UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

IMPACT OF ILLEGAL MINING ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG STUDENTS IN PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN ATIWA WEST DISTRICT

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Godfred Gyamfi, declare that this project report, with the exception of quotations references contained in published works which have been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely the result of my own original research work, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: ……

Date: ……..…….……

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of project report as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Mr. Kweku Esia-Donkoh (Supervisor)

Signature: ……

Date: ……..…….……

DEDICATION

To my parents.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor, Mr. Kweku Esia-Donkoh for his assistance in the form of guidance and his time in reading through my project work and making the necessary correction.

To all you mentioned and unmentioned, I say thank you, and may the blessing of the Lord be your portion.

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ABSTRCT

This study assessed the impact of illegal mining on school attendance and academic performance of junior high school students in the Atiwa West District of Ghana. Phenomenological research design was used for this study and research instrument used was semi-structured interview. Twenty (20) student respondents were selected for the study. Purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were employed to select respondents for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the five junior high schools in the district and the pupil participants were selected using snowballing technique. Findings of the study has revealed that indeed illegal mining activities partake, by students do have negative effect on school attendance and academic performance and it was established that students who come to school regularly perform tremendously while the absentee students perform poorly. The study recommended that with the implementation of the New Educational Reform and Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education, parents must educate their wards on the importance of education, and parents must be made aware that it is their responsibility to bear the cost of their children's need.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Background to the Study**

Mining is the extraction of minerals and precious metals from the earth (Adu-Gyamfi, 2014). Some minerals extracted from the earth are diamond, bauxite, manganese and gold. With a reasonably well-known and attractive mineral resource base, a significant mining investment has been attracted into the country over some 20 years of stable multi-party democracy. The mining sector has therefore been an important part of our economy, with gold accounting for over 90% of the sector (Akabzaa, 2007). Ghana is the second largest gold producer in Africa and the 9th largest producer in the world.

The sector employs 28,000 people in the large-scale mining industry whilst over 1,000,000 people are engaged in the small-scale gold, diamonds, sand winning and quarry industries (Ankutse, 2015). In 2011, Ghana produced 3.6 million ounces of gold, the highest ever in the history of the country. This resulted in export revenues of over US$5billion. It is significant to note that small-scale miners contributed some 28% of the total gold production in 2011. Total Direct Investment (TDI) into the minerals and mining sector from 1983 to 2011 amounted to US$ 11.5billion (Aryee, 2012).

In Ghana, small-scale mining mostly of diamond and gold has expanded dramatically in recent years contributing significantly to the improvement of local economies and gross foreign exchange (Amankwah & Anim-Sackey, 2003). Ghana is currently Africa's second largest gold producer after South Africa, with gold exports accounting for more than 40% of total export earnings (Airo, 2010; Berger, 2008).

Over the past ten decades, Ghanaian gold production from small-scale mining activities has risen tenfold and doubled since 1998, accounting for an estimated contribution of $461.1 million to the national economy since 1989 (Yakubu, 2002). Due to these large mineral deposits, mining in Ghana has become a significant economic activity going back to many years. Apart from gold, diamond, bauxite, iron, limestone, salt, and various other industrial mineral were also exploited. Gold, however, is by far the most dominant mineral currently being exploited. Gold accounts for, on the average, 90% of total value of minerals won (Akabzaa, 2007).

Researchers have found ample evidence to suggest that small-scale artisanal mining in Ghana started some 2000 years ago (Owusu & Dwomoh, 2012). It was the mineral wealth of ancient Ghana that made the ancient empire of Ghana in the 7th and 8th century AD. According to historians, Portuguese sailors who first visited Ghana in 1470 were bewildered at the amount of gold dust, nuggets, and ornaments found in the country and had to name it the Gold Coast appropriately (Afrenya, 2002). The forefathers of Ghana mined gold and diamond on small scale before the white man arrived on the shores of Ghana as noted above. Small-scale mining may be legal (registered) or illegal (not registered). Where they are registered there is some level of supervision, hence moderate consideration for environmental concerns (Iddirisu & Tsikata, 1998). Nevertheless, much destruction is done to the environment in the sense that activities done here are more vigorous and relatively higher.

In spite of the economic strides made by mining in Ghana and in spite of the prioritized economic considerations given by governments coupled with the corporate social and environmental responsibilities performed by the mining industry, mining still has a direct or indirect adverse effects on the lives of children, more especially on

their education by pulling them out of the classroom into the labour market. It is well known among the Ghanaian public that exportation of precious minerals such as gold, diamond and manganese forms the second highest foreign-exchange earner to Ghana apart from cocoa but, it is said that the way and manner these minerals are being mined in the various communities in Ghana cause more harm than good to the inhabitants especially the youth (Owusu & Dwomoh, 2012).

Research revealed that pupils who registered to write the 2012 Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), refused to write the Mock examinations and also exempted themselves from school to engage in "galamsey" activities (Mensah, 2012). Most of the children involved come from poor homes. They initially start mining as part-time to help them pay and purchase petty things for school but many of them end up abandoning school altogether, as the attraction of making money is seemingly better for them than the perception of long-term schooling. According to Thorsen (2012), a third of all children in West and Central Africa are estimated to work full- or part-time, paid or unpaid. Many of these children are involved in hazardous and harmful activities in mines. Even if the work itself is not hazardous, many working children do not have access to education or drop out of school due to the opportunity costs for parents of keeping children in school and out of work.

However, some children do combine work and school and earning an income may enable them to continue their schooling. Nevertheless, the hard physical work and long working hours in mining sites is one reason among many why children may have difficulties in keeping up with school work. Over the past years, Ghana has been confronted with the negative effects of illegal mining in her communities. Ankutse (2015) in a study noted that, some districts (e.g., Asutifi) are experiencing the

repercussions of a somewhat negative influence of mining on children's performance, enrolment and retention in schools. According to Ankutse (2015), the major communities within the district have raised great public outcries on the seriously mining-led problems that threaten to destroy the human capital of the communities in the near future. For example, it was revealed from a research that was conducted in one of the schools in 2008 that, seven out of fourteen pupils, who sat for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), passed and gained admission into Senior Schools but in 2011 out of 44 pupils who sat for the examination only five passed (Mensah, 2012). The research also revealed that pupils who registered to write the 2012 Basic Education Certificate Examination refused to write the Mock exams and also exempted themselves from school to engage in "galamsey" activities.

The most outstanding among these mining-led problems that attract great concerns in the area are the increase in school drop-out and the poor performance of children in schools, alcoholism and teenage pregnancy among school children. Most of the children involved come from poor homes. They initially start mining as part-time to help them pay and purchase petty things for school but many of them end up abandoning school altogether, as the attraction of making money is seemingly better for them than the perception of long-term schooling.

In another forum organized by Action Aid at Kenyasi in Asutifi District in the Ahafo Region of Ghana, the District Director of Education said, some 200 school children absent themselves from school daily to do all kinds of works in illegal mining (galamsey) site. As a result of this alarming and seemingly uncontrollable trend, about 14 girls became truants and 21 girls were impregnated who later became school dropouts in the previous 2007/2008 academic year (Ammanor, 2009). Illegal mining

has directly or indirectly induced school children to engage in all forms of commercial and economic activities such as food vending, sale of hard drugs, sale of ice water, hawking, sale of alcoholic beverages and kerosene. A survey conducted by the Talensi-Nabdam District Assembly of Ghana in 2007 revealed that as many as 658 children who were supposed to be in the classroom or learning various trades were working in the mines (Ankutse, 2015). The mines employ the services of children to separate gold dust from pounded rocks extracted from the mines. Instead of finding their way to the classrooms, these children make their way to the mines and no wonder the district has witnessed a decline in the performance at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) level (Glover, 2010). This situation indicates a significant departure from sustainable development agenda that seeks to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Ananga, 2010).

Undeniably, a fair number of investments have gone into the promotion of basic education in Ghana. However, there are doubts as to whether these initiatives are necessarily having the desired impact. Example, seeing the low level of enrolment in schools especially in mining communities, the Government of Ghana has implemented and will continue to implement a number of programmes in collaboration with stakeholders, which intend to directly remove all children from the labour market. Prominent among these is the full implementation of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy. This policy aims to use free attendance at public basic schools to disengage children from child labour and get them into schools (De Lange, 2007; Okyere, 2012). The Capitation Grant was also designed to relieve parents of the burden of paying tuition fees in public schools (Little, 2010). The School Feeding Programme (SFP) that equally aims (in part) to

boost enrolment and retention in basic schools was also introduced. Other programmes like Free Transportation for school children in the Metro Mass Transit Busses, Free school uniforms and other learning materials were given free to children, all with the aim of promoting children's education which also serve as an expressway for removing children from mining-led child labour.

In the past few decades, children's right advocates have instituted a plethora of education related campaigns aimed at getting children out of the labour market. For instance, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) World Day against Child Labour in 2008 was instituted to highlight the adverse impact of child labour on children's education and on their development in general (International Labour Organisation, 2008). Similarly, other researchers (e.g., Heady, 2003; Okyere, 2012) have also noted the adverse effect of child labour on children's education and on the development of the nation at large. All these educational policies and programmes are good in their places but as to whether they have brought significant educational changes in mining communities of Ghana remains an unanswered question. The mining activity in the Atiwa West District is dominated by illegal mining operations and majority of the population is predominantly farmers growing both cash and food crops. Mining activities in the district contribute significantly to the socio-economic development of the people inspite *of* its effects on farmlands, water bodies and junior school students as *well.* This research, therefore, sought to investigate the influence *of* illegal mining on school attendance and academic performance of junior high school pupils in the Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa with abundant resources are confronted with the issue of 'resource curse' (Ankutse, 2015). Illegal mining activities which is locally known in Ghana as galamsey or mechanism to extract gold and other mineral resources appears to be on the rise with its attendant effects especially in Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Atiwa West District appears to be one of such districts that is experiencing the repercussions of a somewhat negative influence of mining on pupils' academic performance, enrolment and retention in schools. The number of galamseys in Ghana is unknown, but it is believed to be from 20,000 to 50,000 and most of them operate in communities where there are substantial reserves of gold deposits and usually within the environs of the larger mining companies (Annan, 2015; Adjei, 2017). Most young people, including children, are notable for engaging in such act with the idea of getting quick money.

According to Annan (2015), many children of school going age have abandoned classrooms and are now into full scale illegal mining activities, in view of the monetary benefits that come with these activities, despite the associated risks. Owusu and Dwomoh (2012) in a study on the impact of illegal mining on the Ghanaian youth showed that, illegal mining activities have negative impacts on the youth's school attendance and academic performance.

Children at Atiwa West District have after all seen that the wealthiest persons in the area had very little education. In fact, all the financially capable people in the area are private business men, some of whom do not have any formal education. The presence of illegal gold mining in the area has brought about excessively high prices of food stuffs. This is because children who are supposed to be in school are all engaged in

illegal gold mining. The very fertile lands conducive for farming are thus being used for mining activities. However, children at Atiwa West District do not attend school due to their involvement and participation in illegal gold mining activities in the area.

This problem is very serious in the sense that it has led to poor performance of students in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E). In recent years, majority of the Junior High Schools in the area failed in the Basic Education Certificate Examination. In light of the above issues this study sought to examine the impact of illegal mining on Junior High School Student in the Atiwa West District.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of illegal mining on school attendance and academic performance among students in Public Junior High School pupils in the Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study aimed at achieving the following:

1. To examine the reasons for junior high school students engaging in illegal mining in the Atiwa West District.
2. To find out how illegal mining activities influence school attendance in junior high schools in Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana.
3. To explain how illegal mining activities influence the academic performance of junior high pupils in Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

1.5 Research Question

The study focused on the following research questions;

1. Why are junior high school students engaging in illegal mining in the Atiwa West District?
2. How do illegal mining activities influence school attendance in junior high schools in Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana?
3. To what extent do illegal mining activities influence the academic performance of junior high school pupils in Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The attraction of children into mining sites can draw children out of schools and may affect the human resource capacity of the study area in the near future. This study would help to uncover the real causes and pattern of the falling standards of education in the face of vigorous mining activities. The study would also add more information to existing literature on the measures to be taken to remove or reduce the movement of children into the mining sites. It would also help to check whether efforts to provide educational support have proved sufficient in discouraging pupils from engaging in mining activities. The study will therefore look at how to bring together the various stakeholders in education such as Directorate of Ghana Education Service at Atiwa West District and Basic School head teachers to ensure the enforcement of rules and regulations regarding school attendance in order to strengthen pupils' school attendance and academic performance.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

There are specific delimitations to this study. The primary delimitation is that; the study is meant to focus on reasons for children to engaging in illegal mining, School attendance and academic performance of pupils in the Atiwa West District.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

The organisation of this study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one, which is the introduction, discusses the background to the study, statement of problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and organization of the study. Chapter two covers review of available literature relevant to the study, while chapter three focuses on the population, sample instrument for data collection and the procedure used in data analysis. Chapter four deals with data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings of the impact of small scale mining on school attendance and academic performance among students in Public Junior High Schools. Chapter five deals with the summary of the research findings, conclusion and recommendation of the study.

1.9 Definitions of Terms

Small scale mining: is a form of mining that is done at small levels and mostly employs relatively a low number of people.

Illegal mining: is mining activity that is undertaken without state permission, in particular in absence of land rights, mining licenses, and exploration or mineral transportation permits.

Academic Performance: A learning outcome that shows the level of progress that pupils are making at the different level of progression.

School attendance: is a measure of the number of children who attend school and the amount of time they are present.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the study. It captures both theoretical and empirical frameworks relevant to the study. The review has been organised under the following subheadings:

- Theoretical Framework on Human Needs.
- Small-Scale Mining in Developing Countries.
- Reasons for children engage in illegal gold mining activities.
- Mining Activities and their Influence on Pupils' School Attendance.
- Mining Activities and their Influence on Pupils' Academic Performance at School.

2.1 Theoretical Framework on Human Needs

A need has been defined as a hunger that compels action for its satisfaction. It ranges from basic survival needs that are common to all human beings and are satisfied by necessities, to cultural, intellectual, and social needs that depend on situations. Needs are said to be the drivers of human action. People have needs depending on their circumstance and there have been various attempts at explaining human needs in several settings and in various communities.

The word "need" is used in a variety of different idiomatic usages, both as a noun and as a verb (Jackson, Jager, & Stagel, 2004). As a noun, need comes with three generic meanings: namely needs as an internal force that drives or guides action, then needs as an (external) environmental requirement for achieving an end, and then needs as

justified requirements for performing behavior (Gasper, 1996; Jackson et al., 2004). Jackson et al. (2004) wrote that most modern needs theoretical frameworks such as Maslow's hierarchical ordering of needs and Alderfer's Existence Relatedness and Growth theory draw on the first meaning of needs. The usage of needs in these theories is basically concerned with illuminating the links between motivation, values, and behavior. Such a usage of needs is located within various branches of psychology, which differs from the conventional economic approach that regards needs as subjective desires and preferences that can be satisfied through consumer choices. For this particular study, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and Alderfer's ERG theory will provide the theoretical framework. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory has categorized individual needs into five categories (Maslow, 1971). These are: Physiological, Safety, Love/Belonging, Selfesteem, and Self-actualization. These needs are hierarchical and begin with the physiological through self-actualization. Physiological needs refer to the lower level needs like food, shelter, breathing, water, excretion, etc. These needs as the name implies are needs that the human physical body demands so that it functions normally.

Safety needs are those that provide security for the individual in terms of body, health, employment, and crime. The individual tries to ensure that the things that he or she has inherited or worked for to make life comfortable are secured and not compromised in any way. Love or belonging needs are those needs that the individual has to have to feel that they are part of a group, family, community, or fraternity. These needs include friendship, sexual intimacy, and family. Self-esteem needs are those that give the individual confidence, respect for others, and respect from others. Self-actualization is the need that the individual has with regards to morality, creativity, spontaneity, etc. (Maslow, 1971). Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory has

been criticized based on the fact that individuals can have affection even if their physiological needs are not fully satisfied. For authors such as Jackson et al. (2004), Maslow's theory over-emphasizes the individualistic nature of needs-satisfaction and understates the importance of society, culture, and the natural environment by treating these as secondary in importance to individual motivation. Furthermore, the claim that only sufficiently well-off people can achieve self-actualization is often seen as problematic because poor people in reality may also be able to develop well their individual potential. Alongside some of these criticisms is the argument that individuals can pursue multiple needs at the same time (Anney, 2014).

In response to the limitations of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Alderfer (1969) proposed a modification of the theory by first proposing three levels of needs instead of five. For Alderfer (1969), the three levels are the Existence, Relatedness, and Growth levels (ERG). The physiological and safety needs are categorised as existence needs, the love or belonging and esteem needs are classified as relatedness needs, and self-actualization as growth needs.

Maslow (1971) stated that when a lower need is satisfied, the individual then moves on to trying to satisfy the next higher need and that when an individual at a higher need level is faced with a situation that results in a deficiency in a lower need, the individual will suspend pursuing the higher need and pursue the lower need. If the lower need is satisfied, then the individual prioritises the next higher need. In other words, it was not possible for an individual to pursue more than one need concurrently. Alderfer (1969) maintained a different position and argues that an individual can pursue more than one level of need simultaneously. Alderfer's ERG theory further proposed a frustration-regression component. This component suggests

that an already satisfied need can become activated when a higher need remains unfulfilled. Thus, if a person is continually frustrated in his or her attempts to satisfy growth needs for instance, relatedness needs can again surface as key motivators. Alongside the theory on needs, this study also uses the concept of sustainable livelihoods to discuss how people draw on different assets and undertake different activities to respond to variations in their livelihoods due to the incidence of mining. Hilson and Potter (2003) defined a livelihood system as comprising the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources), and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood strategy connotes a combination of assets and activities to make a living. A livelihood system or strategy encompasses not only activities that generate income but many other kinds of elements, including cultural and social choices (Ellis, 2000). For Ellis (2000), sustainability is achieved when a livelihood "can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base." In the context of mining, the stresses and shocks refer to the changes that occur at a setting as a result of mining related activities. Most often mining communities encounter displacements from farmlands and this has consequences for livelihoods and level of vulnerability, especially those who are unable to cope or adapt to the changes brought in by mining. The outcomes in terms of vulnerability will have consequences for the level of needs and development.

2.2 **Illegal Small-Scale Mining (Galamsey) Activities in Ghana**

According to Bach (2014), artisanal small-scale gold mining has been practiced in Ghana since around the 4th century. In the beginning it was done in very primitive ways which can be divided into three categories: shallow pit, deep shaft and alluvial (Donkor, Nartey, Bonzongo & Adotey, 2006). The latter was the most extensively

used, and is a process which entails retrieving sediments from rivers containing gold particles, which was then washed multiple times before using mercury to creating an amalgam consisting of mercury and gold, which is then burned in order to leave pure gold behind (Botchway, 1995). Today, the so called galamsey is conducted in very similar manners, both because it does not require much equipment but also due to the activity being closely connected to the land and the people's ancestors (Bach, 2014).

However, in addition to working in rivers, it is now also normal to use the same method on land, in so-called surface mining operations (Hilson, 2002). Bach (2014) established that even though it used to be rather difficult to get hold of, mercury has been used by many galamsey since the advent of Ghanaian gold mining. In 1932 the colonial rule made the use of mercury illegal, as its widespread use made Ghanaians prefer working in their own mines rather than for the Europeans (Armah et al., 2013). Thus, practically the whole small-scale mining sector was made illicit. It was not until the implementation of the mercury act of 1989, that the buying and usage of mercury for mining was legalized, thus formalizing the sector causing a new gold rush (Donkor et al., 2006). About ten years ago, the small-scale mining sector accounted for around 20% ofGhana's total gold output (Hilson, 2003). Currently, Ghana, as well as many other SubSaharan countries has liberalized their mining investment codes to attract more capital (Campbell 2003; Pegg 2006). This in turn has had devastating implications for rural communities. Examples of such are displacement (often implying loss of farmland), leading to increased unemployment, which again leads many into being galamsey miners (Banchirigah, 2008). Today, a large part of those working in the small-scale mining sector operate illegally. According to Hilson 2000), it is estimated to be around 30,000 legal small-scale miners, and as much as 170 000, or more, illegal. By a more recent source, it is estimated that around 265 000, or 85%

of small- scale miners were unlicensed (Carson et al., 2006). Another source stated that as much as 1 million operate illegally (Banchirigah, 2008). Thus, the number can be seen to rapidly increase.

In Ghana, the mining policy processes themselves are characterized as having a very low degree of public participation, as well as parliamentarians lacking resources and skills to understand the complex issues regarding mining. This further combines with a situation where politicians very seldom are replaced when responding inadequately to the needs of the country's development, making improvements in governance difficult (Aryee et al., 2003).

The discourse of illegal small-scale miners in Ghana can be portrayed as generally highly negative, focusing on the galamseys' role as irresponsibly using mercury in their extraction of gold with no concern for the communities' health and environment. This is paired with a situation where many officials tend to view small-scale miners, and particularly galamsey, as an obstacle to development. The sentiments are often that the small-scale miners spoil the investment potential the country can realise from the largescale mining companies.

In 1989, when small-scale mining was formalized, those practicing traditional smallscale mining without a license, as had been done in several centuries, suddenly turned into illegal workers. With few alternative sources of income, low ability to register due to bureaucratic delays, and no access to education regarding how to mine more efficiently and environmentally sound; these miners are now characterized as a highly marginalized group. Another main source of inability to register is that most land set off for mining is already assigned to large- scale mining companies, forcing locals to pursue illegal mining. By making miners' operations illicit, it also

undermines awareness rising of mining's environmental- and health effects. Thus, it is argued that criminalizing miners in this way, without offering proper alternatives is not a viable solution to the issue (Tschkert & Singha, 2007).

The general illegal mining operations, can be said to have a bad influence on the investment environment for legal and bigger mining companies. To mitigate this, corporations have invested in organizations working to promote alternative activities to the mining. Examples of such are cassava harvesting, farming and poultry rearing, which have been done with limited success (Banchirigah, 2008).

Further, according to Hilson, most locals are reluctant to undergo training to become registered legal miners (2001). This is hypothesized as rooted in the fact that governmental policy processes have not been done with sufficient stakeholder participation. It is even reported that many managers and mine engineers state that efforts taken with regards to policymaking and implementation in the mining sector has been done very poorly (Hilson, 2001). However, in the academic sphere one is starting to realize that what is needed to deal with the galamsey sector is an integrated approach that provides space and support for active community participation (Tschakert & Singha, 2007).

2.3 Reasons for Children Engaging in Illegal Gold Mining Activities

First of all, gold mines or activity is regarded as very enticing, especially for those hoping for a lucky break (Ofosu-Mensah & Ababio, 2011). This has resulted in the unemployed people, the young people from communities near mine sites to move to the mining sites to work in order to increase their standard of living. According to Akabzaa (2000), the reason behind why the majority of young people engage themselves in galamsey work is that they are unable to secure jobs due to their low

educational qualifications and background. This has played a crucial role in the number of migrants who engage in illegal gold mining activities because of the benefits you get in the trade.

Secondly, another reason worth mentioning is prestige and high lifestyle. Ofosu-Mensah and Ababio (2011) assert that the rationale behind why the majority of young people are trooping into the mining activity is due to the prestige and high lifestyle those miner exhibit and enjoy. Prestige connotes the idea of reputation, or influence arising from success, achievement, rank or other favorable attributes. Promise of wealth is another reason young people engage themselves in galamsey activity. It is been asserted that people

who normally mine the gold themselves are more likely to make fortunes quickly than other professions. Ofosu-Mensah (1999) assets that the socio-cultural significance of gold in traditional rich areas in Ghana, combined with the difficulty in enforcement and monitoring, may have accounted for the non-compliance with the Law banning illegal gold mining.

Poverty is regarded as the most important reason why children of school-going age quit school and work. Families in the rural setting find means to raise their revenue by taking up mining activities (Bloeman, 2009: Boas & Hatloy 2006: Hilson, 2010). And also, families with poor background are those with more children, so it becomes very difficult for them to survive on the income of only one family member which is also quite less. So they make their children their source of income. According to Acheampong (2000), children as young as eight years involve themselves in gold business. It was examined that some of these young children even work to feed their unemployed parents and spend the rest of the income to feed and clothe themselves.

Some also give themselves a break from school in order to get money, especially when their parents are unable to provide for them. This has resulted in most of these children becoming school dropouts because they get so much from the gold business that they no longer consider education as an important venture. Also, some parents are so irresponsible that they expect their children to work for their own upkeep (Bloeman, 2009).

2.4 Mining Activities and their Influence on Pupils' Attendance in School

Education is a key to the realization of most of the goals and targets of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The World Conference on Education for all held in March, 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, marked a new beginning in the worldwide journey to universalize basic education and wipe out illiteracy (Haddad et. al., 1990). Again, it is captured in the global Sustainable Development Goals which aim at achieving universal basic education for children everywhere able to complete a full course of basic schooling. It is also particularly well reflected in Ghana's 1992 constitution which provides for education to be free, compulsory and available to all (Government of Ghana, 1992). Nonetheless, according to UNESCO, 2007, hundreds of millions of children tend to drop out of school each school passing year.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2008) has indicated that the prevalence of children in mining is growing. The Organisation's background document for the World Day against Child Labour was on eliminating Child Labour in Mining and Quarrying. Children in mining have become a focus of attention as its links to many of the worst forms of child labour on the African continent which has become very obvious. Children are in mining for several reasons – family disintegration through poverty or HIV/AIDS as well as war and conflict; traditional expectations of children

as income earners; negligence and premature independence from parental control. ILO/IPEC (2004) has undertaken a number of quite detailed studies into child labour in Ghana, as part of multi-nation studies.

Local communities at the fringes of mines have suffered and continue to suffer various degrees of adverse impact of mining operations. Some communities have suffered militaristic attacks, others have had their water sources polluted, their land destroyed, and many of them continue to suffer low and inadequate compensation packages. Concerns have also been expressed about inadequate housing, youth unemployment, family disorganisation, school dropouts, prostitution and drug abuse associated with the mining boom. In most cases these impacts affect people of different age groups and gender differently. Due to the sub-sectors' remoteness, informal character and mobility, the number of children involved in mining and quarrying activities is difficult to measure. However, the ILO estimates that nearly 1 million children under the age of 5 to 17 years of age work in the mines and quarries. Saiduddin (2003) in a study of junior high pupils stipulated that there is a positive correlation between achievement and attendance. One article explains, "When many are absent or chronically tardy, achievement levels suffer" (p. 1). Ananga (2011) explained that the results of his research signify that enhanced rates of class attendance were connected to enhanced academic performance and the stresses on the academic remuneration of class attendance were also efficient. Roby (2004) in a study of attendance and achievement in Ohio schools believed the positive impact of fine school attendance on academic attainment might be superior to what people have in the past believe. Gump (2005) identified a tough negative correlation between absences and final grades. Furthermore, Gump postulates that pupils who desire to succeed

academically ought to attend class, and that teachers must promote attendance. This suggests that there is a positive correlation between examination performance and attendance.

School attendance, therefore, refers to the habitual practice of act of being present at school. Attendance rates to school are often used as indications of positive a tool for monitoring. Whilst truancy is frequently a feature of pupil's debate, there is a lack of available data on its frequency. It is possible to infer over all trends that showed a gradual increase in attendance rates from the dip experienced in the year following the raising of the school leaving age. According to him, these surveys, however, were not able to distinguish between absence due to illness and absence due to truancies and therefore, can only provide a general indication of improved 'average' attitude such as the proportion of pupils chosen to remain beyond statutory leaving age or a further education college.

2.5 Mining Activities and their Influence on Pupils' Academic Performance at School

Academic performance refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers. It can as well be said to be the ability for pupils to study and remember facts and being able to communicate their knowledge either verbally or written down on paper. The concept of poor academic performance varies in its definition. Diaz (2003) considers poor academic performance or academic failure as the situation in which the subject does not attain the expected achievement according to his or her abilities, resulting in an altered personality which affects all other aspects of life. Some indicators of poor academic performance are low Grade Point Average (GPA), poor class participation, poor coordination among teachers and students, and absenteeism.

Defining and measuring the quality of education is not a simple issue and the complexity of this process increases due to the changing values of quality attributes associated with the different stakeholders' viewpoint. The other important factor playing a part in the quality of pupils` performance is the learning- teaching environment, which can be approached in two ways (Gump, 2005):

i) Teaching Technology: a. Teaching and Learning Practices: Interaction between Teachers and Pupils; Materials and Resources used in the Classroom (e.g., ICT); The Nature of Learning Tasks Done by pupils. b. Academic Standards and Assessment Practices: Curriculum content and graduation requirements; Methods for Assessing Pupil Progress (e.g., Tests, homework) c. Class Size and Teaching Loads.

ii) School Environment: a. Partnerships: Parental and community involvement b. Peer effects c. Internal organisation of schools, leadership, and academic norms d. Safety e. Quality of facilities. The above indicates that the quality of teaching, learning achievement and teacher quality all have within them complex, closely related micro- and macro level elements of observable qualities, also elements that cannot be or can only indirectly be observed; while there are additionally factors making up the teaching environment (teaching technology, school environment). The notable role of teacher quality is emphasised via a number of research results, and we can see that other school activity parameters, like financial conditions, the number of pupils per class, school structure or equipment, hardly have any detectable effect (Heemskerk, 2005). Thus, the existence of teaching technology and equipment in itself is no guarantee of quality education, i.e. such items will only have a favourable effect if the school employs quality teachers as well. Infrastructural parameters do not influence achievement directly, yet they do communicate the effect of other, non-

observable factors, and they also determine existing opportunities and limitations quite well. From the point of view of pupil and school achievement, teachers` professional qualities and dedication are of the utmost importance, together with the applied teaching practices and methods; and these, in an optimal case, will be coupled with a knowledge of pupils` attitudes and motivations and the use of information technology (Jing-Lin, Gang & Wei, 2009). According to research data examining teaching practice indicators, pupil achievement can be linked to the characteristics of classroom practice. It is true, however, that this only explains a small part of any achievement scattering, a reason for which might be

iii) School Environment: (a). Partnerships: Parental and community involvement (b). Peer effects c. Internal organisation of schools, leadership, and academic norms d. Safety e. Quality of facilities. The above indicates that the quality of teaching, learning achievement and teacher quality all have within them complex, closely related micro- and macro level elements of observable qualities, also elements that cannot be or can only indirectly be observed; while there are additionally factors making up the teaching environment (teaching technology, school environment). The notable role of teacher quality is emphasised via a number of research results, and we can see that other school activity parameters, like financial conditions, the number of pupils per class, school structure or equipment, hardly have any detectable effect (Heemskerk, 2005). Thus, the existence of teaching technology and equipment in itself is no guarantee of quality education, i.e. such items will only have a favourable effect if the school employs quality teachers as well. Infrastructural parameters do not influence achievement directly, yet they do communicate the effect of other, non-observable factors, and they also determine existing opportunities and limitations quite well. From the point of view of pupil and school achievement, teachers`

professional qualities and dedication are of the utmost importance, together with the applied teaching practices and methods; and these, in an optimal case, will be coupled with a knowledge of pupils` attitudes and motivations and the use of information technology (Jing-Lin, Gang & Wei, 2009). According to research data examining teaching practice indicators, pupil achievement can be linked to the characteristics of classroom practice. It is true, however, that this only explains a small part of any achievement scattering, a reason for which might be the fact that the indicators of classroom practice correlate with other, non-observed teacher characteristics (Jin-Lin et al., 2009). Research data also indicates that pupils` cognitive and deductive abilities are developed much more effectively if teachers have a constructivist attitude as opposed to an immediate knowledge-transfer one (Asiedu-Addo, 2009).

2.6 Society Attitude towards Education

Research has established that parental attitude and encouragement has a great deal of weight on students' education and height of success attained in education. Parents and community attitudes towards education are largely influenced by traditional beliefs. Ghanaian children continue to face barriers to accessing and completing education that result in drop-out, whereby children fail to complete their full cycle of basic education. Canagarajah and Coulomb (1998) state the families have a role to play in a child's decision to school or work. Father's education has a significant negative effect on child labour the effects is stronger for girls than boy" to them estimations also show that father's with very high level of education are likely to have a negative effect on the livelihood of working while mothers education seems to influence only schooling participations than working. Canagarjah and coulomb (1998) further emphasis that "the presence of at home is likely to effect the child's likelihood of going to school as opposed to work". Chernichously (1985) states that "it has been

argued in the past that ages and presence of gender of siblings have a strong effect on schooling and work pattern of members of the household". In a survey conducted by Brandon (1994), it was found that in the school equation, there is a positive marginal effect on school participation. As subjects of undesirable socio-cultural expectations within the household and community, most girls take on much of the burden of sustaining the family in terms of labour, child-care and income generation, and are extremely vulnerable in the face of persistent poverty.

2.7 Government Policy on School Attendance

The development of education in Ghana since independence has been and continues to be guided by various education acts and programmes, the most fundamental being the Education Act of 1961. The Education Act of 1961 is the principal legislation on the right to education and its states in section 2(1): "Every child who has attained the school going age as determined by the Minister shall attend a course of instruction as laid down by the Minister in a school recognised for the purpose by the Minister." The 1992 Constitution gives further impetus to the provision of education as a basic right for all Ghanaians. Article 38 sub-section 2 states: "The Government shall within two years after parliament first meets after coming into force of this constitution draw up a programme for the implementation within the following ten years for the provision of a free, compulsory universal basic education". In 1996 the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme was launched. This is a 10- year programme (1996 – 2005) designed to establish the policy framework, strategies and activities to achieve free and compulsory basic education for all children of school going age. Before 2002 Pre-School Education was not part of the formal system; it was introduced as a result of recommendation made by the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms (October, 2002).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter presents the methodology that guides the study. Specifically, the chapter covers research design, population (target and accessible), sample, sampling technique, data collection instruments.

3.1 Study Design

A research design is a plan that describes the conditions and procedures for collecting and analysing data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In research design, it is believed that a good and careful design ensures that the research is valid and could yield consistent results every time (Yin, 2014). This research used phenomenological research design.

Phenomenological research is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand and describe the universal essence of a phenomenon (Bliss, 2016). The approach investigates the everyday experiences of human beings while suspending the researchers' preconceived assumptions about the phenomenon. In other words, phenomenological research studies lived experiences to gain deeper insights into how people understand those experiences. Researchers using phenomenological research design assume that people use a universal structure or essence to make sense of their experience. They interpret the participants' feelings, perceptions, and beliefs to clarify the essence of the phenomenon under investigation. Phenomenological research design requires the researcher to bracket whatever a priori assumption they have about the experience or phenomenon (Groenewald, 2004).

3.2 Population

A target population is the larger group that one aspires to apply findings (Yin, 2014). The target population of the study was all pupils at the public Junior High Schools, in the Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The accessible population of this study was all the pupils from the five selected schools in the Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

3.3 Sample

A sample is small portion of a target population (Yin, 2014). The sample of the study consisted of five (5) government assisted Junior High School students in the Atiwa West District, out of the 280 students from these five selected Schools, 110 Students were sampled for the study. According to Asamoah-Gyimah and Duodu (2007) ,a sample of 10% to 30% to the accessible size is desirous in qualitative study.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Different sampling techniques were employed to select respondents for the study. Purposive sampling was used to select the five junior high schools namely: Pameng D/A Junior High School, Bomaa Presbyterian Junior High School, Awenare D/A Junior High School, Akrofufu D/A Junior High School and Asamama D/A Junior High School. These schools were located at the illegal mining communities and that; they receive the immediate impact of the mining activities in the Atiwa West District of Ghana. This was adopted because of their knowledge in the phenomenon under investigation.

Pupil participants were selected using snowballing approach. Pupils who engaged in illegal mining activities were used to reach out to other pupils who also engaged in illegal mining.

3.5 Research Instrument

The study employed semi-structured interview.

3.6 Semi-Structured Interview

Being aware that questionnaires alone cannot provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, interviews were also conducted. According to Creswell (2012) an interview is an interactive process between a researcher and a subject in which the researcher poses a question and records answers supplied by the subject. Similarly, Mitchell and Jolley (2010) also perceived interview as a survey in which a researcher orally asks participants questions. Denscombe (2010) asserted that "although there are a lot of superficial similarities between a conversation and an interview, interviews are actually something more than just a conversation" (p. 172). Denscombe further identified three categories of interviews namely; structured interview, semi-structured interview and unstructured interview.

In this study, a semi-structured interview was used to collect qualitative data on the influence of illegal mining on school attendance, and academic performance of junior high school pupils. The interview enabled participants to express their views and concerns freely and explicit. The interview guide was designed based on emergent issues from literature.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Study

Trustworthiness is used to evaluate the worth of the qualitative data. To establish the trustworthiness of a qualitative study, researchers have to ensure: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of qualitative findings (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). In this study the researcher adopted Gal et al. (2007) model of establishing trustworthiness as a means of evaluating the worth of the study. The

model was adopted due to the fact that it is developed conceptually and is widely used by qualitative researchers.

3.7.1 Credibity

Credibility is defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of a research finding (Anney, 2014). To ensure credibility of the present study, the researcher spent sufficient time in the various sampled schools and with participants to gain insight into the context of the study (prolonged engagement), presented collected data to participants to verify (member checking), and finally exposed the collected data to colleagues for constructive criticism (peer debriefing). Feedback from colleagues was used to improve upon the quality of the results.

3.7.2 Transferability

Transferability is explained to mean the degree to which qualitative results can be applied with participants in other context (Bitsch, 2005). To facilitate transferability of the results, the researcher provided detailed description of the enquiry and participants were selected purposively.

3.7.3 Dependability

According to Bitsch (2005), dependability is described as “the stability of findings over time”. To ensure the study dependability, the researcher submits it for external audit by a lecturer in the department of basic education who was not involved in the research process to examine the process and product of the study. The feedback generated from the external audit was used to improve upon the trustworthiness of the study.

3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is a proof that data and interpretation of findings are not fabrications from the researcher's imaginations, but are truly derived from participants (Anney, 2014). To establish the confirmability of the study's qualitative findings, the researcher highlighted every step of data analysis that was made in order to provide justification for the decision made (audit trial).

3.8 Pilot Study

Pilot study is a preliminary study conducted to help researchers make informed decisions about a major project (Crossman, 2017). The outcome of a pilot test enables the researcher to recognize, and to rectify problems, ahead of the main research being conducted (Eiselen & Uys, 2005). It provides an indication of the expected response rate. As a result, it is highly recommended that researchers pilot their instruments on subjects with characteristics similar to the target population of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Accordingly, the researcher piloted the instrument among a group of twenty pupils in two Junior High Schools in Atiwa West District. The researcher chose these schools in the same district because it has similar characteristics to the setting of the study, such as teaching time-table, teaching and learning resources, and mining resources. Awanta and Asiedu-Addo (2008) conceived pilot testing of instruments as a window which enabled researchers to modify items that were difficult to understand, reduce ambiguities and incorporate new categories of responses that were identified as relevant to the study.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire administration spanned four weeks, and were delivered to the respective schools personally by the researcher for the pupils to respond to them. This

was after permission had been sought and granted by the District Directorate of Education with a letter of introduction from the Department of Foundational Education, University of Education. Upon reaching the schools, the researcher went to the head teachers to introduce himself and sought permission by handing over the letter of authorization from the District Education Office before permission was given. The researcher visited the schools that were involved in the study to administer the instrument to the pupil respondents concerned. Parent participants were however visited at their homes for the collection of data as agreed upon.

The instruments were administered to all the sampled schools in four weeks. In order to ensure that the instruments were well completed, enough time was given to the pupils so that they could have time to complete them well. The return rate for the instrument was 100% since its administration was personally done by the researcher.

3.10 Method of Data Analysis

This chapter presents results and discussions of the study. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of illegal mining on School Attendance and Academic Performance among students in public junior high schools in Atiwa West District. Descriptive and Analytical methods were used. The major areas of the questionnaire were considered one after the other. Students' response to each item were worked out into percentages and out of which tables were drawn. From the table drawn, one can easily ascertain the general standpoint of respondents of each question. The tables also give the opinion of all the respondents from the various schools in the study area. Having presented the results in this manner, each item in the questionnaire was taken and discussed to bring out how varying views were put up on each item. The results presented in this chapter are based on the following research questions;

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents results and discussions of the study. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of illegal mining on school attendance and academic performance of public junior high school students in the Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Descriptive survey was used for this study and research instruments used were questionnaire and interview. The results presented in this chapter are based on the following research questions.

- Why are Junior High School Students engaging in illegal mining in the Atiwa West District.
- To what extent do illegal mining activities influence school attendance in Junior High Schools in Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana.
- To what extent do illegal mining activities influence the Academic Performance of Junior High School pupils in the Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The demographic characteristics of 110 pupils were considered in the study which include sex and age. The details are presented as follows.

The sex distribution of pupil participants was explored and its details illustrated in Figure 4.1.

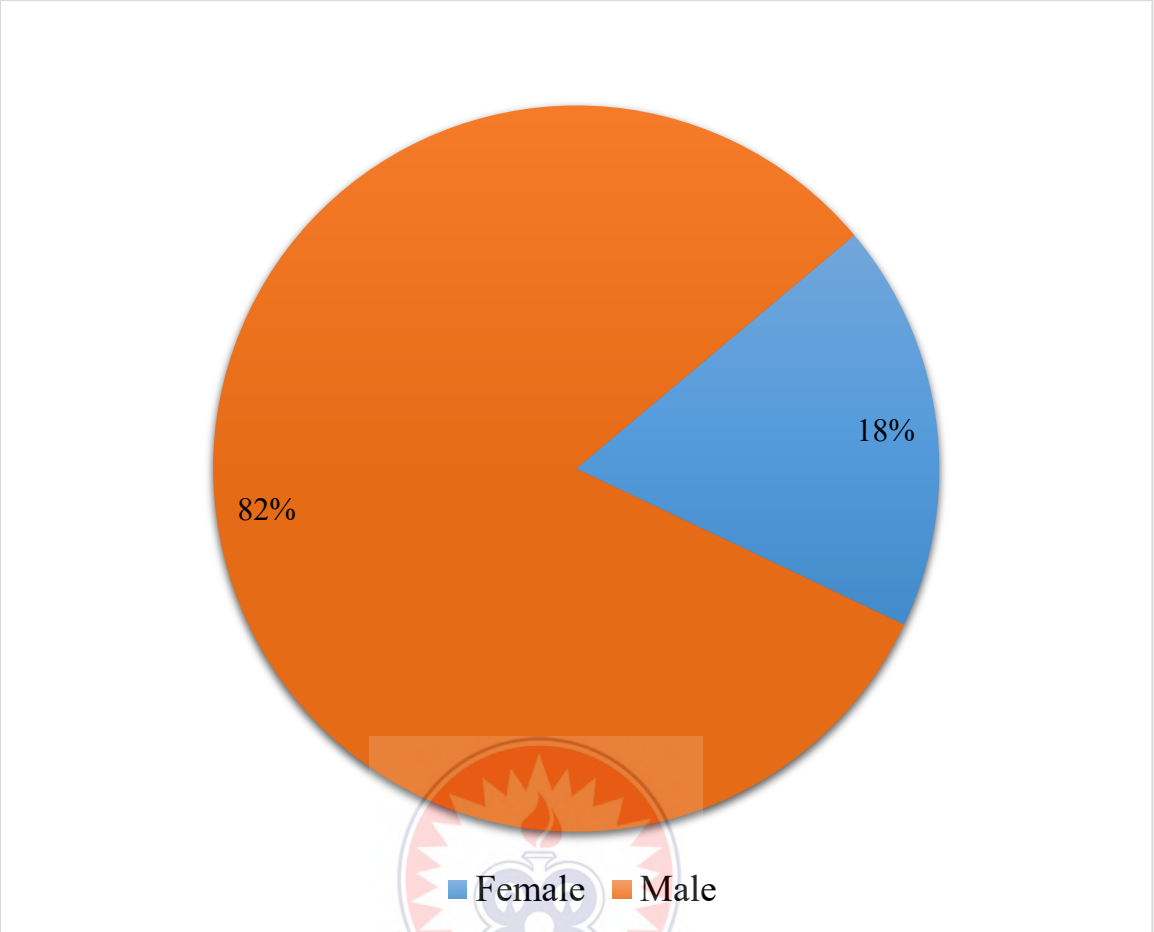

Figure 4.1: Sex distribution of Pupils

Source: Field Data (2022)

From Figure 4.1, the data show that 90(82%) of the respondents were males whereas 20(18%) were females. The indication here is that there were more male pupil participants than females in the study.

4.2 The age Distribution of Pupil Participants was Explored and its Details Illustrated in Figure

Also, the age distributions of pupil participants were explored and its details illustrated in Table 4.1

Table 4.1: Age Distribution of Pupil Participants

Age of pupils	Frequency	Percentage
6-09	0	0
10-13	30	27.3
14-17	75	68.2
18 and above	5	4.5
Total	**110**	**100**

Source; Field Data (2022)

From Table 4.1, the data revealed that the modal age group among pupils was 14-17years(n=75,68.2%) with the least represented age group 5(4.5%) being 18 years and above. Also 30(27.3%) of pupil respondents were between the ages of 10 and 13 years with non-representing the age group between 6 and 9 years. The distribution means that pupil participants in the study were teenagers.

4.3 Research Question 1

What are the reasons for Junior High School Students engaging in illegal mining in the Atiwa West District?

In relation to the first research question, the study aimed at gathering data on the reasons why Junior High School Students engage in illegal mining in the Atiwa West District.

Table 4.2: Reasons for Students' Involvement in Illegal Mining

Reasons for students' involvement in illegal mining	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Financial constraints of parents	95	86.4
Students desire for money	10	9.1
Lack of parental control	5	4.5
Total	**110**	**100**

Source: Field Data (2022)

The study sought to find out the factors contributing to pupils involvement in illegal mining activities instead of attending school. From the figure above, it was revealed through the interview that, (n-95,86.4%) of the student respondents said they are into illegal mining activities due to financial constraints of their parents,(n-10,9.1%) said they are also into illegal mining activities because they have the desire for money and (n-5,4.5%) of the respondents said due to lack of parental control. From the data indication, it was evidently clear that majority of students are into illegal mining activities due to financial constraints of their parents, followed by students themselves desire for money and the least reason has to do with lack of parental control.

4.4 Research Question 2

To what extent do illegal mining activities influence school attendance in Junior High Schools in Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana?

In relation to the second research question, the study aimed at gathering data on how illegal mining activities influence school attendance in Junior High Schools in Atiwa West District using interview.

Table 4.3: Illegal Mining Activities Influence on School Attendance

Illegal mining activities influence on school attendance	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
The time for mining activity coincides with the time for school	80	72.8
Students absent themselves from school for mining without official permission	15	13.6
Mining activity has led to low school turnout	5	4.5
Due to mining activity, students find it difficult to do homework	10	9.1
Total	**110**	**100**

Source: Field Data (2022)

The study sought to find out the extent to which illegal mining activities influence school attendance in the study area. Carefully look at the table above, during the interview it was revealed that, majority of student respondents said, time for mining activities coincide with time for school representing (n-80,72.8%), Also,(n-15,13.6%) of students responded that, they absent themselves from school for mining without official permission,(n-10,9.1%) of the students responded that due to mining activity, they find it difficult to do their homework and (n-5,4.5%) of students said mining activity has led to low school turnout. The findings of the data shows that, greater number of students failed to attend school because, the time for mining activities coincide with that of school hours, followed by students absent themselves from school for mining activity without official permission respectively.

4.5 Research Question 3

To what extent do illegal mining activities influence the Academic Performance of Junior High School pupils in the Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana?

In relation to the third research question, the study aimed at gathering data on how illegal mining activities contributed to pupils academic performance in junior high schools using interview.

Table 4.4: Illegal Mining Activities Influence on Academic Performance

Influence of mining activities on academic performance	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
The time students used in mining activities affect their academic performance	50	45.5
The work of children at the mining site has negative effect on academic performance	30	27.3
Students are not able to complete their academic assignments due to their engagement in mining activities	20	18.1
Mining activities have enabled students acquire basic educational needs	10	9.1
Total	**110**	**100**

Source: Field Data (2022)

The study sought to find out the extent to which illegal mining activities influence the academic performance of Junior High School pupils in Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. From the figure above, it was indicated through interview that,(n-50,45.5%) of the student respondents said the time they used in mining activities affect their academic performance,(n-30,27.3%) of the student respondents

said the work they do at the mining site has negative effect on their academic performance,(n-20,18.1%) of student respondents said, they are not able to complete their academic assignments due to their engagement in mining activity and (n-10,9.1%) responded that, mining activities have enabled them acquire basic educational needs. The data shows that, majority of the students admitted that, the time they used in mining activities affect their academic performance, followed by the work they do at the mining site also has negative effect on their academic performance, others also admitted that, they are not able to complete their academic assignments due to their engagement in mining activities and the least of the student respondents said, mining activities have enabled them acquire basic educational needs.

4.6 Students Views on Academic Performance

Finally, question was asked on the academic performance of the students in their internal examinations and final examination for junior high school organize by the West African Examination Council From table 7 below, it clearly shows that ,the average academic performance of the students was 27.7% said by the respondents,50% said students perform poorly in their academic performance,18.2% of the students said the academic performance of students was good and 9.1% said the academic performance was excellent. It was learnt that, students who come to school regularly perform excellently and good while the absenteeism students perform poorly

Table 4.5: Academic Performance of Pupils

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Excellent	10	9.1
Good	20	18.2
Average	25	22.7
Poor	55	50
Total	**110**	**100**

Source: Field Data (2022)

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter contains conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations given to the impact of illegal mining on public Junior High school pupils in Atiwa West District.

5.1 Summary

This study explored the impact of illegal mining on school attendance and academic performance among students in Public Junior High Schools in Atiwa West District. The study made use of a qualitative research design. Primary data was obtained using semi-structured interview. The sample of the study consisted of five (5) government assisted Junior High School students in the Atiwa West District, out of the 280 students from these five selected Schools, 110 Students were sampled for the study.

5.2 Conclusion

The study has revealed that indeed illegal mining activities done by students do have negative effect on school attendance and academic performance, but that notwithstanding, there are other causes like poverty, broken home, distance to school, inadequate parental control which also have great effects on school attendance and academic performance.

5.3 Recommendation

From the conclusion, it can be realised that the illegal mining activities indeed have negative effect on school attendance and academic performance. From the research, the following recommendations are offered.

- Parents and teachers must educate their wards and students on the importance of education and parents must provide their wards basic needs. This would motivate and rekindle students' interest in schooling and reduce the rate of absenteeism. Parents must be made aware that it is their responsibility to bear the cost of their children's needs including education.
- Again, teacher should be loving and receptive so as to encourage students who face challenges at home to approach them. They should also try and find out from students why they absent themselves from schools so that they can offer the necessary assistance and counselling to these students
- Non-governmental organizations (N.G.Os.) should come to the aid of children whose parents cannot afford to pay their fees. This can be done when the school heads communicate regularly to the N.G.Os on the problems faced by the needy but brilliant students. This will motivate other students to take their studies serious.
- The various Districts Assemblies can also help by setting up educational funds which will assist needy students and also encourage parents to send their wards to school instead of engaging their wards in illegal mining activities.
- The traditional authorities and district assemblies can also assist by enacting bye-laws which prompt parents to see to it that their wards attend school regularly.
- The government can also help by providing the needed school materials regularly and check the illegal payment of unapproved fees on educational materials to enable school children to be in school. • The implementation of the New Educational Reform and Free-Compulsory Universal Basic Education

should be strengthened and implemented fully by the government to assist the education of pupils.

- Communities can also establish small-scale agro-processing industry to help raise the standard of living in for the people particularly those in deprived communities and districts.

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APPENDIX

Interview Guide for Pupils

This questionnaire is designed to investigate the influence of illegal mining on school attendance, and academic performance of some selected junior high school pupils in the Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The first section of the questionnaire intends to obtain personal information, and in the second, third and fourth sections there are questions that will find out the influence of illegal mining activities on school attendance, reasons why pupils engage in illegal mining and academic performance respectively. Please, respond honestly to the items and you can be assured that your responses will be kept confidential.

Section A: Background Demographic Data – Please fill in or check the appropriate response below.

1. Sex of respondent

(i) Male [ ] (ii) Female [ ]

2. How old are you?

(i) 6-9 years [ ] (ii) 10-13 years [ ] (ii) 14-17 years [ ] (ii) 18 years and above [ ]

Section B: Influence of Illegal Mining on Pupils' Attendance, reasons, and academic performance

Interview guide on reasons for children to engaging in illegal mining

1. 1.Is mining activity beneficial in this area? YES/NO
2. Do youth find it difficult to secure employment due to low academic background? YES/NO
3. Do the youth prefer better lifestyle here? YES/NO
4. Is poverty rate high here? YES/NO
5. Do most parents neglect their children in this area? YES/NO

Interview guide on influence of school attendance

1. the time for mining activity coincides with the time for school. YES/NO
2. Students absent themselves from school for mining without official permission. YES/NO
3. Mining activity has led to low school turnout. YES/NO
4. Due to mining activit y, I find it difficult to do my homework. YES/NO
5. The mining job has helped me to secure my basic needs. YES/NO

Interview guide on influence of academic performance

1. The time I used in mining activities affect my academic performance. YES/NO
2. Mining activities have negative effect on academic performance. YES/NO
3. Students are not able to complete their academic assignments due to their engagement in mining activities. YES/NO
4. Mining activities have helped improve the acquisition of basic educational needs. YES/NO

SECTION C

This interview guide is designed to investigate the influence of illegal mining on school attendance, reasons and academic performance of some selected junior high school pupils in the Atiwa West District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The first section of the questionnaire intends to obtain personal information, and in the second, third and fourth sections there are questions that will find out the influence of illegal mining activities on school attendance, reasons and academic performance respectively. Please, respond honestly to the items and you can be assured that your responses will be kept confidential.

1. How old are you?
2. How do you spend the money you earn?
3. Has mining operations led to the reduction in your attendance? If yes, in what way?
4. How does the work in mining related activities interfere with your studies
5. In your own opinion what are the influence of mining activities on pupils' education in the stated areas?
6. In your own perception has the advent of mining activity in the area helped education in the district? Give reasons
7. In what way could you prioritize mining activities over school?