher absenteeism as one of their biggest problems. In addition, in the field of education, research has shown that teachers are involved in certain vices in school among which absenteeism ranks high (Betweli, 2013). The intensity of the effects of absenteeism is such that a study in the United States showed that organizations lose up to \$3,600 for employees who are paid on an hourly basis and \$2,650 for salaried workers. In North Carolina, a study in 2006 revealed that a teacher’s absence of ten days from school has

an effect of 1% or 2% of a standard deviation (Brown & Arnell, 2012) and that is a lot compared to the number of days teachers absent themselves from school on the average. In Ghana, teacher absenteeism has been one cause of poor academic performance especially in basic schools such as St. Gregory Basic School.

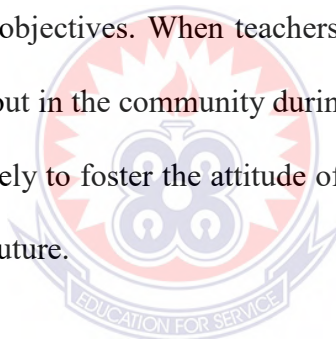
Absenteeism can be classified under legitimate or illegitimate absence. An absence is legitimate if the teacher rightfully seeks permission from the appropriate authorities before absenting himself or herself. Some examples are a teacher who is pregnant or on sick leave or attending a workshop on behalf of the school. An illegitimate absence on the other hand refers to the absence of a teacher from school without any permission from the school's authorities.

Several reasons account for why teachers absent themselves from school. According to a study conducted by Tao (2013), some teachers absent themselves from school to go searching for jobs with better working conditions due to job dissatisfaction. In schools where there are no facilities that make teaching and learning conducive, most teachers are most likely to look for other jobs with better conditions. Some teachers may also absent themselves due to personal ailments or a relative or child's illness while some people might be absent due to some conflicts at home which may sometimes require them taking the issue to court. Other reasons why teachers absent themselves from school may include poor leadership and the lack of supervision. Frequent absence of teachers from school leads to learning loss and this can negatively affect the academic performance of the students.

Teachers' absenteeism is sometimes difficult to check because a teacher who reports for school might leave the school premises before the school closes. This could sometimes be due to emergencies such as an ill child of a teacher at school who has to

be picked up or in a case where the teacher himself or herself becomes ill. Murnane and Willett (2010) have shared their opinions through their research, that absenteeism among teachers affects the process of interaction between teachers and students. When students need help pertaining to a particular topic and their teacher is absent from school, it affects their ability to understand that particular topic. According to Dorward, Hawkins, and Smith (2000) teacher absenteeism negatively affects the academic performance of students. This has been supported by a further study conducted by Ameenq, Hassan, Jabeen, and Fatima (2018).

There are several negative effects of absenteeism on the students and the institution as a whole. On the part of the school, absenteeism serves as a barrier to achieving the organization's goals and objectives. When teachers are absent from school, students can be found loitering about in the community during class hours. This breeds truancy among students and is likely to foster the attitude of absenteeism when these students also start working in the future.



#### **2.4.3 Punishments and Students' Academic Performance**

Punishments serve as a deterrence towards an action to prevent the individual or culprit from repeating it. The purpose of punishments in schools is usually to cause some form of pain but not to inflict harm on the individual. Some schools of thought are of the view that, without punishments in schools, students are likely to misbehave while others think otherwise. Sossou (2002) shared that in Ghana, some teachers use canning, whipping, slapping and giving knocks on the head as punishments to students who misbehave in school. Other forms of punishments used in schools in Ghana include cleaning washrooms and gutters, kneeling down and raising of hands and weeding (Agbenyega, 2006).

Teachers and school administrators continue to assume that the practice has no long-term detrimental consequences. According to a report published by Save the Children – Swaziland in December 2008 as cited by Ngussa and Mdalingwa (2017), 60 percent of student participants rated corporal punishment as a "good" practice, while 94.2 percent of teacher participants stated that corporal punishment in schools "is aimed at developing a child's own self-discipline." Some reasons why students get punished in school include going to school late, not doing their assignments, fighting at school (Medway and Smircic, as cited by Visser, Van der Put and Assink, 2022), absenting themselves from school, failing a test, not wearing the prescribed uniform (Visser et al., 2022) or footwear, not bringing the required learning materials to school, disrespecting school authorities, stealing from friends, cheating during examination, bullying and destroying school property.

A study by Omari (2011) grouped the categories of punishments into punitive, retribution, reformation and deterrence. Punitive punishments are intended to inflict pain on the individual who has done wrong while a punishment of retribution usually happens as a form of revenge to the recipient. Reformation punishments are usually to correct the wrong done and to teach the individual what should be done instead. A punishment of deterrence is meted out to deter or prevent the individual from committing the wrong action or deed again. In schools, students who come to school late are punished to serve as a deterrent to the individual and to other students in the school to deter them from also reporting to school late. Whatever form of punishments exists in schools, if they are not properly applied, they can lead to student absenteeism and eventually poor academic performance.

A study conducted in Kenya by Emily as cited by Yeboah (2020) showed that female teachers were in support of using canes in schools while the male teachers were not in support. In Ghana, canning is one of the punishments used in schools to ensure discipline and correct certain behaviors (Yeboah, 2020). Although the Ghana Education Service has come up with some policies to do away with canning in school, it is still in existence. A study by Gershoff (2017) showed that Ghana was part of a list of 69 countries where canning was legally being practiced. In the years after however, more laws were put in place to reduce the practice of caning in schools because as a disciplinary approach, corporal punishment "may easily degenerate into physical abuse" (Gudyanga, Mbengo, & Wadesango, 2014).

Punishment in schools is likely to breed some fear in children when they are going to school, which could lead to students dropping out of school (Mumthas, Munavvir, & Abdul Gafoor, 2014). The findings of a study conducted by Nyarko, Kwarteng, Akakpo, Boateng and Adjekum, (2013) opined that the use of corporal punishment on pupils in schools has a negative impact on their academic performance and social connections. The study further demonstrated that associating topic areas with penalizing teachers reduces students' desire and interest in learning. When children always receive punishments at school, going to school becomes a difficult task and there is always fear and anxiety about going to school (Lawrent, 2012). When children begin to feel reluctant going to school, they begin to absent themselves from school and miss important lessons being taught. This in the end negatively affects how well they perform during examinations.

Corporal punishment in schools disrupts learners' normal sensory and emotional development (Kambuga, Manyengo & Mbalamula, 2018). Corporal punishment instills

in the student sentiments of helplessness, hopelessness, and worthlessness, and the phenomenon has a significant negative impact on their human dignity and personality development. Their self-esteem and confidence are lowered because of corporal punishment. Students are pushed to lie as a result of the impacts, which instills fear, anxiety, low self-confidence in their ability to express themselves, hostility, and a revenge mindset among them (Gudyanga, Mbengo & Wadesango, 2014).

Students who are subjected to corporal punishment are more likely to develop distrust, a sense of guilt, aggressive outbursts, disobedience, vengefulness, and a loss of interest in studying (Smith, Lindsey and Hansen, 2006). Other studies have added that students' hostility and misbehavior in the classroom are positively connected with corporal punishment, while responsibility and promotion of desired behaviors are adversely correlated (Baruwa & Balogun, 2020; Han, 2016).

A study conducted by Mumthas et al. (2014) from the perspectives of students revealed that corporal punishment exposes students to "shame, rage, despair, anxiety, discomfort, tension, feeling hate against teachers, low self-esteem, mental weariness, and hatred toward the subject,". In other studies, some punishments also inflict physical wounds on the students. Sometimes, some students suffer broken bones and physical illness from these punishments (Naker & Sekitoleko, 2009) and due to these parents would have to take these children to the hospital, which comes with a lot of cost. In cases where the repercussions are severe, the child might have to stay at home or at the hospital to fully recover and receive treatment while his or her colleagues' study at school causing the student to miss all that is taught at school.

Clinical depression, lack of self-esteem, despair and stress have all been linked to corporal punishments on the psychological level (Naz, Khan, Daraz, Hussain, & Khan,

2011). Punishments at school can cause the student to feel inferior to his classmates and cause him or her to become withdrawn to prevent more punishments. When a student is punished for giving a wrong answer in class, that student is most likely not going to lift up his or her hands the next time a question is asked to prevent being punished again. The danger here is that sometimes, a combination of factors such as depression, low self-esteem, despair and stress could lead to the student having suicidal thoughts. A study conducted by Kumar and Teklu (2018) also revealed that negative consequences of corporal punishment in schools include increased aggression, decreased levels of self-control, more problems with compliance, bad parent-child relationships, sleep disturbance, bed-wetting, tension, sadness, and anxiety.

Amoah, Owusu-Mensah, Laryea and Gyamera, (2015) has recommended that discipline strategies utilized in schools should focus more on disciplining children rather than controlling since this approach has the tendency of turning them into uncontrolled creatures rather than wise ones. In addition, teachers should be trained in student discipline management utilizing positive discipline practices at teacher training colleges around the country. In order to foster desired behavior, schools must empower the triangle interaction of parents, school, and students and the three must work together. Schools must have well trained counselors to deal with pupils' misbehaviors.

In sum, punishment should not serve as a push factor that pushes children out of school. In order for children to continually attend classes and obtain knowledge and skills, pull factors such as conducive school environment and wholesome student teacher relationship should be adhered to.



#### **2.4.4 Parent Teacher Association and Academic Performance**

Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) comprise of parents whose wards are in a particular school, the staff of the school and its associates. This association is established in most schools to foster a better relationship between parents and teachers. According to Ugwulashi (2012), PTA is a voluntary organization joined by parents and staff of a school to see to its development. Various researches conducted have proven that there is the need for parental involvement to help in the academic performance of students.

Parent Teacher Associations are involved in making curriculum and instructional decisions, promoting communication, generating school funding, and lobbying state and national legislatures on behalf of students in the United States of America (Onderi & Makori, 2013). In Kenya, a study by Duflo, Dupas and Kremer (2015) found that the existence of a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) affects how teachers are employed. This means some sort of accountability is created between management and parents when this association exists in an institution. Parents and teachers are able to cordially work together to ensure that students are performing well academically. A study by Ugwulashi (2012) also revealed that the existence of this association provides an avenue to acquire funding to support school projects.

A recent study by Darko-Asumadu and Sika-Bright (2021) in Ghana showed a statistically significant relationship between students' academic performance and parents' involvement. Research conducted by Mutodi and Ngirande (2014) has also shown that the involvement of parents positively affects the academic performance of students. According to Brown, McNamara, O'Brien, Skerritt, & O'Hara (2020), parents are important stakeholders of a school and must be consulted in making crucial



decisions pertaining to the school. Crozier (2016) observes that parental involvement in schools enhances the educational system by ensuring that school authorities put in place the necessary measures with help from the parents to make sure the students have access to all they need to excel academically.

In a situation where a student is absent from school for a number of days, the existence of the PTA enables the teacher of the student to have direct access to the parent of the child in order to find out what exactly may be going on (Olayemi, 2019). When the teacher notices a sudden change in behavior or the withdrawal of a child from class activities or even when the performance of a child starts going down, the teacher is able to directly contact the parent of the child so that they liaise with the school to assist the child. The PTA acts as a link between the school and the surrounding community. They provide recommendations on students' educational needs and support high-quality teaching and learning. They must define their school's short, medium, and long-term priorities, as well as estimate the resources required to meet the school's objectives (Mutinda, 2013).

Olayemi (2019) raised a concern in the study that despite the many advantages of the PTA, an issue of concern is when the PTA begins to bear the burden of the government especially in public schools. In Ghana, public schools are mostly free and it can be assumed that most parents from a low socio-economic environment will prefer taking their wards there. If the PTA begins to bear the burden of the government and is being made to pay huge levies to finance the school, it is likely that some parents will shy away from this association.

#### **2.4.5 School Facilities and Students' Performance**

In general, school facilities can also be defined as the entire school plant, which includes classroom blocks, staff rooms, laboratories, workshops, libraries, laboratory equipment, consumables, audio-visual aids, electricity, water, chairs, tables, stationeries, playgrounds, storage spaces, and others. The term "school facilities" refers to all types of buildings (for academic and non-academic purposes), equipment (for academic and non-academic purposes), school grounds, various facilities (toilets, lighting, acoustics, storage, parking lots, and so on) within the school grounds and inside the buildings, and support services (Asiabaka, 2008).

It has long been recognized that facilities play a critical role in the development and improvement of education in Ghana. Permanent and semi-permanent structures are the two types of school facilities; for example, laboratory equipment, teachers' tools, machinery, teaching aids, and other equipment and tools, as well as consumables. School facilities systems include classrooms, libraries, workshops, laboratories, equipment, electricity, water, desks, chairs, audio-visual and visual aids, toilets, and storage space, all of which are likely to motivate students to learn. A school without facilities, whether private or public, may be unable to meet the system's stated goals and objectives. When facilities are available and used effectively, they have an impact on learning and make it more meaningful. Education facilities are critical because they aid in teaching and learning. Modern laboratories, libraries, and classrooms should be installed in all of our schools.

It has been claimed by Mutiu (1994) that the availability of school physical facilities and the conduciveness of the school learning environment are effective factors influencing students' performance. The researcher's visits to the St. Gregory Basic

School revealed that the physical facilities were in poor condition. In some cases, in Ghana, students are taught while sitting on the ground. Many of the classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and athletic fields are in a terrible state of disarray. Mutiu (1994) and Ali, Haider, Munir, Khan and Ahmed (2013) demonstrated that in the majority of the country's secondary schools, teaching and learning take place in an unfavorable environment devoid of basic materials. The bad conditions of the facilities have increased students' complaints in the school which has drawn the attention of the community.

Ekundayo (2012) research revealed that there is a significant relationship between school facilities and students' achievement in the affective and psychomotor domains of learning. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2011) indicated that there is a positive relationship between school facilities and school effectiveness. Hallack (1990) earlier confirmed that school facilities are a major factor affecting students' academic performance in the school system. The authors stress that the availability, relevance, and adequacy of these facilities significantly promote students' performance, whereas unappealing school buildings, crowded classrooms, a lack of playgrounds and flowerbeds, and surroundings devoid of aesthetic beauty can contribute to poor academic performance. Ahunanya and Ubabudu (2006) also emphasized the importance of providing adequate facilities for effective teaching and learning. Usen's (2016) research revealed a significant positive relationship between teachers' use of school facilities such as library, laboratory, Information Communication and Technology (ICT) center, and recreation center, and student academic performance. Durán-Narucki, (2008) concluded that poor facilities lead to low student attendance, which can lead to lower exam performance.

In another related study, Cynthia and Megan (2008) confirmed a strong and positive relationship between quality of school facilities and student performance in English and Mathematics. Everything that is used directly or indirectly for the benefit of education is referred to as a facility. The effect of school facilities on performance is subject to argument. Ajayi and Osalusi (2013) argued that the school type makes a difference in student academic performance but not the school facilities per say. Catherine (2011) concurs that the type of schools, (single sex or mixed, private or public) has effect on the academic performance of students rather than the school facilities.

## **2.5 Environmental Factors That Affect Pupils' Academic Performance**

This section reviews the literature on environmental factors, which include class size and student-teacher ratio, distractions and lateness.

### **2.5.1 Class Size and Student-Teacher Ratio**

Class size is defined as the total number of students being taught by a teacher at a given point in time (Datta & Kingdon, 2021). Michaelsen (2002) defines it as the total number of students a teacher is put in charge of for an academic year. In a school setting, the factors that affect students could be the school environment or the classroom environment aside from the other factors that affect a student.

Over the years, there are several researchers who agree and others who also disagree as to whether class size affects students' academic performance or not. Some researchers argue that a smaller class size gives the teacher the advantage of getting to know each student very well such that they know their weaknesses and help them become better. A meta-analysis on small class sizes by Glass and Smith (as cited by Thomas, Martin, Etnier & Silverman, 2022) showed that a class with twenty or less students had improved academic performance, however, a study by Hanushek (2003) showed no

consistent relationship between the size of a class and the academic performance of students. In India, Banerjee, Cole, Duflo and Linden (2007) conducted a study on 175 government primary schools and the findings revealed that smaller class sizes had no effect on test scores.

Class size is still a factor worth considering because in large classes, the teacher tends to focus most of the time spent in the class on ensuring order and discipline in the classroom (Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown & Martin (2007); Çakmak, (2009). Smaller class sizes encourage behavioral engagement by allowing teachers to limit disruptive behavior while also encouraging attentiveness and questioning. The exact number of a large class has been an issue for debate over the years. Jones (2013) opined that the size depends on the context; in a developed western country, 22 students in a class may be defined as large and 150 for a class in a developing country in Africa. Other researchers say it depends on what is being taught and according to Jones (2007), a language class should have a maximum student number of twelve.

Student-teacher ratio has been identified as one of the most powerful predictors of student success and engagement. According to Datta and Kingdon (2021) pupil/teacher ratio can be defined as a measurement of the various “human resources” that are utilized directly or indirectly during the learning process of children. Generally, student-teacher ratio refers to the number of students every teacher is in charge of in a school. The ability of a teacher to effectively teach a class can be said to affect how well the students will perform. The student-teacher ratio also reflects the teacher's workload and how much time they have to offer services and care to their students Japan, Europe, the United States of America and China are among several other countries that have come

up with policies to have smaller classes to ensure effective academic work in classrooms (Blatchford & Lai, as cited by Koc, & Celik, 2015).

California enacted SB1777 in 1996, providing a significant incentive for school districts to reduce class size from an average of approximately 30 students per class to 20 or fewer according to Bohrnstedt, Stecher, and Wiley (2000), after which a positively significant change was observed in the academic performance of the students. In Indiana, funding was provided to reduce all class sizes to a ratio of 18:1 and reduced later to a range of 15:1 to 18:1 (Lapsley, Daytner, Kelly & Maxwell (2002)). In sub-Saharan Africa, however, a report by UNESCO (2011) cited by Nath (2012) revealed that the average class size in public primary schools range from 26 students in Cape Verde to 67 students in Chad, 73 in Mali, 58 in Togo, 56 in Burkina Faso and 51 in Guinea. In these large class sizes, learning outcomes are usually negative and this is a critical issue in the above-mentioned countries. UNESCO (2020) as cited by Osai, Amponsah, Ampadu and Commey-Mintah (2021) also reports that the pupil teacher ratio in Ghana as at 2020 was 26.99 with its highest at 35.39 in 2006.

A smaller class size enables the teacher to become conversant with the strengths and weaknesses of every student. When this is established, the teacher will be able to adapt to a teaching style that fits into or considers the learning styles of all the students in the classroom. In a small class size, teachers can also form healthy one-on-one mentoring relationships and provide insight and assistance in ways that would be impossible in a larger classroom. In a class with a lower ratio, it reduces teachers' workload and enables them to focus on the quality of what they deliver to students and not just the quantity of work done in a day. In a smaller class size, students are more likely to feel comfortable contributing, asking questions, and expressing their needs. This structure

also provides additional care for students who may be experiencing learning difficulties in any given subject. Rather than moving with the masses in a larger classroom or one with a higher student-teacher ratio, students benefit from teachers' increased ability to notice and provide suited assistance.

Several studies have revealed that there is no universally accepted ideal student-teacher ratio. The number will vary depending on the school's budget, as smaller class sizes and more teachers are more expensive to staff and train. Differences in student-teacher ratios are also common depending on the type of school. For example, public schools (government schools) usually have a higher student-teacher ratio than private schools, which typically have smaller class sizes. Although most private schools charge more, most parents from a relatively high socio-economic status prefer to send their children to private schools due to the fact that they have smaller class sizes and the student can easily have access to the teacher if they have any challenge. Pupils in large classes easily lose focus as a result of too much instruction from the teacher to the entire class rather than individual attention, and low-achieving students are the most affected. In a larger classroom, the teacher cannot be certain that everyone understands what is being taught and sometimes due to time limitations, the teacher cannot explain to everyone's understanding.

Taft, Perkowski and Martin (2011) revealed through their study that there is a significant relationship between student-teacher ratio and students' achievement. According to Alzahrani, (2017), large class sizes could be a contributing factor to disruption in the classroom. This is because having too many students in a class results in a diverse group of students with varying levels of learning ability. As a result, the teacher might end up devoting a lot of time to less performing academic students, when



that time could be better spent progressing through the curriculum. This can be attributed to the reason why most schools with large class sizes are unable to fully complete the curriculum before the year ends. Longer periods in small classes result in greater increases in achievement for all students in later grades. Low achievers can benefit more from small class sizes in reading and science and small class sizes help to close the achievement gap in reading and science in later grades.

### **2.5.2 Distractions**

Maxwell (2016) points out that a school's social atmosphere is a potential and significant contributing factor to student learning outcomes. Factors in the social atmosphere that could serve as a distraction may include but not limited to noise pollution, air pollution, insufficient light, overcrowded classes, misplaced boards, and an inefficient classroom layout (Gilavand & Jamshidnezhad, 2016). Teaching and learning require and thrive in a conducive environment to enable the teacher to deliver well and the student to focus on what is being taught. A noisy teaching environment is a major distraction to the teacher and the students. Noise is generally defined as any unwanted sound which could become detrimental when it persists over a long period of time. Nelson, Smaldino, Eler and Garstecki (2008) opined that source of noise in a classroom background could emanate from external sources such as passing vehicles, internal sources such as students in the school, running around or playing with friends and room noise where students in a particular class talk among themselves such that it disturbs their own colleagues or students in other classrooms. Some noise in a school environment could be caused by passing vehicles, traders and loud music being played around the school environment among others.



Several studies over the years have shown that persistent noise affects students psychologically as they are unable to concentrate during class hours and with time, it is possible that students can lose their motivation to learn or even come to school. Fielder and Zannin (2015) state that the severity of the issue is such that noise pollution and noise in urban areas are currently considered as public health issues due to the negative effects that come with them. A study conducted by Farid, Ali, Shakoor, Azam, Ehsan, Tauqeer & Iftikar (2013) revealed that high noise levels in the classroom were agreed upon by 57% of students as an impediment to learning. Studies conducted by Gilavand and Jamshidnezhad (2016) and Ramli, Zain, Zain & Rahman (2020) all showed a significant relationship between noise pollution in schools and the academic performance of students.

Noise impedes learning and academic performance because if a student is unable to hear the teacher, there is no way the student will be able to understand what is being taught and the teacher might end up straining his or her voice even without being heard. This is the same with excessive noise in classrooms where students make uncontrollable noise, disturbing not just their colleagues but students in the other classes as well. Air pollution also serves as a form of distraction in the school environment while teaching and learning is ongoing. Dust from untarred roads makes the books of the students and the entire classroom dirty, it also causes harm to the health of students and could lead to diseases such as asthma. Infant mortality, lower lung function and hay fever which are diseases that young children suffer as a result of air pollution in the school environment. Generally, children spend almost their entire day at school and considering the fact that children report to school by 8:00 am and get picked up around 4 to 5pm. If the air in the school environment where the children spend most of their

day and week is not safe or is polluted, then the children are exposed to harmful bacteria which comes with several negative repercussions.

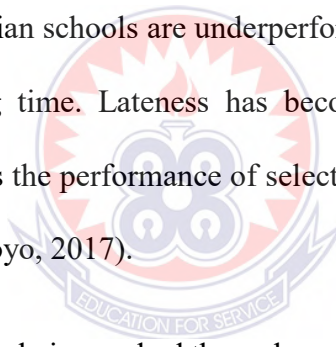
A dusty school environment could also cause the students to always look untidy because the dust is likely to make their uniforms dirty. According to Zweig, Ham and Avol, (2009), four main ways air pollution affect students' academic performance are through; (i) low punctuality due to pollution-related illness; (ii) inability to concentrate in class due to pollution-related illness; (iii) extreme tiredness when doing homework due to pollution-related illness; and (iv) a direct detrimental impact of pollution on brain development. When children fall ill and are unable to come to school, they tend to lose whatever is taught that day and if care is not taken, they will begin to lose interest in schooling. When children attend a school where they always return home with very dirty uniforms due to their dusty school environment, parents who wash these uniforms or provide soap for these uniforms to be washed will not be pleased. If students attend schools where there is always smoke from either passing vehicles or items being burnt, they may lose their motivation to go to school due to the unpleasant nature of the school environment. All of these cumulatively affect academic performance.

### **2.5.3 Lateness and Academic Performance**

Lauby, (as cited by Adegunju, Ola-Alani & Agubosi (2019) states that lateness is a term used to describe people who do not show up on time. Breezes et al. (as cited by Aquino, Bueno, Mora & Deonaldo, 2016) added that lateness is synonymous with "tardiness," which implies being slow to act or slow to respond, and thus failing to meet proper or usual timing. The issue of lateness is a major problem that cuts across most schools worldwide and is regarded as a violation of the principle of punctuality (Maile & Olowoyo, 2017). Chujor & Kennedy (2014) argue that the issue of lateness is one that has to be seriously tackled by stakeholders such as school administrators, teachers,

parents and the students themselves. Lateness can lead to poor academic performance, disruption in class, difficulty keeping accurate records, a reduced ability to meet instructional targets, and harm to the school's reputation (Employment Training Corporation (ETC) as cited by Maile & Olowoyo, 2017).

A study by Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) revealed that on average across Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, 48% of students arrive late for school which should not be the case. More than 10% of students in 22 countries and economies, including Argentina, Chile, France, Georgia, Greece, Israel, Poland, the Russian Federation, Serbia, and Uruguay, arrived late for school at least five times during the same period (PISA, 2019). Many South African and Ghanaian schools are underperforming as a result of inefficient use of teaching and learning time. Lateness has become a barrier to achieving large interventions and it skews the performance of selected township schools in a different direction (Maile & Olowoyo, 2017).



In most schools, lateness is being curbed through various punishments such as canning, sweeping the school compound, emptying dust bins and counseling, and this is because recurring lateness makes it difficult for schools to achieve their set objectives. Because lateness is a function of time, time is commonly used as the criterion for determining lateness. It is only when students come to school frequently and on time that they will be able to fully make use of the day's lessons. The habit of lateness must be addressed at its early stages because it has severe consequences on the individual especially in the world of work where one could risk losing a job (Van Breda as cited by Chujor & Kennedy, 2014).

Cognitive therapy is a well-known approach to curbing lateness in schools. This therapy seeks to elicit an individual's acceptance of responsibility for his or her own decisions and actions and it entails management by oneself. The student must come to the realization that he or she needs to work on the habit of lateness and must be ready to work at it willingly (Friedberg, McClure, & Garcia, 2009). For example, a student who desires to wake up early for school must thus ensure that he or she goes to bed early in order to get enough rest and also be able to wake up early. Some other measures to achieve this may include setting an alarm to wake up early. A student must also ensure that adequate preparation is made the day before for the next day to avoid delays. The role of the counselor in this case is to help the individual's interpretation of reality and to make the individual realize the role he or she has to play in achieving set goals rather than relying on others.

The mass media, broken homes, excessive workload at home, school location, and parents' socioeconomic status are all possible causes of lateness in schools. In this current dispensation of several social media applications such as WhatsApp, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram, some students spend long hours on these platforms at the detriment of their studies and sometimes even forget they have to be in school the next day, sleeping as late as 2am or 3am (Ubogu as cited by Sarkodie, Ntow-Gyan, Bempong, & Saaka, 2014). In some broken homes where the mother is left to fend for the children all by herself, it is common to see these women with their children selling various items late into the night. When these children engage in trade and are unable to go to bed on time, it becomes difficult waking up early to go to school the next day. Some students are also seen selling in the mornings to support the home and to be able to get some money for school.

Excessive workload at home is another contributing factor to why some students are always late to school. In the mornings, some students whose parents are food vendors have to assist their parents in the preparation of the meals and sometimes also help in the setting up of the place where the food will be sold. After assisting in the cooking, some may have to wash the dishes and fetch water in addition and all these prevent the child from getting to school on time. Unfortunately, some students also live very far from the school premises and for those whose parents cannot afford the cost of using public transport, these students have no option than to walk for several hours before getting to the school (Oghuvbu as cited in Sarkodie et al., 2014).

Analytically, most students lose out on all that has been taught when they turn in late for class. Sometimes, the class gets disrupted because the teacher might have to go back to explain what has already been taught which prevents the teacher from utilizing the time set to achieve the day's goals. Students sometimes consider the price to be paid for coming late and sometimes of their tardiness and, in many cases, choose to be absent. This has a significant impact on the individual's academic and other accomplishments. According to Ali, Gavino and Memon (2007), this could lead to students losing confidence and engaging in premature sexual activity, which could lead to pregnancy, a result or a phenomenon known as storm and stress among adolescents occur.

## **2.6 Psychological Factors That Affect Pupils' Academic Performance**

Psychological factors in this subsection encompass class participation and teacher motivation. Psychology has become an essential part of everyday life. In the field of education, it is important to consider the psychological state of students since it also affects their academic performance. The psychological make-up of students' centers on

issues surrounding their mental wellbeing and behaviour. It also focuses on their emotional development, motivation, their environment and how they react towards it. Some psychological factors also include attitudes, motivations, perceptions, learning abilities, and emotions (Chang, Putukian, Aerni, Diamond, Hong, Ingram, & Wolanin, 2020). Self-efficacy, motivation, stress, and test anxiety are part of the most important psychological factors for students' academic performance in the subject they study. As a result, teachers should select meaningful and authentic tasks that students will find useful in their future careers.

Several studies (Gang, Han and Bansa, 2019 and Beharu, 2018) have shown a significant relationship between psychological factors and the academic performance of students. A positive psychological factor such as high motivation from teachers, friends and family may improve academic performance but a negative psychological factor such as being stressed may reduce academic performance. There are so many factors that affect the academic performance of the students and research considered only relevant for the purpose of the studies. The research work focused on psychological factors in relation to students' classroom participation, teacher motivation, extra tuition for the students and other factors.

### **2.6.1 Class Participation**

Kim, Cho and Kim (2019) study revealed the practical and low-cost means of identifying students who could benefit most from additional academic support and resources to help enhance their achievement in a course. That is the practical means of teaching increases students' understanding and involvement of the learners. The end result of this is high achievement among students. Kim et al., (2019) indicated that it is important for students to adopt effective study habits and learning strategies from the

beginning of a course. This stresses the importance of the students taking the responsibility of learning in the classroom.

Students developing independent learning is not an easy task; it requires students with the needed support from the school and the parents. The students from the low income bracket and poor homes tend to lack such support which makes it impossible for them to develop self-learning in their learning process at the basic schools. To achieve high participation among students, there is one state that must be present which is a sound mind, healthy living and confidence. It implies students must be at their maximum psychological state where they can concentrate during teaching and learning in the classroom. Most students in the study area (St. Gregory Basic School) are coming from poor homes and weak socio-economic backgrounds which tend to affect their confidence to participate in the classroom teaching and learning. The state of students' participation in the classroom is influenced by their psychological state.

According to Fredin, Fuchsteiner and Portz (2015) there are so many factors that affect students' success from the individuals' readiness, characteristics, backgrounds to educational policies and practices as well as institutional facilities. Students' engagement still stands as a key factor in educational settings. The literature indicates that there are too many factors affecting students' academic achievement where the class participation cannot be underestimated. Fredin et al (2015) argue that this factor must be taken into consideration since the students' participation in class has something to do with their psychological state. Those students from good social class and high support in terms of finance and other resources are more willing to participate in educational activities than students from poor backgrounds since such students have low self-concepts and confidence to talk. Accordingly, as they practice and participate



in activities more, they will more likely get much more feedback from their teachers and the more in-depth they learn, the more masterfully they can cope with complex and ambiguous situations.

Class participation has also attracted much attention as one of the essential elements for the successful conduct of a learning activity (Mundelsee & Jurkowski, 2021). Class participation depicts students' emotions, behaviours and judgements about school life and it is an important variable since it affects academic outcomes such as achievement and high level of school commitment (Engels, Spilt, Denies, & Verschueren, 2021). Ozdemir (2017) suggests that rather than affective and cognitive aspects, behavioral dimension has attracted more attention in terms of investigations. Thus, getting high grades, the rate of completing homework or completing tasks on time, and time spent on school-related events are generally considered as indicators of participation.

Several studies have revealed that class participation is positively correlated with academic achievement whereas non-participation causes poor academic outcomes. Ko, Park, Yu, Kim and Kim (2016), in their study where over 18,000 students participated, as well as Konold, Cornell, Jia and Malone's (2018) study including more than 60,000 participants, cited that class participation had a significant impact on learning outcomes. This indicates that student's participation in classroom learning positively impacts their learning more than non-active learners' in the classroom. This is an indication that the teachers must create a learning climate that increases students' academic performance.

Syaveny and Johari (2017) research studies revealed that English learning achievement increased when students' participation was higher. They specifically focused on the language as a course of study in the classroom. They are of the view that students who participate more in learning language achieve high performance in the classroom



language learning. They stress that these students who participate in the language learning come from very high income earning homes unlike those from low social class and economic background.

### **2.6.2 Teacher Motivation**

Motivation has been defined by so many authors and due to that there is no common definition for motivation but it has a purpose, which is assisting to achieve individual or organizational goals. Most human beings including teachers need some form of motivation, whether intrinsic and extrinsic. Salary increment, promotions, opportunity to pursue further studies, better working conditions and other acts of motivation increase the spirit of teachers to work sacrificially and genuinely which leads to high academic performance (Owusuwaa, Nuamah & Yebowaa, 2013).

As a teacher's performance increases, the students' academic performance also increases. Motivation is not only given to teachers only but the motivation the students also obtain from their teachers and the parents goes a long way to encourage them to do better. The motivation teachers and parents give to students goes a long way to positively affects students' psychological state. Such students become hopeful and determined and tend to concentrate in the classroom, take their studies seriously and increase their participation in class activities which propels them towards academic excellence.

According to Remez (2001) motivation is the inner power or energy that pushes a person towards acting, performing actions and achieving. Remez's view on motivation focuses on all the kinds of motivation that must be available to the teachers to feel good and comfortable. This boosts their psychological state towards work in the classroom. Mathis and Jackson (as cited in Bastari, Eliyana & Wijayanti, 2020) argued that

motivation is the need within a person which causes that person to act. They argued that most people act for the purpose of achieving a goal. Shameena (as cited in Aslam, 2013) agrees that motivation could be defined as the activity of a heavy force within persons that push them to move forward and to perform, in respect of attaining their projected wants and opportunity. Motivation has been a mechanism that enables human beings to act in a way leading to achievement of organizational or individual goals. Intrinsic motivation can be defined as genuine motivation for teachers and students because it is within and not influenced by external sources. However, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation work together to achieve set goals.

In the classroom setting, there are educational goals that teachers and students aim to achieve in the course or at the end of the term or the year. The accomplishment of such goals is fueled by a force known as motivation. The high performance of teachers and students is reflected in the achievements of the students. It is usually implied that the higher the academic performance of students, the higher the performance of the teachers. Acheampong and Bennell's (2003) research on motivation concurs that: "Teacher motivation and incentives in schools greatly reflect in students' academic performance with effect from determinants" (Acheampong & Bennell, 2003, p. 12).

Teaching at the basic school works very well when the teachers' incentives and other working conditions are put in place. Acheampong and Bennell (2003) also noted that public school teachers are demotivated by ineffective incentives and sanctions that lead them into unprofessional behavior like absenteeism, lateness, poor teaching and abusive behavior towards pupils. Several motivational acts such as provision of houses or bungalows to teachers serve as major incentives to motivate them and as such how their performance would impact on students. Some conditions of service such as health

insurance, contributing towards the individual's pension and good salaries and remunerations are job satisfiers in a workplace which motivate teachers.

According to research, motivation changes the thinking of teachers with regard to their work. It helps them refocus their energies and direct their performance, thus increasing their effectiveness in the classroom (Adamu & Mansur, 2018). Motivation in education can have several effects on how students learn and how they behave towards their studies. It directs behavior towards set goals leading to increased effort and energy, increased initiation of and persistence in activities, enhanced cognitive processing which leads to improved performance (Cerdan, 2017). Teacher burnout can lead to demotivation and the students can be affected by the teacher's anxiety symptoms and job stress (Ormrod as cited in Rahimi & Karkami, 2015). This indicates that the absence of motivation affects teachers' performance negatively. Motivation of teachers is a necessary condition which must be present at all costs in order to achieve quality education.

Naz and Rashid (2021) argue that other psychological factors such as students' learning environment, control over educational stress and emotions, health issues, corporal punishment by the teachers, drug usage and academic anxiety affect students' academic achievement. It was revealed that self-awareness, life skills development and self-efficacy affects students' academic performance. Trigueros, Padilla, Aguilar-Parra, Rocamora, Morales-Gázquez, and López-Liria (2020) argued that academic stress negatively affects critical thinking and academic performance of students while academic motivation positively predicts metacognitive strategies and critical thinking. Life skills are adaptive and positive social and psychological capabilities that help individuals deal positively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (World

Health Organization as cited in Naz and Rashid (2021). The relationship between life skills development and educational attainment according to Lindsey and Mabie (as cited in Naz et al., 2021) is that it increases their academic performance in the classroom.

Again, Currie et al. (as cited in Naz et al., 2021) argued that there is a significant effect of health care skills and physical fitness of the students on their academic performance in the classroom. This is based on the opinion that students with good health conditions are likely to have a good sound mind to study in the classroom. Students with a good and sound mind have a good psychological state and therefore are able to pay attention in the classroom, which positively affects their academics. Based on this, students with health problems may have many challenges focusing in the classroom and even attending classes that negatively affects their academic performance.

Another factor that is likely to affect the psychological makeup of students is drug usage or abuse of hard drugs. Nahas, Goldfine and Collins (2003) indicated that smoking, physical inactivity, irregular diet and alcohol consumption are directly related to students' learning. Amadi and Akpelu (2018) commented that students who usually abuse drugs like tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and hot drinks recorded poor educational attainment at secondary level. Additionally, Chukwu, Pius, Fiase, Haruna, Terkuma and Evangeline (2017) stated that low educational attainment is one of the causes of drug abuse. Some students believe that abusing hard drugs will rather enable them to study for long hours. King, Kmeehan, Trim, and Chassin (as cited in Naz et al., 2021) are of the opinion that substance abuse reduces educational pursuits. Furthermore, Okari (2018) added that school dropout, absenteeism and low attention are causes of substance and drug abuse, which create nervousness, misperception and difficulties in

students' academic performance. The literature reviewed above indicates that students who do not engage in drug abuse outperform students who use drugs whether for learning or not.

Positive student self-esteem as Mirzaei-Alavijeh, Rahimi, Matin, and Jalilian (as cited in Naz et al., 2021) argue, shows a positive relationship between self-esteem and students' learning. According to Doodman, Zadeh, and Changizi (2017) low learning achievement is a main cause of lower self-esteem, and higher self-esteem causes better educational success. Noronha, Monteiro, and Pinto (2018) supported that high self-esteem enables students to perform better in educational accomplishment. Kalouti (as cited in Naz et al., 2021) identifies high correlation among students' self-esteem, social relations and educational commitment. Booth and Gerard (2011) research revealed a consistent relationship between students' self-perceptions and their educational success. In all, the self-esteem of students affects their level of learning. Students with high self-esteem have a mind frame to accept learning and challenges in the classroom, which positively affect their studies.

There are some students who have the spirit of school phobia. School phobia is an anxiety disorder among children who have an irritation and persistent fear of going to school (Colman, 2015). It implies students develop the fear of going to school due to poor performance, teachers and students' embarrassment and some level of anxiety. Most students enter school expecting to learn, but activities such as caning and other punishments they experience change their decision of going to school. In particular, students who have learning difficulties begin to perceive themselves as unable to learn. In such situations, students believe that there are high levels of uncertainties, indefinites, or loss at the end of schooling which makes them anxious.

The perception that students have about themselves also increases their psychological challenges for learning which affects their academic performance. Self-concept is the totality of a person's perception of his or her physical, social, temperamental and academic competence. It covers the beliefs, conviction and values of a person. It also includes the attitude of his/her worth, right to have his own feelings, thoughts and decision making. Self-concept refers to how an individual sees himself or herself in terms of ability, interest, aptitude and other personality characteristics. This indicates that students who have good self-concepts are likely to have fewer psychological challenges for learning unlike students with low self-concept. The students with the poor self-concepts may perform badly as compared to students with high self-concepts (Laryea, Saani, & Dawson-Brew, 2014).

## **2.7 Socio-Economic Factors That Affect Pupils' Academic Performance**

Socio-economic status (SES) is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. Socioeconomic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group. A study of the socioeconomic status of various individuals often reveals inequities about getting access to resources and issues related to privilege, power and control.

It can also be examined as a gradient or continuous variable that reveals inequalities in getting access to and the distribution of resources. Studies have shown that students' academic performance is affected by numerous factors which include gender, age, teaching faculty, students' schooling, parents' socio-economic status, accommodation, fears, school environment, teachers' experience, daily study hours, cost of tuition, medium of instruction in school and psychological health, which can all be said to have a significant relationship with the socio-economic status of the individual.

Socio-economic status is an economic and sociologically combined measure of a person's educational performance based on an individual or family's economic and social position relative to others based on income, education and occupation (Marmot & Michael as cited in Girisom, 2017).

The relationship between a family's socio-economic status (SES) and the academic performance of children is well established in sociological research. Graetz (as cited in Muchunku, 2014) argued that there is disagreement over the best way to measure socio-economic status. The study by Muchunku (2014) found that children from low socio-economic backgrounds do not perform as well as they potentially could at school compared to children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Other studies, however, compare pupils from across all socioeconomic backgrounds to reach the conclusion that low socio-economic status adversely affects a range of educational outcomes.

One of the most debated issues among educational professionals is the correlation between the academic performance and socio-economic status of students. A prevalent argument is that the socioeconomic status of a student has a major effect on his/her academic achievement. Adams (as cited in Muchunku, 2014) concluded that parents play an immense and significant role in the academic performance of their children. Educated parents would have increased emphasis on educational excellence and will thus ensure that their wards have all learning materials to help them excel. Educated parents are equipped by virtue of their education to take cognizance of the fact that parent- student- school- community relationship is important in order to promote educational attainment and academic achievement of their children and so they make the partnership a priority. Muchunku, (2014) also mentioned that the basic needs of certain pupils are not being met, thus not allowing the pupils to be physically or



mentally be able to perform in school. Students who lack the basic needs in terms of food are likely to be very weak in terms of energy and they may not be able to concentrate and participate in teaching and learning in the classroom. This has the tendency of making the students create their own learning environment, which may not exist. This “hunger suffering” may affect their thinking faculty and their confidence level in class. Such attitudes can be tantamount to low performance in the classroom. This lack of confidence infringes on the success a student may have in the academic environment Ellis (as cited in Muchunku, 2014).

High levels of illiteracy, poverty and low socio-economic status, have thrown many farmers and old rural dwellers into untold financial problems such as poverty, lack of money to purchase the required textbooks and working materials for their kids Ellis (as cited in Muchunku, 2014). Due to the low socio-economic background of the students, they take schooling as a secondary assignment and school attendance on rotational basis. The resultant problem posed by this is poor academic performance in examinations. There is no way students who always absent themselves from school perform well in a school’s organized examinations.

The socio-economic status of parents and home background of a student goes a long way to predict the quality and regularity of the satisfaction and provision of a child's functional survival and academic needs. Poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child usually yields poor academic performance of the child. On the other hand, where a child suffers parental and material deprivation and care due to divorce, death, or absconding of one of the parents, the child's schooling could be affected as the mother or father alone may not be financially buoyant to pay school fees, purchase books and uniforms. Unfortunately, such a child may play truant



in order to have some needs met, for example, forfeiting school to get food to eat and as a result his or her performance in school may be adversely affected (Shittu, as cited in Muchunku, 2014).

It can be said that good parenting supported by a strong economic home background can enhance strong academic performance of the child. Muchunku's (2014) research predicted that the academic performance of a child who is properly counseled on the choice of his/her courses and vocation that match his/her mental ability, interest and capability is likely to do better than a child whose parents have no form of education with no idea of how to guide their ward and are struggling to make ends meet.

In contrast, Hardy (2006) revealed that it is not the economic status of an individual that only determines his/her academic success but also pointed out other social cultural factors such as poverty, educational background, occupation and income level of parents and harmful cultural practices. Hardy stressed that poverty has a strong association with low academic achievement of students. The low poverty level increases the number of dropouts, grade failure, and school disengagement. The longer a child is embedded in poverty-stricken conditions with no hope of empowerment, the more detrimental his/her environment is for the progress of academic enhancement.

The relative social class of a student body also affects academic performance (Eamon, 2005). Eamon (2005) reveals through a study that students coming from low socio-economic backgrounds who attend poorly funded schools do not perform academically as well as pupils from higher social classes. He is of the view that most students with poor economic background attend low-income schools where the required teaching and learning facilities are not available. Eamon believes that low socio-economic

development negatively affects academic performance because it prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home.

Sirin (2005) further researched pupils' grade level and the relationship of income status and academic performance. He suggested that a relationship exists between the income status and academic performance across 17 various levels of schooling with exceptions to the high school level pupils. Weinreb (as cited in Muchunku, 2014) found that children from low-income families are more likely to be preoccupied with environmental stressors within their neighborhood such as feelings of insecurity about their safety, housing status, and violence within their community to the detriment of their academic achievement. Secker (2004) stated that, when groups of pupils with similar backgrounds are compared, the pupils from a high socio-economic status outperform those from a low socioeconomic status (SES) in terms of academic performance. High SES is related to better social support, fewer discipline problems in the district, and higher social expectations.

Brownell and Roos (as cited in Muchunku, 2014) indicated that educators have known for years that pupils from high-income families academically perform better than those from low-income families. There are however, some studies that have shown some students from low socio-economic statuses who also do well and others from a high socio-economic status who do not but the overall trend is evident. It is not always the case that pupils from low socio-economic status do poorly, but the higher the economic status of the student, the more likely the educational success considering the fact that success does not happen in vacuum and some basic resources must be provided. The perception of family economic stress and personal financial constraints also put a strain

on students and their academic outcomes (Mistry, Benner, Tan & Kim as cited in Girisom, 2017).

According to Kahlenberg (as cited Muchunku, 2014), a study conducted found that pupils from high poverty backgrounds tend to skip classes, have more behavioral problems, have less motivation for academic success, and even possibly feel that performing successfully in their academics is embarrassing. In Nigeria, Georgewill (as cited Muchunku, 2014) conducted a study to find out the effect of parental occupation on children's academic performance. The sample consisted of 500 parents in Port Harcourt city and the results revealed that children of civil servants perform better followed by children of business parents. But the poorest performance came from farmers' children. This indicates that the higher the parents' occupational level, there are better economic conditions which leads to higher students' performance in the classroom. This means the parents with good occupations have the financial capacity to provide their children with the necessary educational support than children from low socio-economic statuses. When the needs of children are met and they are equipped with all the needed resources, they feel confident and are more likely to participate in classroom activities.

It is argued that families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically, foster a higher level of achievement in their children. Such parents may provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for academic achievement at school. The educational qualification of parents may also have a significant effect on the performance of the students in the classroom. Fantuzzo (as cited Muchunku, 2014) concluded that parents who are educated have a more positive relationship with the

school than those less educated. Such parents understand the importance of education and how it affects the lives of their students. They also play a vital role in the administration of the school.

Okantey (as cited Muchunku, 2014) concluded that parents play an immense and significant role in the academic performance of their children. Educated parents should have increased emphasis on educational excellence. Educated parents are equipped by virtue of their education to take cognizance of the fact that parent- student- school- community relationship is important in order to promote educational attainment and academic achievement of their children and so they make the partnership a priority.

## **2.8 Summary of Literature Review**

Educational institutions or schools are established to achieve set goals with the help and availability of the needed resources. The availability of resources is however not enough, as there should be adequacy of resources, proper management and utilization of resources to enhance effective teaching and learning (Usman, 2016).

A study conducted by Savasci and Tomul (2013) on the relationship between school resources and academic performance showed that there was a significant relationship between the availability of school resources and the academic performance of students. They opined that the availability of school resources could bridge the gap created by socioeconomic factors that affect the academic performance of students. If a school such as St. Gregory Basic School has the needed resources all students need to understand what is being taught, it gives all students the equal platform to learn and understand.

There are several negative effects of absenteeism on the students and the institution as a whole. On the part of the school, absenteeism serves as a barrier to achieving the

organization's goals and objectives. When teachers are absent from school, students can be found loitering about in the community during class hours. This breeds truancy among students and is likely to foster the attitude of absenteeism when these students also start working in the future.

Amoah, Owusu-Mensah, Laryea and Gyamera, (2015) has recommended that discipline strategies utilized in schools should focus more on disciplining children rather than controlling since this approach has the tendency of turning them into uncontrolled creatures rather than wise ones. In addition, teachers should be trained in student discipline management utilizing positive discipline practices at teacher training colleges around the country. In order to foster desired behavior, schools must empower the triangle interaction of parents, school, and students and the three must work together. Schools must have well trained counselors to deal with pupils' misbehaviors.

In a situation where a student is absent from school for a number of days, the existence of the PTA enables the teacher of the student to have direct access to the parent of the child in order to find out what exactly may be going on (Olayemi, 2019). When the teacher notices a sudden change in behavior or the withdrawal of a child from class activities or even when the performance of a child starts going down, the teacher is able to directly contact the parent of the child so that they liaise with the school to assist the child. The PTA acts as a link between the school and the surrounding community. They provide recommendations on students' educational needs and support high-quality teaching and learning. They must define their school's short, medium, and long-term priorities, as well as estimate the resources required to meet the school's objectives (Mutinda, 2013).

Ekundayo (2012) research revealed that there is a significant relationship between school facilities and students' achievement in the affective and psychomotor domains of learning. Ajayi and Ekundayo (2011) indicated that there is a positive relationship between school facilities and school effectiveness. In addition, According to Alzahrani, (2017), large class sizes could be a contributing factor to disruption in the classroom. This is because having too many students in a class results in a diverse group of students with varying levels of learning ability. As a result, the teacher might end up devoting a lot of time to less performing academic students, when that time could be better spent progressing through the curriculum.

A study conducted by Farid, Ali, Shakoor, Azam, Ehsan, Tauqeer & Iftikar (2013) revealed that high noise levels in the classroom were agreed upon by 57% of students as an impediment to learning as seen in St. Gregory School. Lateness on the other hand, can lead to poor academic performance, disruption in class, difficulty keeping accurate records, a reduced ability to meet instructional targets, and harm to the school's reputation (Employment Training Corporation (ETC) as cited by Maile & Olowoyo, 2017).

Class participation has also attracted much attention as one of the essential elements for the successful conduct of a learning activity (Mundelsee & Jurkowski, 2021). Class participation depicts students' emotions, behaviours and judgements about school life and it is an important variable since it affects academic outcomes such as achievement and high level of school commitment (Engels, Spilt, Denies, & Verschueren, 2021).

Motivation changes the thinking of teachers with regard to their work. It helps them refocus their energies and direct their performance, thus increasing their effectiveness in the classroom (Adamu & Mansur, 2018). The study by Muchunku (2014) found that

children from low socio-economic backgrounds do not perform as well as they potentially could at school compared to children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Other studies, however, compare pupils from across all socioeconomic backgrounds to reach the conclusion that low socio-economic status adversely affects a range of educational outcomes.

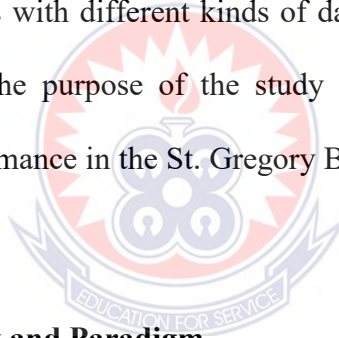


## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

The research methodology constitutes the section of the research that describes the approaches, philosophies or paradigms adopted in collecting, organizing and analyzing field data (Thomas, 2017). It describes the procedures, framework and sources of data. It comprises the research design, target population, location, sampling techniques and sample size. In addition, it makes mention of the research instruments used in the study, its validity and reliability, the data collection procedures employed and the ethical considerations observed. Omari (2010) notes that research methodology provides varying research methods with different kinds of data based on the research purpose and research questions the purpose of the study is to explore factors influencing student's academic performance in the St. Gregory Basic School in the Central Region of Ghana.



#### 3.2 Research Philosophy and Paradigm

Researchers have different beliefs and feelings about the world and how and how it should be understood and studied. These beliefs are often referred to as philosophies or paradigms. Omari (2010) defines research philosophy or paradigm as a basic set of beliefs that guide research actions. A research philosophy or paradigm is essentially a broad view or perspective that standardizes inquiry in a particular discipline by providing processes through which investigations are accomplished (Thomas, 2017). Ideally, research philosophy is described as the world view of research because it explains how researchers see their perspective of the world.



There are research assumptions that are used in research. These assumptions are known as research beliefs, which are also known as research paradigms. A research paradigm is the philosophical underpinning of a research. It provides a set of beliefs and understandings on which the theories and practices of your research project are based. The research paradigm contributes to the research approach and design used in this study. "Researchers are inextricably linked to the social reality under investigation, — in other words they are not 'detached' from the subject under investigation." according to Grix (2004) (as cited by Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

Based on the purpose of this research, that is, investigating by ascertaining the factors that affect academic performance of basic school pupils in the St. Gregory School, and the nature of questions raised to guide the study, the interpretivist philosophy or paradigm was adopted for this study. The goal of interpretive research is not to discover universal, context, and value free knowledge and truth, but rather to attempt to comprehend individuals' interpretations of the social phenomena with which they interact. Viewing social phenomena "through the eyes of the participants rather than the researcher" is required by the interpretive paradigm (Cohen et al., as cited in Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). The interpretive paradigm seeks to understand social phenomena in their context.

Interpretivists research methods like case study, basically collect qualitative data from participants over time. The resulting approach to data analysis is inductive, in that the researcher sought to discover the factors that affect students' academic performance, which were classified into broad themes in order to comprehend a phenomenon.

This philosophy allowed the researcher to inquire into the factors that affect students' academic performance at St. Gregory Basic School. It supports methods of data collection such as interviews and focus groups discussions.

Guba and Lincoln (as cited in Rehman & Alharthi, 2016) proposed a set of criteria to assess the trustworthiness of interpretive research. A study is considered high-quality if it has credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity) (Guba & Lincoln, as cited in Rehman, & Alharthi, 2016). It allows the researcher to gain a better understanding of the issues from the respondents, which aids in gathering quality data to conclude the findings. The assumption does not impose a question on the respondents to choose an answer that may reflect their thinking.

Advocates of Interpretivist philosophy hold a view of the social world that is different from that of the positivist which stresses objective social reality (Omari, 2010). Implicitly according to interpretivists, there is no objective social reality, but rather multiple realities that are embedded in feelings, emotions and cultural contexts. In this research, the investigator sought to understand the factors that affect pupils' academic performance in the St Gregory School context which has a social structure of deprived inhabitants in the Buduburam refugee community. Hence, the researcher sought to derive contextual meaning rather than making generalized rules. In this regard, perspective regarding the factors that affect their performance academically. The interpretive paradigm has been criticized for being "soft," incapable of developing theories that could be generalized to larger populations, and for the researcher's involvement with participants, which leads to a lack of objectivity (Grix, as cited in Rehman, & Alharthi, 2016). According to Richards (as cited in Rehman and Alharthi,

2016), qualitative inquiry is not "soft... it requires rigor, precision, systematicity, and careful attention to detail."

### **3.3 Research Approach**

The problem this study sought to address or probe is the factors that affect academic performance of pupils in the St. Gregory Basic School in the Central Region of Ghana. Understanding of the problem from an in depth perspective enabled the researcher to interpret and analyze the data through an explicit framework (thematic analysis) so that both the researcher and readers obtain a clear perspective on the problem being investigated. It is apparent from the above discussion, the choice of research approach suitable for this study was the Qualitative approach. The researcher is of the conviction that the nature of the research questions that stresses "how" are best answered by the qualitative approach. A major characteristic of qualitative research is its ability to explore and understand social interactions. It seeks in-depth knowledge but is not based on numerical data like the quantitative approach. Omari (2010) has added that the qualitative approach enables the researcher to conduct and work with more descriptive data that seeks rich and vivid descriptions of the context and events.

Qualitative research according to Berg and Lune (2012) gives meanings, defines concepts and describes in detail daily happenings around us. This implies that some of the instruments in qualitative research such as interviews, observation and focus group discussions are suited to help understand and solve everyday problems in society. In Qualitative research, instruments such as interviews, focus group discussions and observation among many others are used to collect data from the natural setting of the participants. Natural settings include but are not limited to schools, classrooms, homes and offices.

In adopting the qualitative approach, the research took an inductive approach which according to Leedy and Ormrod (2014) constitutes a reasoning process that begins a specific case (influencers of academic performance) and draw from them conclusion of wider and more general relevance (these factors affected academic performance in St. Gregory Basic School). Accordingly, the adoption of qualitative research was to assist the researcher to hear the voice of the students in St. Gregory Basic School and how they felt about those factors that affect their academic performance. The researcher was interested in the processes of how various factors affect the students' academic performance. Again, the researcher in this study was the sole agent of data collection; bringing to fore the issues of subjectivity or partiality in collecting the data through interviews and focused group discussion.

The researcher, when collecting data, was able to acquire enough and well detailed descriptive information for better understanding. Through interviews and focused group discussions, there was a better understanding of participants' (basic school pupils) behavior and how their academic performance was being affected by the factors (things and people) around them. This approach helped the researcher to understand the phenomena from the perspective of the students. Hence, the qualitative research approach provides abundant data about real life people and situations (De Vaus, 2014, p6; Leedy & Ormrod, 2014).

However, Creswell (2014) critiques the use of qualitative approach as it intrudes into the privacy of the respondents which is not possible in the quantitative. It is also very difficult to generalize the findings from the research study. In view of this criticism, it must be argued that this study is a case study that takes an inductive approach dwelling on a specific case (St. Gregory Basic School) with no intention to generalize.

### 3.4 Research Design

Research design refers to all of the general techniques used by the researcher to bring together the various parts cohesively and analytically, making sure that the problem of the study is properly addressed; it is the blueprint for data collection, measurement, and analysis (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018). There are three research designs: qualitative related research designs which generate words as data for analysis, quantitative related research designs which generate numerical data used for analysis (Patton and Cochran, 2002), and the mixed-method related research design which include the qualitative and quantitative research designs (Patton & Cochran, 2002).

The researcher opted for a case study which is a qualitative research design due to its tendency to enable the researcher to acquire detailed information about factors affecting students' academic performance in St. Gregory Basic School. This design enabled the researcher to find answers to the "whys" and "hows" in the research questions of the study. This is unlike quantitative research designs that focus more on propounding theories based on numerical data for generalization purposes. Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery and Sheikh (2011) are of the view that case study design helps find meaning to the day-to-day happenings of human life and even creates an opportunity to change the status quo.

As the name suggests, case study is the study of a case (in this context, St. Gregory Basic School). The case therefore was an individual organization (the basic school was investigated in its natural context) and the group described were basic school pupils. In adopting the case study design, the researcher took cognizance of some of its advantages such as in depth study of the problem and the use of two methods of data collection (focused group discussion and interview). However, the researcher was not

unaware of some of the disadvantages of the case study which are inability to generalize, the natural setting of the data collection process which could be influenced by the presence of the researcher, and the collection of voice data (which are soft opinions) that some may find difficult to accept (Krusenvik, 2016).

The researcher used a case study under the qualitative research design to have a better and deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied using two different data sources (interview and focused group discussion) in a given context (St. Gregory Basic School). The case study design was very flexible to collect through interviews and focus groups. While conducting interviews for the study, the researcher was able to adjust to the respondents' circumstances and offer open-ended questions due to the chosen research design. The researcher also made use of focus group discussion to ensure the triangulation of data.

According to Krusenvik (2016) the case study design creates an in-depth knowledge and if a researcher needs a deeper understanding of a specific issue such as the factors affecting students' academic performance, then the use of a case study helps find answers to the objectives of the study. In this study, the sampled pupils shared their thoughts and ideas on thematic areas such as Administrative, Environmental, Psychological and Socio-economic factors. In order to achieve the goal of discovering factors affecting students' performance in St. Gregory Basic School, the researcher conducted a narrative study to recount the participants' stories about the elements (factors) that affected their academic achievement.

A “spoken or written text offering an account of an event/action or set of events/actions, chronologically connected” is a narrative study (Creswell 2014). The researcher develops a narrative of the factors and experiences of students based on the stories

shared by the participants or students in this study (Miller, Liu & Ball, 2020). Humans are storytelling creatures, according to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), who live storied lives individually or collectively.

Data from various sources were used to explain the possible factors that affect students' academic performance. Focus group discussion and interviews were used in this study to gather information on factors and experiences of students. The case study design was able to help the students explain how some factors from their school environment, class rooms and their homes affected their academic performance.

### **3.5 Site and Sample Characteristics**

A study site or area can be referred to as an immersive environment which contains many settings for the researcher to investigate (Bryman, 2016). The St. Gregory Basic School was the study site located in the Gomoa East District. The issues the researcher investigated at this site were the various factors that affected the students' academic performance. The research was conducted in a single school (St. Gregory Basic School) which makes the study a single case study as opposed to multiple case study. One main criterion used in selecting the school was the fact that it partook in the BECE which is a key determinant of academic performance in Ghana at the basic level of education. Secondly, the school was a public school in which all the students wrote the same subjects, and lastly, the location of the school (formerly a refugee settlement) in the Gomoa East District where the academic performance of students has been declining.

The study was conducted at St. Gregory Basic School located in Gomoa Buduburam also known as Liberia Refugee Camp. From Accra, it is the next big town after Kasoa when heading towards Winneba. It lies about 32 kilometers on the Accra-Winneba highway and about 19 kilometers west of the capital city, Accra. Gomoa Buduburam



is in the Central region of Ghana and forms part of the Gomoa East District with its capital at Potsin. It is traditionally administered under the chief of Gomoa Fetteh. The indigenes are ethnically “Gomoas” and their main occupations are trading, farming and fishing. The community has however, served as a home to several other refugees and natives of other African countries after it served as a refugee camp for Liberians who fled from their country due to war.

It can be classified as “a little or mini-West Africa” as citizens from almost all West African countries can be found there. Gomoa Buduburam has three secondary schools and a hospital. Gomoa Buduburam consists of 891 square kilometers of area land and has a population of about 70,560 (2021 national census).

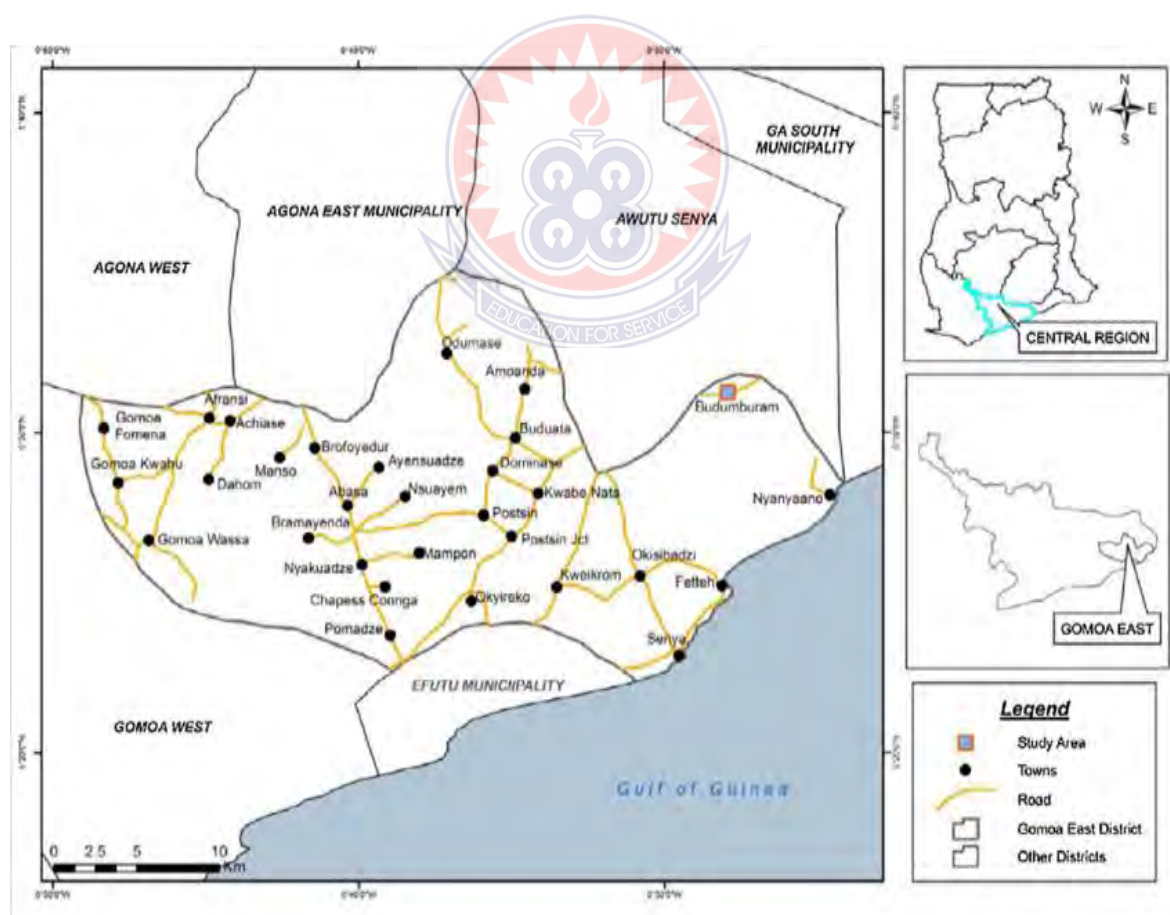


Figure 3.2

Map of Gomoa East District



Source: Cartographic Unit, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, University of Cape Coast (2012)

### **3.6 Population of the study**

A population is defined as a group or set of elements which comprise of people or objects that possess the features or characteristics the researcher needs for sampling and are affected by the findings. A population can also be defined as a group of people from which samples are taken for measurement (Geuens & De Pelsmacker, 2017). It refers to whichever group the researcher wants to conclude about. In this study, the population consisted of past students of St. Gregory Basic School. The aim of the research was to ascertain the factors that affects the academic performance of the population (Basic school students) in St. Gregory Basic School.

The data collected from the sample populations were analyzed to make deductions. In this study, only the St. Gregory Basic School was used. This research was conducted by getting the contacts of past students of the school from the head teacher. The researcher reached out to students who could be reached on the list and through this, the researcher was able to get ten of the past students to meet up at the school's premises for the research. Most students had moved out of the community after school according to the head teacher and confirmed by their friends and majority were also without mobile phones to be contacted.

### **3.7 Sample and Sampling Procedures**

Sampling is the process of acquiring information about a population by studying a part. Bhardwaj (2019) defines sampling as a process of selecting from the target population a sample for the purpose of a study. A sample, according to Sandelowski, (1995), is a small group from the population in which information is acquired to draw. It can also be defined as a subset of a population or universe as opined by Sharma, (2017).

Several sampling techniques exist in research. These techniques are grouped under two broad types namely; probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Probability sampling has to do with the theory of probability where there is the likelihood for all variables in the universal set to be selected. It is also known as random sampling and usually used for the generalization of findings. Systematic sampling, simple random sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling are the various types of probability sampling techniques.

Unlike the probability sampling technique, the non-probability sampling technique does not focus on representing all of the larger population and thus not every variable stands a chance of being selected. This technique enabled the researcher to explore a given problem (factors affecting academic performance) among a targeted group of people (former students of St. Gregory Basic School) and also get a better understanding from the sample's point of view. In this study, the researcher sought to explore the factors affecting the academic performance of students in a particular school and did not seek to generalize but to get a better understanding from the population's point of view.

Snowball, convenience, quota and purposive sampling are the types of non-probability sampling but in this study, snowball sampling was used. Snowball sampling technique refers to a sampling technique where the researcher makes use of a participant who further assists to reach out to other participants suitable for the study. As stated early on, this study was conducted using past students of the school and as a result it took some time to reach out to the students through phone calls and visiting their homes or in some instances where they used to live since most of the students had moved out of the community with their families after school.

Five out of the ten were involved in a focus group discussion while the five others from were interviewed individually. In a qualitative study using a case study design, even a single respondent could provide the researcher with the needed information (Patton, Coffey, Carlin, Degenhardt, Lynskey, & Hall, 2002). Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2002) are of the view that the research design of a study determines its sample size. In qualitative studies, the sample size is usually with a smaller number as compared to quantitative studies and a sample size of ten is gradually becoming the preferred sample size (Lichtman, 2012). The theory of information power as introduced by Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora, (2016) suggests that, the more information the sample is able to provide, the lesser the sample size. The researcher reached a point of saturation during the data collection process and to prevent the repetition of the same information the researcher worked with a sample of ten respondents.

The participants in sampling were chosen because they were readily available and were considered to be rich in information or in-depth knowledge of the problem. They were part of the students whose academic performance was being investigated.

### **3.8 Research Instruments**

There are so many instruments used in collecting data when conducting research. Based on the researcher's knowledge of the research instruments and the purpose of the study, qualitative studies are open to a number of research instruments (Creswell, Hanson, Clark-Plano, & Morales, 2007; Hamilton & Finley, 2019). Some Qualitative research instruments include but are not limited to interviews and focus group discussion.

In order to gain useful insight through appropriate information, the researcher ensured accurate and appropriate data collection instruments. Accurate and appropriate data collection methods ensure the integrity or reliability of the research. The use of multiple

data collection instruments helped to ensure the reliability of the data generated. According to Ary, Jacobs, Irvine and Walker (2018), the two most common methods for gathering data in research includes interviews and focus group discussion. These two research instruments also help researchers acquire in-depth information while observing the respondents body language. The two data collection instruments; Semi-Structured Interview Guide and Interview Schedule were used to answer the research questions that focused on the “how” and “why”.

### **3.8.1 Semi-Structured Interview Guide**

Interviews serve as one of the primary ways of acquiring information (Seidman, 2006) when it comes to research in qualitative studies. In the view of Creswell (2002) an interview enables the researcher to acquire data from the respondents’ perspective. Instruments like the interview guide have an advantage of yielding a large amount of data in a short period of time. Interviews could be one on one or in a group discussion and are conducted by the researcher using an interview guide.

An interview guide contains a set of prepared questions that guide the conversation between the researcher and the respondents. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. In qualitative studies, every interview has a structure but it depends on how much power the interviewer has and the level of rigidity (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). In a structured type of interview, the questions asked are brief and precise and it takes a very formal approach. The respondents are also expected to give very brief answers according to the questions being asked. The interviewer follows the trend on questions on the interview guide and does not go beyond that (Stuckey, 2013). In a structured interview, the researcher is saved from the stress of coming up with new sets of questions on the spot but it comes with a disadvantage of some questions not

applying to some respondents. Alshenqeeti (2014) has shared that several researches have shown that semi-structured interviews are one of the most used interviews in qualitative research. In a semi-structured and an unstructured interview, there is flexibility for the respondents to freely express themselves and the researcher is also able to ask further questions based on what the respondents say or share during the interview. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in this study and this enabled the researcher to explore the various themes with the respondents. It also allowed for new ideas based on what the participants shared during the interview. Respondents were allowed to express themselves freely on the various themes and were able to bring up several ideas. Semi-structured interviews can however take a lot of time and also involve a lot of work (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

Semi-structured interview guides bring about in-depth interviews which are sometimes referred to as “conversation with a purpose” (Stuckey, 2013). In this study, the interview guide was used to obtain information from a particular group of people (students of St. Gregory Basic School) with the intent of finding out their opinions. Although the semi-structured interview is quite time consuming, they are fairly useful because they can reveal information that the researcher could not get from other sources and are specific in their intents (Alshenqeeti, 2014); and they allow the participants to provide information in their own words. In this research, the participants’ thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning and motivation regarding factors influencing academic performance were explored at length based on their experiences.

The researcher adopted a semi-structured interview guide for the purpose of flexibility. This means that the questions were at times reframed to suit the participants’ understanding and the situation. The interviews were useful for the study because it

helped the researcher to be personally present to remove any doubt or suspicion regarding the data collection process. By this a friendly and conducive atmosphere was created for obtaining the desired data, especially as it relates to follow-up questions and responses.

There were a total of five interview sessions for the five JHS students that were targeted for the interview. For each student, an interview session lasted 45 minutes because some of the questions were repeated for the students to grasp better understanding. The interviews were done in the English language. All interviews were conducted after school hours between 3:30-4:30pm. Tape recorder and a field notebook were used to record the interview data. The reason for conducting the interview after school hours was to make it a private affair so that other students will not interfere with the activity, and for the student to freely express themselves truly and fully.

### **3.8.2 Interview Schedule**

The researcher also employed a focused group discussion method (FGD) using an interview schedule in the collection of data. An interview schedule in focus group discussions enables a researcher to acquire data by bringing together individuals with some similarities such as same class or age group (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2018) and in the case of this study, the researcher used only final year students. This strategy has the advantage of allowing people who are unable to freely express themselves to do so after witnessing the contributions of their peers present (Sharma, Conduit & Hill, 2017). In the FGD, five students were engaged to provide an in-depth discussion into thematic areas which are factors that are associated with academic performance. According to Morgan (1997), a focus group that comprises 3 to 5 participants is enough to reach saturation.

Krueger (as cited in Creswell, 2002) opined that focus groups make room for some form of interaction among the participants. The interview schedule in focus group discussions also aid the collection of extensive data and participation by all individuals in the group. Misconceptions and misunderstandings of respondents are revealed and corrected in the course of the interaction between the researcher and the interviewees. Students were also made to speak one after the other to make the information valid to the researcher.

There were two focus group discussion sessions in line with the thematic issues in the research questions. Each focus group discussion lasted for about an hour and these discussions were held after school sessions. Although the students had similar educational backgrounds (they were all Junior High School students) however, they had varying psychological and family/social backgrounds. This made the adoption of focus group discussion very appropriate because the responses came from varied viewpoints. The focus group discussion also helped the participants to recall, verify or rectify some mistaken information.

### **3.9 Triangulation**

Triangulation is a strategy used to increase the credibility and validity of research findings (Noble & Heale, 2019). Triangulation helps the researcher to check the accurate representation of the ideas being investigated and trustworthiness of the research findings. There are different types of triangulations but this research study employed methodological triangulation.

Denzin (as cited in Noble & Heale, 2019) argued that methodological triangulation promotes the use of several data collection methods such as interviews and focus group discussion. Methodological triangulation allows the researcher to combine different



research instruments like interview and focus group discussion in a single study. The researcher used interviews to collect responses from the students and employed focus group discussion to seek the students' views on the factors that affect their academic performance in the school. The data collected from the two instruments were used for the research analysis from which the conclusions were drawn.

This helped to ensure that fundamental biases arising from the use of a single instrument were overcome. Methodological triangulation can enhance research by providing a variety of datasets to explain various aspects of an interest phenomenon. It also aids in the refutation of cases where one dataset invalidates a supposition generated by another. Methodological triangulation made it possible for the researcher to explore and explain the factors that affect students' academic performance in St. Gregory Basic School at Gomoa Buduburam. It is a procedure that enables validation of data collected from the respondents in St. Gregory Basic School.

### **3.10 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity is the examination of the researcher's own beliefs, judgments, and practices during the research process and how they may have influenced the research. Recognizing one's role in the research is what reflexivity entails. As a qualitative researcher, the researcher was part of the research process, and her prior experiences, assumptions, and beliefs can have an impact on the research. Reflexivity can be used to establish trustworthiness by applying the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria.

In this study, reflexivity extended beyond reflection, introspection, and self-awareness. An examination of the epistemological foundations of technical research skills such as interviewing and focus group discussions (Hsiung, 2008) necessitated that the researcher conduct a composite study of self as subject and object. Introspective



reflexivity entails the researcher becoming aware of herself in order to understand how her own beliefs, attitudes, experiences, and assumptions influenced the choice of subject, methodology, and themes. The researcher was both a documentor and a builder of social reality.

Introspective reflexivity recognizes that the researcher's own experiences, attitudes, and emotions may influence engagement with participants and subsequent data analysis. This necessitated the researcher developing a mechanism to maintain research focus by shielding her biases and attitudes that may have a negative impact on the research outcome. Such biases were reduced by enlisting the assistance of colleagues and experts, such as the supervisor, in evaluating the research process and findings.

To ensure the standardization and validity of the research process, the researcher used methodological reflexivity. This acknowledged the researcher's relationship with the research, and methodological reflexivity strives to ensure that standardized procedures are followed in the conduct of research. Each educational institution in Ghana has its own set of rules for conducting research, and the researcher followed all guidelines and procedures used for research at the University of Education, Winneba.

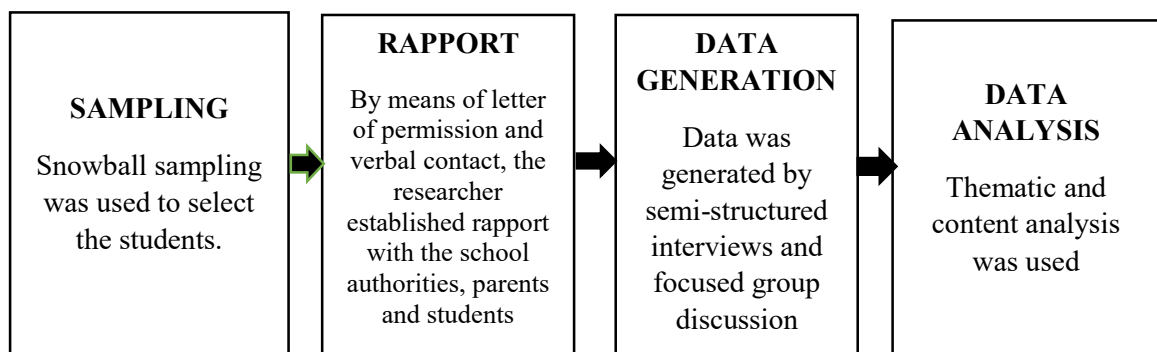
In this study, ethical considerations such as consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy were strictly adhered to. Aside from that, the researcher obtained permission from the Head of Department (HoD) and the supervisor before collecting data from students at St. Gregory Basic School in Gomoa Buduburam in Ghana's Central Region. Before conducting the interview and focus group discussions, the researcher sought parental and student input, as well as the headmaster's approval.

To avoid deviating from the study's focus, the researcher spent a significant amount of time developing an interview guide to elicit the appropriate responses from the students.

The interview was conducted in such a way that the researcher gained a thorough understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

### 3.11 Data Collection Procedures

According to Muhammad and Kabir (2016), data collection includes series of activities or procedures connected to each other. Before the researcher started conducting the interviews and the focus group discussion with the students, an introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Educational Administration and Management of the University of Education, Winneba. The letter was then taken to St. Gregory Basic School to seek permission from its authorities to collect data from the students. The permission enabled the researcher to gain access and establish a relationship with the school authorities and some old students. The head teacher granted the researcher permission to brief the past students and teachers on the purpose of the study and how they could be of help. Different dates were scheduled by the head teacher for the researcher to collect data from the students. It took a total of two weeks to collect data from students who were involved in the one-on-one interviews and the focus group discussion. The researcher used one week and four days to conduct the one-on-one interviews and one day for the focus group discussion. Regarding methodological procedures especially as it relates to sampling, the procedures were as follows:



**Fig. 3.3** Source: Author (2022).

In the context of rapport building, rapport is the relationship of mutual understanding between individuals (Bryman, 2016). Building rapport was critical in this study for field entry and better communication. It aided the researcher in persuading the participants and people close to them, such as their parents and school officials. It enabled the researcher to get more significant insights from participants who were at ease throughout the interviews and focus group discussions. Building rapport was critical since the researcher was investigating a very sensitive problem of factors influencing students' academic achievement. It was essentially a definite means of establishing trust between the researcher and the subjects. Another way to establish rapport and gain the trust of participants was to exhibit a nice personality or style and to utilize suitable terminology at the participants' level.

### **3.13 Data Analysis Procedure**

Data analysis refers to putting together what has been seen, heard, and read to make meaning of what one learned (Afdal & Spernes, 2018). Data analysis is a method of working with data, organizing it, and breaking it down to be easily understood. It is also about combining data, looking for trends, figuring out what is significant, what needs to be taught, and selecting what to tell others (Sgier, 2012).

Data analysis was carried out throughout the data gathering process in this study. This study used Kvale's (1992) approach to data analysis, which states that data analysis in an interview should include five steps: transcription, classification of meaning, condensation of meaning, structuring of meaning through narratives, interpretation of meaning, and ad hoc ways for generating meanings.

The material (field data) was initially reviewed by the researcher in the data analysis of interviews and focus group discussions. Second, the data was organized into study sub-

topics. The third stage was to reread each category's common patterns, and determine which ones to keep and which to discard. Fourth, using quotes from interviewees, write narratives for each category. The fifth phase was to interpret respondents' statements to get significance from them. The research questions guided all data categories.

The researcher transcribed the audio recordings and organized them into topics. The analysis method was largely based on the recommendation of Braun and Clarke (2006) which stresses a flexible yet detailed analytic technique, hence, a thematic analytic approach was adopted. Themes were chosen and organized using a theoretical framework, which meant that coding was done with specific problems in mind. The researchers discovered sub-themes after reading each transcript thoroughly. Following the creation of a preliminary thematic map, the transcript and coded items were evaluated to ensure the authenticity of the thematic map. For the students that were interviewed, they were Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 4 and Student 5.

In analyzing the interview data, the recorded verbatim quotations were played and replayed from the tape recorder for complete and objective analysis. Adequate thought or attention was given to the quotations. Regarding the focus group discussion, the responses of the participants were summarized and represented in the text. They were bulleted in the boxes. For both the interview data and focused group discussion, the trend of analysis was as follows: organization, coding and categorization into themes and subthemes. Thematic or content analysis which is the procedure for analyzing textual or verbal behaviour was the sole basis of the analysis of the Qualitative data.

### **3.14 Trustworthiness of the study**

The persuasion offered for confidence in the study conducted, particularly the data and how it was analyzed to make the results useful, is referred to as trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness is associated with validity, dependability, and credibility, as well as transferability, and confirmability. The term "validity" refers to the question of whether an indicator or set of indicators designed to assess a concept actually measures that concept (Bryman, 2012). Bryman (2016) discusses several methods for establishing validity, including face validity, concurrent validity, predictive validity, construct validity, and convergent validity. Face validity is a metric that appears to reflect the content of the concepts under consideration. It can be determined by asking colleagues if the measure appears to be getting at the concept that is the focus of attention. As a result, determining face validity is primarily an intuitive process (Bryman, 2012).

The interview was validated in the following ways: the researcher asked research experts and education and administration professionals to review the items on the instrument to determine whether the set of items accurately represented the variables under study. They were tasked with reading, judging, making recommendations, and providing feedback to the researcher. Before it was given to the supervisor for consideration, the semi-structured instrument was scrutinized by the researcher's colleagues as a requirement for face validity. Before being used in the actual study, the instrument was further pilot tested to identify potential flaws. Five students from J.T Addo Memorial Basic School were purposefully sampled and interviewed for the pilot test. This was because they shared characteristics with the study's actual population. The pilot study enlisted the participation of five people (5). According to Bryman (2016), when evaluating the scope of the interview guide, it is critical to consider whether it allows participants to provide a full and coherent account of the central issues and incorporates issues they believe are important.

According to Speziale, Streubert, and Carpenter (2011), trustworthiness is defined as "establishing the validity and reliability of qualitative research." Qualitative research is reliable when it accurately represents the study participants' experiences. To assess the trustworthiness of data, four criteria were used: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Lincoln & Guba (1988) formula was used to establish the trustworthiness of qualitative research because it is conceptually well developed and has been widely used by qualitative researchers.

### **3.15 Credibility.**

According to Bryman (2016), credibility is involved with establishing that the results of the research are credible and believable from the perspectives of the participants in the research. In establishing credibility, the researcher made the participants feel comfortable by reporting her interpretation and inferences to the participants so that both the participants and the researcher fully understand the phenomenon under study. Participants demonstrate credibility when they recognize the reported research findings as their own (Speziale, Streubert, & Carpenter, 2011).

The researcher used the following strategies to ensure credibility: Prolonged engagement required the investigator to stay at a site long enough to detect and account for distortions that might otherwise creep into the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1988). During the interviews and member checks, enough time was spent with the participants to develop a trusting relationship with them (Holloway, 2005). The goal of persistent observation was to identify and focus on the characteristics and elements in the situation that were most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). During her visits to the school, the researcher made some educated guesses about the factors affecting students' academic performance. Peer debriefing exposes a researcher

to the probing questions of others who are familiar with the methods of investigation, the phenomenon, or both (Bryman, 2016). The researcher in this study distributed the research work to colleagues for constructive criticism.

Member checking is a qualitative research technique that helps researchers to improve the accuracy, credibility and reliability of the research findings. Members' checks included data, analytical categories, interpretations, and conclusions that were verified by members of the stakeholder groups from which the data was collected (Bryman, 2016). With the feedback from the participants, the researcher performed member checks. The categories that emerged from the data were checked by the participants, and once the themes were finalized, the researcher discussed the interpretation and conclusions with them.

### **3.16 Transferability.**

Transferability is analogous to external validity or generalizations as depicted in quantitative research. According to Bryman (2016), transferability in qualitative research is the degree to which the results can be generalized or transferred to other contexts. The researcher ensured transferability by providing a robust description of the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research. The context of the study (students in deprived economic setting with various nationalities), the participants (Junior High School children who had difficulties in their academic performance) and the themes (academic performance and the causal factors) were all described in details to enable any reader make decisions about the applicability of the findings to other settings or similar contexts.

The likelihood that the study findings will be relevant to others in similar situations is referred to as transferability (Speziale, Streubert & Carpenter, 2011). The researcher



ensured the credibility of the findings in this study by making the work available for constructive criticism from colleagues and by sharing the preliminary findings with people who did not participate in the study. Finally, the supervisor was in charge of reviewing the findings, interpretations, and recommendations and ensuring that they were supported by data.

### **3.17 Dependability**

According to Holloway (2005), dependability like reliability in Quantitative research refers to the consistency of results. It is appropriate because it establishes the research study's findings as consistent and accurate. The goal of the researchers is to confirm that their findings are consistent with the raw data that they gathered. The study's supervisor was in charge of examining the data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations to ensure that they were supported by data. This activity was used in this study to establish the research's confirmability. The detailed description of the research context, themes and participants by the researcher ensured that the study can be repeated with similar results.

### **3.18 Confirmability**

The confirmability of the study is the objectivity of research during data collection and analysis. It is the extent to which the study's findings may be validated or verified by others (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). The researcher ensured confirmability by supporting the research findings with the data collected. This was done to reduce the researcher's sense of subjectivity. Ideally, the researcher carefully documented the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study. There must be consensus between two or more independent individuals on the accuracy, relevance, or meaning of the data (Polit and Beck, 2012). Confirmability also denotes a method of



demonstrating quality. With the decision trial, the researcher established rigor and demonstrated confirmability through credibility, transferability, and dependability.

### **3.12 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical considerations include the researcher's obligation to follow ethical principles when conducting research. Furthermore, it is not advisable to infringe on people's rights in the pursuit of knowledge. As a result, the researcher must first obtain informed consent before indulging respondents to reply without any force or coercion. (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012). In this study, the researcher focused on confidentiality, anonymity and consent as part of the ethical consideration. Confidentiality in research is an ethical approach of ensuring that whatever is shared between the respondent and the researcher stays between them and if there should be the need to share then the respondent must be anonymized. In ensuring anonymity, the researcher changed the names of respondents by giving them codes to protect them from any harm or embarrassment. Anonymity in research helps the researcher to ensure confidentiality and to avoid tracing any information given during data collection to any particular respondent.

The researcher ensured informed consent by ensuring that all participants also did so willingly (Thomas, 2017). Informed consent is very essential when it comes to ensuring that research is ethical (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It involves making sure the respondent is well informed and also making sure they agree or consent before going on with the interaction. In this study, all respondents were well informed of their right to leave at any point in time if they were not interested and the researcher received the consent from all participants before engaging them. In addition, the researcher obtained a research clearance letter from the Departmental Head and Thesis Supervisor from the University of Winneba.

### **3.19 Limitations**

The outbreak of the COVID-19 slowed down the process of data collection and the researcher had to go through several scrutinies before being granted access to the students. Most past students of the school had moved to different communities without any contacts to be reached on.

The scope of the study centered only on St. Gregory Basic School with ten participants and thus was limited. The results of this study could thus not be generalized to represent other schools in the region or in other parts of the country.

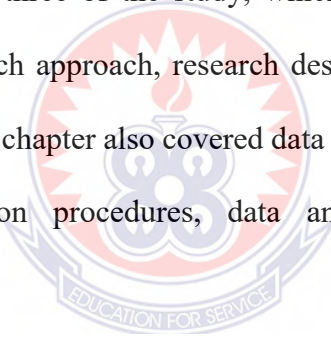
### **3.20 Positionality**

Positionality refers to how we are positioned (by ourselves, others, or specific discourses) in relation to multiple, relational social processes of difference [gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, and sexuality]. Positionality refers to how people perceive the world from various locations. Our social, conceptual, and spatial locations, as well as our intellectual history and lived experience, all place us differently, whether as researchers or participants (Torres-Olave & Lee, 2020). Our research is shaped by our positionality, which can either hinder or enable research insights. The researcher conducted a study to investigate the factors that affect students' academic performance at St. Gregory Basic School in Gomoa Buduburam. The researcher's positionality seeks to clarify the personal experiences that have shaped this research inquiry, as well as to reveal the reflexivity that informs the analysis and theorizing process (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020).

### **3.21 Summary of the Chapter**

In order to explore the factors that account for the academic performance of students in the St. Gregory Basic School, an interpretative Qualitative case study was adopted. This

research philosophy/paradigm was used to allow the researcher to understand the situation of academic performance and the factors accounting for them. This helped the researcher to interpret the meaning within a particular social context (Buduburam refugee community with junior high school students who had poor academic performance). Because the research investigated a well-defined context (academic performance of junior high school in St. Gregory Junior High School) within its natural setting, case study was found to be very appropriate. Snowball sampling was used to select ten students, five of whom were interviewed and five involved in focus group discussion. Data were recorded in a tape recorder and field notebook and analyzed qualitatively by means of content and thematic analysis. The research methodology was discussed in chapter three of the study, which included information about the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample size, and sampling techniques. This chapter also covered data collection instruments, instrument validation, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the methodological processes of the research. This fourth chapter centers on the participants' responses. It presents the findings and discussion of the study analysis. The responses were presented under five (5) major themes namely; administrative factors, socio-economic factors, environmental factors and psychological factors; it enabled the researcher to get a better understanding of how these factors affect the academic performance of students in this case. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis method.

#### 4.1 Demography

According to Vogt and Johnson (2011), demography seeks to investigate the facts and figures of a specific population which is essential to the study. This study's demography was concerned with the number of participants, their ages, gender and level of education, all of which are influential elements that affect or have the potential to greatly affect the study. The research's demographics involved a total of ten participants. They were all past students of St. Gregory Basic School. Their ages range from 14 to 17 and as minors the consent of their parents were sought before the interviews and discussions were held. The participants included both males and females. There were five females and five males indicating the presence of both genders in the school.

#### 4.2 Administrative Factors

The essence of this theme was to find out if there was any existing relationship between administrative factors and the academic performance of students in St. Gregory Basic

School. Administrative factors refer to how the administration of the school affects the academic performance of students in the school. In relation to this, the response from the respondents in this study centered on administrative factors such as educational resources and facilities, teacher punctuality, punishments and parent teacher association.

### **4.3 Administrative Factors and Academic Performance at St. Gregory Basic**

#### **School**

According to the findings of this study, administrative factors affect the academic performance of students. This implies that the academic success or failure of students in St. Gregory Basic School also depends on the roles performed by the administration.

#### **4.3.1 Educational Resources**

The availability of educational resources such as textbooks, math sets and science apparatus were made known to have an effect on students' academic performance based on the responses of the students. During the interviews, a student raised concerns about insufficient textbooks in the school:

Madam, in our school eh, the textbooks that the government gives, they were not many at all. When we have a particular subject and you don't have the textbook, sometimes it is difficult to understand the subject. For example, if they give us homework like this and you don't have the textbook, sometimes you cannot do the work. (Student 1, Field data)

Student S5 on the contrary revealed:

My father bought me my textbooks so I was able to learn when I went home. I don't take the textbooks to school because somebody once stole my textbook and my father was very angry with me. Because of that, I keep the books at home and then when we close, I come and learn with it. Even sometimes, my friends come to my house to copy notes from my textbooks.

Another student added about inadequate textbooks; "...when you are about to write exams or you are coming to write your exams then they will provide you with the

Mathematics set but for the textbooks, there are not many so we had to share with our friends.” (Student 5, Field data)

Another student affirmed;

Learning science was difficult because in our school there, we didn't have the science eh, science apparatus. Sometimes our teachers tried to show it on their phones to us but like if we have the real thing then we can understand the things well. (Student 4, Field data)

The findings on the relationship between educational resources and the academic performance of students show that they have an effect on the academic performance of students. The absence of educational resources made teaching and learning difficult. Some resources, although available in St. Gregory Basic School, were insufficient and do not help to achieve set goals. This is in line with the views of Usman (2016) who opined that the availability of resources is however not enough as there should be adequacy of resources, proper management and utilization of resources to enhance effective teaching and learning. Thus, the administration of the school also has a role to play as the ability of the school's administration to make good use of the human and material resources brings about effective teaching and learning (Okendu, 2012). In relation to the System Theory input-output model, the availability of adequate and quality educational resources as an input is likely to positively affect the overall output which is the academic performance of students in the school.

#### **4.3.2 Educational Facilities**

The availability of educational facilities such as an ICT laboratory, Science laboratory and a well-furnished library were made known from the responses of the students to have an effect on students' academic performance. In studying Science without a Science laboratory, a student described how this was affecting them:

It affected us a lot that when some of the teachers teach us and they are teaching us the practicals without the apparatus, we don't get it right. In my friend's school like this, they had a science lab with apparatus. Sometimes I become sad because we all wrote the same BECE. (Student 4, Field data)

Some students were however privileged to get access to these science apparatus by visiting other schools since their school lacked these resources. Student 3, shared the following;

After school during those days, I sometimes go to my classes' teacher's school and he takes me to their science laboratory. At that school, they have provided all the apparatus that makes learning science very easy and interesting. It has really helped me and that is why I usually do very well in my science examinations.

Another student from the focus group discussion revealed how their teachers cope with the absence of a Science laboratory:

...other teachers like our Science teachers bring some of the things we use for the experiment. Some like the litmus papers, oranges that we use for checking whether this one, the fruit is acidic or non-acidic. The teacher gives us groups so sometimes we have to buy some of the things eh... as a group so that we do the experiment. (P5, Field data)

A respondent shared that due to insufficient resources, they do not visit the ICT laboratory at all; "Please us, when I came to this school, we've not gone to the computer laboratory to type or to do something..." (Student 2, Field data)

Another student from a different class however shared a different view:

We visited the computer lab on Mondays and Fridays and it has helped us a lot... I know how to open the computer and learn how a folder is and a file... even though most of the computers are spoiled, we have to manage it like that. (Student 4, Field data)

A student advised the focused group discussion that: "We need more computers to learn because when the ICT teacher is teaching us for example instead of him bringing a proper keyboard, he'll bring the spoilt one." (P5, Field data)

The responses above show that the lack of educational facilities in the school is affecting their studies and their performance academically. Some students such as P5 described in worry how they have to make do with a faulty keyboard which is not as helpful as a working one. Ekundayo (2012) research revealed that there is a significant relationship between school facilities and students' achievement in the affective and psychomotor domains of learning. Another study by Ajayi and Ekundayo (2011) also indicates that there is a positive relationship between school facilities and school effectiveness. Narucki (2008), concluded that poor facilities lead to low student attendance, which can lead to lower exam performance. The output being academic performance as opined by the System theory is negatively affected by the lack of facilities in the school which serves as the input in this instance.

#### **4.3.3 Teacher Punctuality**

Teachers play a role in the academics of students and must be present to ensure a continuous flow in the teaching and learning process. Teachers are a vital part of the educational system. The absence of teachers in school prevents the attainment of set goals and delays the academic calendar.

A student revealed that: "Please me since I went to that school, I have not seen any teacher. If any teacher doesn't come to school, he or she has a reason for not coming to school." (Student 2, Field data)

Another student added that; "Maybe when we have our teachers like eh pregnant or after birth, they don't usually come to school and so our Headmaster will come to the school, will come to our class and come and teach us..." (Student 5, Field data)

Teacher absenteeism is a great problem in most schools all over the world. In the United States of America, a study conducted by Norton (as cited by Porres, 2016) showed that



71% of schools involved in the study had the issue of teacher absenteeism as one of their biggest problems. A study by Murnane and Willett (2010) has revealed that absenteeism among teachers affects the process of interaction between teachers and students. In this study, students have revealed that their teachers are mostly punctual and hence this is influencing their studies positively. Relating this to the System theory, punctuality of teachers as an input positively affects students resulting in good academic performance as an output.

#### **4.3.4 Punishment**

Participants informed the researcher that various punishments are meted out to students for various reasons. Punishments are given to students who report to school late. Lateness is one of the habits that contribute to students' poor performance. Punishments were meted out to such students who have been coming too late and to deter other students from learning and copying such students. Student 5 revealed that: "Oh Madam, there is a teacher that checks lateness. He canes after, when we, after, after 11:15."

A student from the focus group discussion affirmed that: "Most of them, most of them give us punishment like weeding, weeding, dumping of the rubbish and sometimes we receive canes." (Participant 1, Field data)

Another student added another reason why their teachers cane them:

"You the bonanza you didn't do well so you are the person who will answer, if you don't answer then they'll lash you. They'll say you don't learn and it will be your parents, the money they are spending on you and all this so they will be lashing them in the class". (Student 2, Field data)

The responses above show that there are a number of punishments being used in the school and thus have an effect on their academic performance. Omari (2011) grouped

punishments into punitive, retribution, reformation and deterrence categories. In most schools, punishments are given to students to deter them from committing the same offense again and to also deter others from committing similar offenses. It can be implied from the response of student 2 that teachers in the school use punishments as a way of getting students to study harder in order to perform better. A study by Yeboah (2020) showed that in Ghana, canning is one of the punishments used in schools to ensure discipline and correct certain behaviors. Punishment in schools is, however, likely to breed some fear in children when they are going to school which could lead to students dropping out of school (Mumthas, Munavvir, and Abdul Gafoor ,2014). The System theory, according to Koontz and Weihrich, (1988) postulates that an organized enterprise does not exist in a vacuum; it is dependent on the environment in which it is established and from the responses of the respondents, punishments are used in St. Gregory Basic School to create an environment of discipline to promote learning.

#### **4.3.5 Parent Teacher Association**

Students shared that Parent Teacher Association meetings usually referred to as PTA meetings are frequently held in the school to discuss important issues pertaining to the students and the development of the school.

Student 4 (JHS2) shared how much importance her parents attach to attending these meetings:

As for my parents, unless I don't tell them there is a meeting; they are always ready to attend PTA meetings. They always tell me that their parents did not do it for them so they will do it for us. They said that it helps them know what is going on in the school and how I am also performing in the school.

A student responded that:

Madam please PTA meeting, when they come to the PTA meeting. The PTA meetings are organized on Thursdays. My mother didn't go most of the time

because she said she is busy. I once went to school early that day and then I saw them they were still on the program and then teachers like, other parents were saying; “my child when he or her come to the house he doesn’t bring homework or if I ask you what did you learn koraa he doesn’t mind me. (Student 3, Field data)

Another added that; “During PTA meetings, parents discuss with the teachers how best to help the students at home and at school. The parents are also able to contribute to support the school.” (Student 1, Field data)

The PTA serves as an avenue to include parents in the administration of school. Onderi & Makori, (2013) have shared that Parent Teacher Associations are involved in making curriculum and instructional decisions, promoting communication, generating school funding, and lobbying state and national legislatures on behalf of students in the United States of America. The Parent Teacher Association in the context of the System Theory input-output model serves as an input that helps the school as an institution produce better output. Parents are able to share ideas with the administration to help in the smooth running of the school. As Student 1 shared, the school is able to collaborate with parents during these meetings to be able to provide some needs in the school.

#### **4.4 Environmental Factors That Affect Pupils Academic Performance at St.**

##### **Gregory Basic School**

This factor considers the relationship between the environment of the students and their academic performance. The environment of the student is usually centered on the school environment and the home environment since these are the two places the student is mostly found or spends most of their time in a day. For the purposes of this study, environmental factors centered on class size, distractions and lateness.

#### 4.4.1 Class Size

According to the findings, there is a relationship between the sizes of the class and the academic performance of students in St. Gregory Basic School. This means that the large size of the classes was affecting how well the students perform academically. When asked how the sizes of their classes was affecting their studies, Student 2 shared;

Please we were 46 in the classroom and some subjects like Mathematics, they said the teacher is slow so they don't understand. When we are doing class work or exams and they will be worrying me that me I understand Mathematics so I should teach them and if I don't teach them then they'll all go against me that me I'm not good, me my head is hard, if I need something I shouldn't come to them for anything.

Another student also recounted;

Now most of us, the teachers don't have, like they didn't pay attention to us because we were many so if you seem not to be paying attention the teacher will just forget you and pay attention to those who are, those who are listening... because now we are packed those who are not that well, that good, they don't associate with the with some of the students ... only the those in front they are the people that benefit from what the teacher is teaching... (Participant1, field data)

Participant 4 from the focus group also attested;

And also because we were overcrowded in the class, those who are at the back there will be disturbing and that will ermmm like disturb the people who are like paying attention and the teacher also will not see those people talking because maybe the height of other peoples will block those who are.. like talking.

Student 3 (JHS1) had a different opinion about the class size; “We were forty-five (45) in the class but me, I think the number is okay because when we were in class six, we were hundred in the class and that one koraa, we managed.”

From the responses above, there is a visible relationship between the class size and the academic performance of students. Thomas et al., (2022) showed that a class with twenty or less students had improved academic performance however, students in a

class of forty-six (46) at St. Gregory Basic School were not getting the conducive classroom environment they needed to perform well academically. Teachers are unable to pay attention to every student due to the large class size to assist students with weaknesses. Çakmak, (2009) has shared that in a large class size, the teacher is unable to achieve much because most of the time is used to ensure order and discipline in the classroom instead of teaching students. Teachers in this situation are unable to attain set goals unlike their colleagues in schools with smaller class sizes although students from these different situations sit for the same external examination. In line with Ludwig Von Bertalanffy's System theory, a large class size as an input negatively affects the output which is the academic performance of the students. Some researchers have argued that a smaller class size gives the teacher the advantage of getting to know each student very well such that they know their weaknesses and help them become better.

#### 4.4.2 Distractions

The responses of the students showed a relationship between the distractions students encounter and its effect on their academic performance. Students face distractions from the school environment and the home environment. A participant P4 from the focus group discussion shared the following about distraction from the school environment;

And as our school is like near the road, the some of the motors have the loud sound with them so when they are passing they just distract us... the dust like passes through the windows and get in and also when you are doing some work our book too will get dirty.

Another student P2 from the focus group also added;

We were many in the class and sometimes when the teacher is teaching we have unnecessary comments by other students. For example, when teachers say this then they will shout; “eeiiii!!!” “ehn???” and all these things distract

the teaching and also the learning. The teacher cannot point out those who do that because we are many and when he asks who did it then they will all becomes quiet.

Another student shared about distractions from the home;

Most of the time when my small brother... after eating, he will just pretend that he is coming to ask me for something, then he will touch my book and then it will get dirty. ...When I'm sitting in the hall learning, then my mother is there with my auntie, they will be talking aaannn and sometimes if I am writing homework, the things they will be saying, I will be writing in my book so hmm (laughs) so sometimes I feel so distracted." (Student 3, field data)

Student 2 also said;

Sometimes eh, some stations will be removing (showing) some Ghanaian movie or telenovelas and some of the stations too, the small children their toys. When we see it and it will be like it's nice for us and we will also stop learning and we will lis and we will watch it so when we are going to sleep it will be around 9,10 and we will say our homework we can't do it so we'll put it down and go and sleep.

The above responses reveal the various distractions students in St. Gregory Basic School encounter at home and at school.

The responses also show that the distractions these students encounter affects the academic performance of students. According to Maxwell (2016), a school's social atmosphere is a potential and significant contributing factor to student learning outcomes. As seen in St. Gregory Basic School, Nelson, et al., (2008) opined that source of noise in a classroom background could emanate from external sources such as passing vehicles, internal sources such as students in the school, running around or playing with friends and room noise where students in a particular class talk among themselves such that it disturbs their own colleagues or students in other classrooms. A study conducted by Farid et al., (2013) revealed that high noise levels in the classroom were agreed upon by 57% of students as an impediment to learning. This affirms the System Theory input-output model which opines that an institution does not operate in

vacuum and is thus affected by certain factors such as distraction which negatively affects the academic performance of students.

#### 4.4.3 Lateness

Punctuality is a virtue most schools try to inculcate into their students. Lateness is frowned upon in all schools and when asked to share on lateness handled in St.

Gregory Basic School, the students shared:

...my mother did not have money so every morning when I wake up and I'll sell soap and I'll go and sell before I'll get some money and bring it to school. This is why I am normally late to school and by the time I get to school my friends are already learning. (Student 2, field data)

Another student had this to say;

Madam please sometimes it is just laziness (laughs). Sometimes if I wake up like this, I will just sweep the compound, wash bowls then if I have water to fetch... So if I finish fetching it, I will be tired and say that I am resting, I will forget myself so sometimes I will be late. By the time I get to school my friends are learning and I won't understand. (Student 3, field data)

P1 from the Focus Group shared on the consequence of being late; "In our school here when you are late, the teachers will punish you. Most of them, most of them give us punishment like weeding, weeding, dumping of the rubbish and sometimes we receive canes."

Student 4 shared on preventing lateness;

My parents don't like it when I go to school late. They always encourage me to prepare a day before for the next day. They make sure that I also sleep early so that I can wake up early. The rule in my house was that we don't watch television during the week. We only watch on Saturdays.

It could be deduced from the above responses that lateness affects the academic performance of the students. Responses from Student 2 and 3 imply that their academics are affected anytime they are late for school. Chujor & Kennedy (2014) argue that the



issue of lateness is one that has to be seriously tackled by stakeholders such as school administrators, teachers, parents and the students themselves. Lateness comes with several effects such as poor academic performance, disruption in class, difficulty keeping accurate records, a reduced ability to meet instructional targets, and harm to the school's reputation (Maile & Olowoyo, 2017). There are several reasons why students report late for school and as seen from the response of Student 2, some students due to financial difficulties have to sell to be able to get money for school while others like Student 3 are late due to laziness. Maile & Olowoyo (2017) have added that lateness has become a barrier to achieving large interventions and it skews the performance of selected township schools in a different direction. It is evident that when students are continuously late for school (input), it negatively affects the academic performance of students (output) and affects the educational system as a whole.

#### **4.5 Psychological Factors That Affect Academic Performance of Pupils at St. Gregory**

The purpose of this theme was to find out how teachers encourage students, how they allow students to contribute in the teaching and learning process and how teachers motivate students. There have been several studies that show the relationship between psychological factors; however, the purpose of this study was to find out if psychological factors such as class participation and student motivation affects the academic performance of students at St. Gregory Basic School.

##### **4.5.1 Class Participation and Student Motivation**

Several studies have shown that class participation and motivation affects the academic performance of students. This study however sought to find out if this is same for students in St. Gregory Basic School. Students of St. Gregory Basic School shared;



“Sometimes our teacher will ask a question, ask a question and a when a student answers correctly the teacher will say; “come for some money” or the teacher will give you a token or sometimes exercise book” (P1, field data)

Another added by saying; “And they do motivate us too, like when we answer questions and like they give us some recommendations that encourage us to do more and learn more.” (P4, field data)

P2 also revealed that; “When the teacher asks you a question and you are able to answer when he says let’s give him a round of applause for you, it makes you feel that respect has been given to you from your teachers and even your classmates.”

The responses above show that students feel very good when motivated or involved in class discussions. Mundelsee and Jurkowski (2021) have stated that class participation has also attracted much attention as one of the essential elements for the successful conduct of a learning activity. According to Syaveny and Johari (2017) research studies revealed that English learning achievement increased when students’ participation was higher. Also, Ko et al., (2016), in their study where over 18,000 students participated, as well as Konold et al., (2018) study including more than 60,000 participants, cited that class participation had significant impact on learning outcomes. When students are fully engaged in the teaching and learning process, they are able to have a better understanding of what is being taught. When students are motivated to learn, it directs their behavior towards set goals leading to increased effort and energy, increased initiation of and persistence in activities, enhanced cognitive processing which leads to improved performance (Cerdan, 2017). Motivation and class participation are positive inputs that affect the output being academic performance of students based on Ludwig Von Bertalanffy’s Systems theory.

#### **4.6 Socio-Economic Factors That Affect Academic Performance of Pupils at St. Gregory Basic School**

This theme sought to find out some socio-economic factors such as the type of houses students lived in, the number of rooms, supervision from parents at home, access to a study area, whether they live with one or both parents, their parents' level of education and the type of jobs their parents do.

A student shared;

My father is an architect and he works in Accra and my, my mother is err, my mother sells. The house we were living in was for my father and it has three bedrooms. I share my room with my younger sister (giggles). She can disturb me papa! I can only learn in the evening when my extra classes' teacher comes to the house. My mother comes back from the market at 7:00pm but as for my father he only comes on weekends. My big brother is the one who takes care of us when my mother is not there. My father went to University but my mother said she stopped at form 3. If you have homework and you show it to my mother, she will say that erhn, go and give it to your classes' teacher. (Student 5, field data)

Another also explained;

I lived with only my mother and my brothers. My father and mother, it is not like they have divorced oo but they are having some quarrels so my father does not stay in the house with us again. We have only two rooms in our house and we are renting it. My mother sells soap in the market. She told me that her mother did not have money so she didn't go to school. As for my father, I don't really know. At home, I used to sit outside to study but sometimes the mosquitoes bite me too much so I have to stop and go inside. Every morning, I go and sell some of the soap to help my mother so that I can get some money for school. If I didn't do it like that we couldn't go to school and when I went to school, I was so tired. (Student 2, field data)

Student 1 also shared;

I stayed with only my mother in a single room. It was someone's house that my mother is looking after. She told me that she stopped school after SHS because she got pregnant with me. She used to sell charcoal but nowadays, she does not sell again because she said she doesn't have money. My father has died so things are hard for us. When we were given homework, I did it at school before going home because I don't have any of the textbooks so I borrowed from my friends. Because I sleep with my mother, I can't turn on the light at night to learn

otherwise my mother will complain. In the evenings, I helped somebody to sell indomie so that I can get money for school.

Based on the responses of the students, most of them can be categorized under low socio-economic status. Muchunku (2014) found that children from low socio-economic backgrounds do not perform as well as they potentially could at school compared to children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Considering the response of Student 1 who had to sell to support her mother every evening, it can be inferred that she is unable to study or go over what she was taught at school at night. This student is also likely to feel exhausted during the day because she works in the evening. When this happens, it will be difficult for her to fully focus when lessons are being taught in class. Muchunku (2014), also mentioned that when the basic needs of pupils are not met, the pupils are not physically or mentally able to perform in school.

Hardy (2006) has shared that the educational background of a parent matters when it comes to the academic performance of a student. From the above responses, Student 2 shared that her mother had never been to school and as such, is unable to assist her when she comes home with assignments. Comparing such a student with one whose parents have a tertiary education will show that the one whose parents are educated will be able to support their wards to do their assignments and also ensure that they are doing the right thing. Weinreb (as cited in Muchunku, 2014) found that children from low-income families are more likely to be preoccupied with environmental stressors within their neighborhood such as feelings of insecurity about their safety, housing status, and violence within their community to the detriment of their academic achievement. Secker (2004) stated that, when groups of pupils with similar backgrounds are compared, the pupils from a high socio-economic status outperform those from a low socioeconomic status (SES) in terms of academic performance.

#### 4.7 Chapter Summary

The academic performance of students is a function of interconnected factors that contribute to the students' performance. Some of the factors studied for the purpose of this research are the administrative factors, socio-economic factors, environmental factors and the psychological factors. The students interviewed revealed that administrative factors such as educational resources, teacher absenteeism, punishments, the role of Parent-teacher Associations and school facilities affects the academic performance of students. According to Usman (2016), the availability of resources is however not enough, as there should be adequacy of resources, proper management and utilization of resources to enhance effective teaching and learning. Dorward, Hawkins, and Smith (2000) have shared that teacher absenteeism negatively affects the academic performance of students. This has been supported by a further study conducted by Ameerq, Hassan, Jabeen, and Fatima (2018). Students of St. Gregory Basic School however shared that their teachers are always punctual. Yeboah (2020) has cited that, in Ghana, canning is one of the punishments used in schools to ensure discipline and correct certain behaviors and this is applicable to the situation in St. Gregory Basic School. Darko-Asumadu and Sika-Bright's (2021) research in Ghana showed a statistically significant relationship between students' academic performance and parents' involvement. Ekundayo (2012) research revealed that there is a significant relationship between school facilities and students' achievement in the affective and psychomotor domains of learning and this was evident from the responses of students in this study.

Environmental factors such as class size, distractions and lateness were revealed to affect the academic performance of students in St. Gregory Basic School. Class size is a factor worth considering because in large classes, the teacher tends to focus most of

the time spent in the class on ensuring order and discipline in the classroom (Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown & Martin (2007); Çakmak, (2009). A study conducted by Farid, Ali, Shakoor, Azam, Ehsan, Tauqeer & Iftikar (2013) revealed that high noise levels in the classroom were agreed upon by 57% of students as an impediment to learning. Chujor & Kennedy (2014) have also supported the fact that the issue of lateness is one that has to be seriously tackled by stakeholders such as school administrators, teachers, parents and the students themselves.

Psychological factors in this study consisted of class participation and teacher motivation. The psychological make-up of students' centers on issues surrounding their mental wellbeing and behaviour. It also focuses on their emotional development, motivation, their environment and how they react towards it. Class participation depicts students' emotions, behaviour and judgements about school life and it is an important variable since it affects academic outcomes such as achievement and high level of school commitment (Engels, Spilt, Denies, & Verschueren, 2021). Acheampong and Bennell (2003) research on motivation concurs that teacher motivation and incentives in schools greatly reflect in students' academic performance with effect from determinants (Acheampong & Bennell, 2003, p. 12).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Overview

The chapter shares the research purpose, design, sample and sampling technique, data collection instrument and data analysis procedure. It summarizes the study's findings and provides key recommendations for further studies. It also tackled some of the areas that need to be studied further. This study sought to find the various factors that affect students' academic performance in St. Gregory Basic School located at Gomoa Buduburam in the Central region of Ghana.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that affect students' academic performance in St. Gregory Basic School. Although these factors have been established in literature and in other places, the study sought to ascertain how a combination of these factors affect students' academic performance in St. Gregory Basic School.

The researcher used a case study under the qualitative research design to have a better and deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied using two different data sources (interview and focused group discussion) in a given context (St. Gregory Basic School). The case study design was very flexible to collect through interviews and focus groups. While conducting interviews for the study, the researcher was able to adjust to the respondents' circumstances and offer open-ended questions due to the chosen research design. The researcher also made use of focus group discussion to ensure the triangulation of data.

In this study, the sampled pupils shared their thoughts and ideas on thematic areas such as Administrative, Environmental, Psychological and Socio-economic factors. In order to achieve the goal of discovering factors affecting students' performance in St. Gregory Basic School, the researcher conducted a narrative study to recount the participants' stories about the elements (factors) that affected their academic achievement.

Data from various sources were used to explain the possible factors that affect students' academic performance. Focus group discussion and interviews were used in this study to gather information on factors and experiences of students. The case study design was able to help the students explain how some factors from their school environment, class rooms and their homes affected their academic performance.

Snowball, convenience, quota and purposive sampling are the types of non-probability sampling but in this study, snowball sampling was used. Snowball sampling technique refers to a sampling technique where the researcher makes use of a participant who further assists to reach out to other participants suitable for the study. As stated early on, this study was conducted using past students of the school and as a result it took some time to reach out to the students through phone calls and visiting their homes or in some instances where they used to live since most of the students had moved out of the community with their families after school.

In all, ten students all past students of St. Gregory Basic School were sampled using snowball sampling. Five out of the ten were involved in a focus group discussion while the five others were interviewed individually. In a qualitative study using a case study design, even a single respondent could provide the researcher with the needed information (Patton, Coffey, Carlin, Degenhardt, Lynskey, & Hall, 2002). Cohen,



Manion and Morrison, (2002) are of the view that the research design of a study determines its sample size. In qualitative studies, the sample size is usually with a smaller number as compared to quantitative studies and a sample size of ten is gradually becoming the preferred sample size (Lichtman, 2010). The theory of information power as introduced by Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora, (2016) suggests that, the more information the sample is able to provide, the lesser the sample size. The researcher reached a point of saturation during the data collection process and to prevent the repetition of the same information the researcher worked with a sample of ten respondents. The participants in snowball sampling were chosen with the help of one student who was able to link the researcher to other old students of the school and were considered to be rich in information or having in-depth knowledge of the problem under study.

In order to gain useful insight through appropriate information, the researcher ensured accurate and appropriate data collection instruments. Accurate and appropriate data collection methods ensure the integrity or reliability of the research. The use of multiple data collection instruments helped to ensure the reliability of the data generated. According to Ary, Jacobs, Irvine and Walker (2018), the two most common methods for gathering data in research includes interviews and focus group discussion. These two research instruments also help researchers acquire in-depth information while observing the respondents body language. Five students were used for the Focus group discussion and since they were all from the same class, the discussion was devoid of any form of intimidation from one another. The five other students were also involved in the one-on-one interviews. These two data collection instruments were used to answer the research questions that focused on the “how” and “why”.



Interviews serve as one of the primary ways of acquiring information (Seidman, 2006) when it comes to research in qualitative studies. In the view of Creswell (2002) an interview enables the researcher to acquire data from the respondents' perspective. Instruments like interviews have an advantage of yielding a large amount of data in a short period of time. Interviews could be one on one or in a group discussion and are conducted by the researcher using an interview guide.

An interview guide contains a set of prepared questions that guide the conversation between the researcher and the respondents. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. In qualitative studies, every interview has a structure but it depends on how much power the interviewer has and the level of rigidity (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017).

The researcher adopted a semi-structured interview for the purpose of flexibility. This means that the questions were at times reframed to suit the participants' understanding and the situation. The interviews were useful for the study because it helped the researcher to be personally present to remove any doubt or suspicion regarding the data collection process. By this a friendly and conducive atmosphere was created for obtaining the desired data, especially as it relates to follow-up questions and responses.

There were a total of five interview sessions for five students that were targeted for the interview. For each student, an interview session lasted 45 minutes because some of the questions were repeated for the students to grasp better understanding. The interviews were done in the English language. All interviews were conducted during times convenient for the students. Tape recorder and a field notebook were used to record the interview data.

The researcher also employed a focused group discussion method (FGD) in the collection of data. A focused group discussion enables a researcher to acquire data by bringing together individuals with some similarities such as same class or age group (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2018). This strategy has the advantage of allowing people who are unable to freely express themselves to do so after witnessing the contributions of their peers present (Sharma, Conduit & Hill, 2017). In the FGD, five students were engaged to provide an in-depth discussion into thematic areas which are factors that are associated with academic performance. According to Morgan (1997), a focus group that comprises 3 to 5 participants is enough to reach saturation.

Krueger (as cited in Creswell, 2002) opined that focus groups make room for some form of interaction among the participants. It also aids the collection of extensive data and participation by all individuals in the group. Misconceptions and misunderstandings of respondents are revealed and corrected in the course of the interaction between the researcher and the interviewees. Students were also made to speak one after the other to make the information valid to the researcher.

There were two focus group discussion sessions in line with the thematic issues in the research questions. Each focus group discussion lasted for about an hour and these discussions were held in a class allocated by the head teacher after school hours. Although the students had similar educational backgrounds (they were all Junior High School students) however, they had varying psychological and family/social backgrounds. This made the adoption of focus group discussion very appropriate because the responses came from varied viewpoints. The focus group discussion also helped the participants to recall, verify or rectify some mistaken information.

Data analysis refers to putting together what has been seen, heard, and read to make meaning of what one learned (Afdal & Spernes, 2018). Data analysis is a method of working with data, organizing it, and breaking it down to be easily understood. It is also about combining data, looking for trends, figuring out what is significant, what needs to be taught, and selecting what to tell others (Sgier, 2012).

Data analysis was carried out throughout the data gathering process in this study. This study used Kvale's (1992) approach to data analysis, which states that data analysis in an interview should include five steps: transcription, classification of meaning, condensation of meaning, structuring of meaning through narratives, interpretation of meaning, and ad hoc ways for generating meanings.

The material (field data) was initially reviewed by the researcher in the data analysis of interviews and focus group discussions. Second, the data was organized into study sub-topics. The third stage was to reread each category's common patterns, and determine which ones to keep and which to discard. Fourth, using quotes from interviewees, write narratives for each category. The fifth phase was to interpret respondents' statements to get significance from them. The research questions guided all data categories.

The researcher transcribed the audio recordings and organized them into topics. The analysis method was largely based on the recommendation of Braun and Clarke (2006) which stresses a flexible yet detailed analytic technique, hence, a thematic analytic approach was adopted. Themes were chosen and organized using a theoretical framework, which meant that coding was done with specific problems in mind. The researchers discovered sub-themes after reading each transcript thoroughly. Following the creation of a preliminary thematic map, the transcript and coded items were

evaluated to ensure the authenticity of the thematic map. For the students that were interviewed, they were Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, Student 4 and Student 5.

In analyzing the interview data, the recorded verbatim quotations were played and replayed from the tape recorder for complete and objective analysis. Adequate thought or attention was given to the quotations. Regarding the focus group discussion, the responses of the participants were summarized and represented in the text. They were bulleted in the boxes. For both the interview data and focused group discussion, the trend of analysis was as follows: organization, coding and categorization into themes and subthemes. Thematic or content analysis which is the procedure for analyzing textual or verbal behaviour was the sole basis of the analysis of the Qualitative data.

## **5.2 Summary of Key Findings**

The study set out to find the various factors affecting students' academic performance in St. Gregory Basic School, Gomoa Buduburam. The study investigated how administrative, environmental, psychological and socio-economic factors affect students' academic performance.

The study adopted a case study which made use of a focus group discussion and one on one interviews in collecting data from the participants who were all Junior High School students. Thematic analysis was further employed to analyze the data acquired from the respondents. The study revealed that resources such as workbooks, math sets and textbooks were inadequate. Due to this, these resources had to be used once in a while such as only during examinations. Even in such instances, students had to share with each other and this was affecting their studies negatively.

### **5.2.1 Administrative Factors That Affect the Academic Performance of Pupils in St. Gregory Basic School**

From the study, the school has a library and computer laboratory however, the resources are insufficient. The study revealed that the library had very few books and the few available were mostly torn, making them difficult to read. Also, effective studies do not take place in the computer laboratory because the laboratory cannot contain the large student number. This is also due to the fact that most of the computers are faulty and as a result, teachers had to sacrifice and make provision with their personal laptops. These factors were also affecting the students' academics negatively.

Education in the 21st century has become highly practical; however, when it comes to practical learning, the absence of resources such as litmus papers, beakers and others for Science practicals has made learning more theoretical than practical. This had made understanding certain concepts difficult and considering the fact that they had to sit for national examinations with students from other schools which had these Science facilities, their academics were being affected negatively.

According to the respondents in this study, teachers in the school were mostly punctual and in the absence of any teacher, the Head teacher was available to teach the class. The respondents revealed that their teachers hardly absented themselves from schools except for some few occasions when the teachers were unwell or female teachers who had to go on pregnancy leave. From the respondents, having their teachers and Headmaster around all the time was a positive factor which gave them the opportunity to always go to them for further explanation even after classes hours.

Some respondents shared that the manner some of their teachers delivered their lessons or taught them affected how well they understood the lessons. They shared that some

teachers taught slowly which made the lessons boring and thus made it difficult for students to follow what is being taught. Corporal punishments were meted out for misbehavior in class, those who performed poorly in exams and students who attended class late. Some punishments given were caning, sweeping of the school compound and emptying dustbins. These punishments positively affected the academic performance of students by serving as a deterrent and preventive measure against negative student behaviour and vices.

The study further revealed that monthly meetings are organized with parents to discuss pertinent issues. According to the respondents, some issues discussed at these meetings were issues regarding lateness, the academic performance of students and several others. Some students however shared that their parents are sometimes unable to attend these meetings due to their busy schedules.

In the school, the classrooms had about forty students each where sometimes four students had to share a desk. Aside from the fact that these students feel uncomfortable sharing a desk with three other students, they sometimes had their items stolen from their school bags. The respondents also shared that when assignments are given in class, it is difficult to do independent work. The classrooms were, however, well ventilated with fans and windows. Noise from friends in the class, noise from passing vehicles and motors and dust from the untarred road served as distractions in the classroom.

### **5.2.2 Environmental Factors That Affect the Academic Performance of Pupils in St. Gregory Basic School**

At home, some distractions shared by the students in this study were television programs that caught their attention and thus prevented them from focusing on their books or doing their assignments. Some students confirmed watching television

programs that caused them to sleep as late as 11pm which made it difficult for them to wake up early for school the next day. For some respondents, their younger siblings distracted them while they studied and for others, constantly being sent on errands by parents when studying also served as a distraction. Lateness to school was attributed to some factors such as being involved in trade before or after school hours, not going to bed early, excess house chores and traveling long distances to school.

### **5.2.3 Psychological Factors That Affect the Academic Performance of Pupils in St. Gregory Basic School**

Teachers encouraged students by helping them solve their problems and providing gifts or verbal affirmation to students who performed well in class. In order to help students, teachers give assignments after each lesson, provide explanations after lessons and also organize extra tuition on weekends. Students are allowed to contribute in class by raising their hands first and respecting the contributions of their fellow students.

In the classrooms, various study groups are made available for students to join to share ideas and assist one another in the various subjects. Corporal punishment may be given to students who refuse to contribute in class. The students shared that their teachers make students feel respected when they do not insult them, when they greet them, allow them to contribute in class and advise them.

### **5.2.4 Socio-Economic Factors That Affect the Academic Performance of Pupils in St. Gregory Basic School**

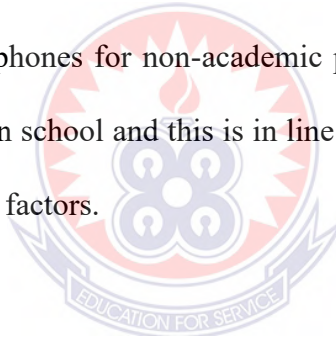
From the study, most of the students live in houses made of blocks and usually share their rooms with their siblings. Some students have tutors who provide them with extra tuition at home and are supervised by their parents to study while others whose parents have very busy schedules are usually left at home to study by themselves. While some

students live with both parents, some live with a parent. The level of education of parents of the respondents ranges from Junior High School to the Tertiary level.

Some parents work in the informal sector while a few have white collar jobs. In order to support their parents, some students are involved in petty trading before coming to school. In such instances, the students shared that it causes tiredness and the tendency to sleep during classes' hours. When given assignments, students rely on either their older siblings, the internet, extra tuition tutors or their parents.

#### **5.2.5 Other Factors That Affect the Academic Performance of Pupils in St. Gregory Basic School**

The research revealed that other factors such as influence from bad friends and the excessive use of mobile phones for non-academic purposes also affect the academic performance of students in school and this is in line with research question two which focuses on environmental factors.



#### **5.3 Conclusions**

This study was conducted to study the factors that affect students' academic performance in St. Gregory Basic School, Gomoa Buduburam. The study centered on the administrative, environmental, socio-economic and psychological factors that affect students' academic performance.

The following conclusions were made;



### **Administrative Factors That Affect the Academic Performance of Pupils in St. Gregory Basic School**

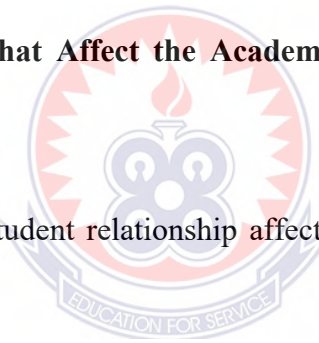
- I. The absence of resource facilities such as a science lab and inadequate resources in the library and ICT laboratory affects teaching and learning which affects students' academic performance negatively.

### **Environmental Factors That Affect the Academic Performance of Pupils in St. Gregory Basic School**

- II. The large class size is affecting the academic performance of students in the school negatively.

### **Psychological Factors That Affect the Academic Performance of Pupils in St. Gregory Basic School**

- III. Good teacher-student relationship affects students' academic performance positively.



### **Socio-economic Factors That Affect the Academic Performance of Pupils in St. Gregory Basic School**

- IV. Students who engage in trade before or after school to support the home are usually exhausted during class hours which negatively affects their academic performance.

- V. Parents of low socio-economic status are unable to provide some basic needs of their children such as textbooks and this negatively affects the academic performance of the students.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

### **Administrative Factors That Affect the Academic Performance of Pupils in St. Gregory Basic School**

The study revealed that the school has inadequate resources for the school library and computer laboratory and there is no science lab to help students understand the subject practically. It is recommended that the school and parents whose wards are in the school must collaborate to make provision for these resources.

Also, teachers must constantly come up with new and fun ways of teaching students to prevent boredom and to encourage the participation of all students and also help them understand what is being taught better. The school administration must ensure the provision of all teaching and learning materials such as markers and books. Faulty desks must be repaired on time to make students feel comfortable in class.

### **Environmental Factors That Affect the Academic Performance of Pupils in St. Gregory Basic School**

In order to reduce the dust from the road which distracts students, the school must work with the appropriate authorities to ensure that it is tarred to reduce the dust coming into the school. Signposts must be placed at vantage points for road users such as motorcycle riders and drivers of trucks to alert them on reducing the noise levels when using the road.

Lastly, parents must show interest in their children's academic performance and take note of things at home such as television which could distract them from their studies. They must also assign special study times where they give their children the time to fully focus on their books without having to send them on errands.

### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

Although mobile phones can be used for research purposes, some students end up spending a lot of time on social media platforms up until late into the night. Further studies can be conducted on how other factors such as the excessive use of mobile phones for non-academic purposes and the effects of bad friends can affect students' academic performance in Junior High Schools.

Other researchers can do a quantitative study on factors affecting students' academic performance in other schools in the community since this research was limited to only St. Gregory Basic School.



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## APPENDIX I

### UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE

Generally, this research sought to answer one broad question; what factors affect academic performance.

To answer this broad question, the following specific questions served as a guide:

#### ADMINISTRATIVE FACTORS

- i. What resources does the school administration provide to help teaching and learning?
- ii. How does the administration supervise teaching and learning in your school?
- iii. What does the administration do to you when you do not come to school on time?
- iv. How does the administration ensure that your teachers also come to school on time?
- v. When does the administration have meetings with your parents concerning issues in the school?

#### ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- i. How many are you in class and how does it affect your learning?
- ii. How does your class get fresh air?
- iii. What effects does your sitting arrangement have on your ability to learn in class?
- iv. What kind of desks do you have??
- v. What kind of distractions occur when lessons are ongoing?

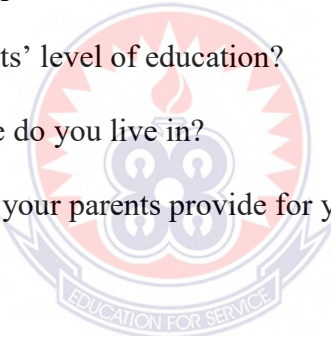


### **PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS**

- i. What do your teachers do to encourage students who perform well in class?
- ii. What is done to students who do not perform well?
- iii. How does your teacher allow you to contribute in class?
- iv. How does your teacher show respect to all students in class?
- v. What does your teacher do when you do not understand what is being taught?

### **SOCIO- ECONOMIC FACTORS**

- i. How do you study at home?
- ii. What jobs do your parents do?
- iii. What is your parents' level of education?
- iv. What type of house do you live in?
- v. What resources do your parents provide for you?





## APPENDIX II

**Figure 1.2.1: General Performance Trends of St. Gregory Basic School Students in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE)**

| YEAR | N   | PASSED (%) | FAILED (%) |
|------|-----|------------|------------|
| 2009 | 105 | 65         | 35         |
| 2010 | 100 | 60         | 40         |
| 2011 | 109 | 50         | 50         |
| 2012 | 63  | 55         | 45         |
| 2013 | 39  | 50         | 50         |
| 2014 | 64  | 75         | 25         |
| 2015 | 69  | 30         | 70         |
| 2016 | 61  | 20         | 80         |
| 2017 | 69  | 40         | 60         |
| 2018 | 110 | 45         | 55         |
| 2019 | 94  | 45         | 55         |
| 2020 | 118 | 30         | 70         |

Source: School Records, 2021

N= Number of students who sat for the examination

## INTRODUCTORY LETTER



UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA  
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT  
P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana

UEW/EAM/INT/27

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We write to introduce **Harriet Woode**, a student on the M.Phil Educational Administration and Management programme of the Department of Educational Administration and Management.

**Harriet Woode** is currently working on a research project titled:

***FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF ST. GREGORY BASIC SCHOOL, GOMOA BUDUBURAM.***

Please, give her the necessary assistance and co-operation.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Salome O. Essuman'.

**Salome O. Essuman (Prof.)  
Head of Department**