UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

ASSESSING PARENTAL MOTIVATION IN ENROLMENT OF THEIR WARDS AT KINDERGARTEN IN AKYEMANSA DISTRICT

MARIAM ABU ANKARAZINNYE
(220012425)

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JANUARY, 2024

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Mariam Abu Ankarazinnye, hereby declare that this dissertation with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledge, the entire thesis is my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or in whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: ………………………………

Date: …………………………………

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.
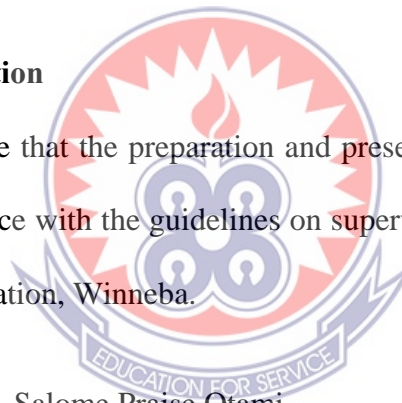
Supervisor's Name: Dr. Salome Praise Otami

Signature: ………………………………

Date: …………………………………

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents and all of my love ones.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am blessed to have Dr. Salome Praise Otami as my supervisor, guiding me along this intricate path. I deeply appreciate her prompt responses to my corrections and the valuable suggestions that have enriched my work. Her excellent supervisory role has been pivotal to my progress. Again, I am grateful to Mr. Alfred and Mr. Robert Kudiabor for their mentorship, which extended beyond academia; they were more than a father figure, offering support, advice, and love that have contributed to a holistic transformation in my life.

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I express heartfelt thanks to my husband, Sumailla Abass for his financial support throughout my programme. In the same vein, I appreciate the support from my family for their prayers and contributions throughout this transformative journey.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to assess parental motivation in enrolment of their wards at Kindergarten in the Akyemansa District. This study was underpinned by positivist philosophy in line with quantitative research approach with a descriptive survey design. The population of this study comprises of all parents whose wards were enrolled at the public early childhood centres in the Akyemansa District. Sample size for the study was seventy-seven (77) participants. Simple random technique was used to select the kindergarten schools in Akyemansa District whiles purposive sampling technique was used to select the parents. Questionnaire was the main instrument used to collect data for the study. The study data was analysed by coding data using Software Package for Social Science and generated descriptive statistics such as percentage, frequency counts. The study found that the respondents had a very positive impression about kindergarten and maintained that children needed kindergarten experience prior to enrolling in primary school. This perception was borne out of the belief by the respondents that kindergarten prepares children for primary school. Finally, the study found that factors that motivated parents to enrol their children in kindergarten were the desire to prepare their children adequately for primary school. The study recommended that the State adopt measures that will improve communication with parents, strengthen collaboration between school authorities and parents, involve parents in decision making in schools, and strengthen school-community relationship in order to improve parental motivation and involvement in children's education.
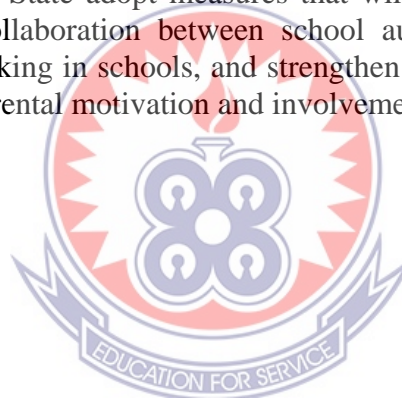
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Parental motivation according to Moneva, Pestano and Vertulfo, (2020) is defined as a motivation or an act given by the parents towards their children. Parents provide proper motivation can help their students being productive in school. Motivated students can give pleasure to their parents and persistence in their studies. They tend to give more effort which required time in their studies (Moneva et al., 2020). However, the achievements of the students depend on how their parents motivate them. Students need motivation from their parents to have a strong desire in their studies. Students who are more inspired and under control of their parents have a better academic success (Atta & Jamil, 2012). Parent with involvement to their children can affect the student attitude and behaviour including their achievement (McNeal, 2014). Parents with the highest level of intelligence will be transmitted to the student that can cause of greater achievement (Neha & Shobhna, 2002). Parents who made a highest demand of encouragement can make the students anxiety and fear of failure (Koskie, 2014). It is not necessary to reject when parents give extrinsic rewards but it would be based when providing and receiving rewards become repetitive (Niu, 2016).

However, the enrolment rate of children into public schools have increased recently. To achieve these high enrolment rates, stakeholders identified and paid critical attention to demand and supply side determinants that influenced the participation of young children in formal education. The supply factors included school characteristics, availability of educational facilities (both quantity and quality), location of schools, policy on education (e.g; whether compulsory or free or fee paying), percentage of female teachers, availability of credit markets, better road and communication

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infrastructure, impact of globalization, and the state's influence and ability to put pressure on parents to send their children to school (Amuchie, Asotibe, Audu, 2015; Bolaji, Gray & Campbell-Evans, 2015; Nudzor, 2015).

On the demand side, factors that have influenced school enrolment included household resource constraints, socioeconomic status of the family (including family wealth, educational background especially that of mothers, occupation, family structure and size, etc.), and cost of education (both direct and indirect costs). Other demand factors included perception of labour market prospects for people with formal education, parental perception of the future rewards of education that accrue to their children as well as the expected rewards for the parents themselves and parental aspirations for their children. Cultural traditions, power relations within the family (especially the position of women within the household), distance to school, and place of residence of parents are also major demand factors (Kipng'etich, Boit & Bomett, 2013).

Of the supply and demand factors, the role of parents has been identified as a very critical factor in children's participation in school (Avvisati, Besbas & Guyon, 2010; Friedman, 2011; Zoppi, 2016). Parental participation in schooling has always been apparent in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly with the intention of improving equitable access, retention, quality and performance of schooling but it is only in recent years that it has become more formalised in policy with new forms of parental participation emerging (Hedges, Mulder, James, & Lawson, 2016; Mekonnen, W. G., 2017). Afridi, Anderson, and Mundy (2014) also maintain that parents are key stakeholders in programmes and decentralisation measures in education and that there is evidence that the involvement of parents in education help in the promotion of access

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for children, school governance and management, teaching and learning, and accountability at all levels.

Evidence from different countries indicate that parental motivation and aspiration play a crucial role in their children's education, especially in the children's schooling and attainment (Jung & Zhang, 2016; Lian 2016; Grolnick, 2014). Chiapa, Garrido, and Prina (2012), after an investigation of the effect on parental aspirations of exposure to professionals via the Mexican anti-poverty programme PROGRESA, found a positive correlation between parental aspirations and children's educational participation and attainment. Samal (2012) notes that parents' attitudes towards their children's education is important in determining school attendance and academic achievement of their children. Samal opined further that parents' favourable attitude towards schooling and education enhances their involvement in their children's present and future studies. Parents are also aware of the importance of providing learning support and educational input at home. Parents support for children's learning at home include encouraging children to do their homework and school projects, providing learning resources and encouraging children to use them, encouraging children to learn, communicating with children and discussing problems and employing tutors. The evidence, thus, shows that parental motivation is crucial in determining the kind of education their children receive.

The crucial question that has often been asked is 'what motivates parents to participate in their children's education'? According to Halle, Blasberg, Chrisler, Shana, Susman-Stillman, Cox, and Cleveland, (2011), among the many considerations that parents weigh when choosing an early care and education setting for their children include convenience factors (**e.g.** cost, location, hours of care, health and safety as well as their perception about the programme and the potential benefits that could be derived

from it. They add further, that parents' positive attitude towards their children's education is important in determining school attendance and academic achievement of the children. Regarding children with disability, parent educational involvement has been demonstrated to be a predictor of in-school and post-school success for all students, including students with disabilities (Hirano & Dawn, 2015; Rodriguez, Blatz, & Elbaum, 2014). Generally, the decisions parents make about their young children centre on the acknowledgement that they are responsible for the children's nurture and care e.g. feeding, clothing accommodation and socialization. The consensus is that motivation to send a child to school is related to what parents see as the purpose and benefits of education. This thinking validates the Needs-based theorists like Maslow (1943), Alderfer (1969) and McClelland (1965), who postulate that the primary motivating stimulus for individuals is the desire to fulfil a felt-need. The fulfilment of the felt-need moves the individual from one state to another whose outcome appears more desirable or attractive.

Consequently, the push for universal enrolment for all children to benefit from Early Childhood Education Early Childhood Education (ECE) makes it imperative for a country like Ghana, with inadequate resources and where the Early Childhood Education Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector faces many challenges to develop partnerships with parents. A situation analysis of the ECE sector, as contained in the Government of Ghana - UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan for 2006-2010 shows that the State's inability to implement the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme (FCUBE) programme comprehensively and to ensure universal enrolment of all children qualified to be in kindergarten is compounded by several challenges. Among the many challenges identified was the questionable quality of service provided by pre-school centres, including the widespread use of poorly trained

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or untrained caregivers, and an early emphasis on rigid, formal learning, in violation of child-development principles. The situation analysis also show that gross disparities exist in access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) services in Ghana. Firstly, there is geographical disparity, with the urban centres, and especially rich neighbourhoods, being better served than rural and deprived areas. Secondly, there exist some disparities due to socio-economic background of children, with children from affluent homes having better access than those from poor homes. Many poor families are unable to afford the cost of private kindergarten (KG) education or levies imposed in public schools which are sometimes imposed by school heads, despite the introduction of the Capitation grant. Thirdly, many private schools were better resourced than public schools. The State was also unable to implement comprehensive and compulsory universal enrolment (Madeez, 2020). Addressing challenges like those above call for strong partnerships with parents. It is only when this is done those parents will be empowered and encouraged enough to become key partners in Early Childhood Education (ECE), especially in the enrolment of their children.
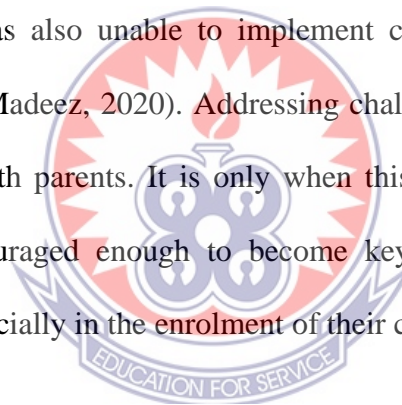
1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ghana introduced a free and compulsory universal basic education programme in 1995 and promised universal education by 2005. However, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme (FCUBE) did not go far enough to offset the opportunity costs of schooling for the poorest households by abolishing all forms of fees and reducing significantly the indirect costs associated with attending school (Akyeampong, 2009). Consequently, even though Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme (FCUBE) led to a surge in enrolments, getting children from disadvantaged or marginalised communities to enrol and complete basic education remained a challenge (Akyeampong, 2009).

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In Ghana, even though statutes in the country allow for parental participation in education delivery, the involvement of parents is voluntary and motivated by factors which appeal to them. The voluntary aspect of parental involvement is more evident in enrolment of children in school because of the State's inability to enforce the compulsory enrolment of children in school as well as provide free, universal education to all children. Consequently, many parents make a conscious effort to enrol their children in school voluntarily (Madeez, 2020).

Given the State's inability to implement a comprehensive Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Programme (FCUBE) programme and to ensure universal enrolment coupled with the challenges in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector, there must be compelling reasons which motivate parents to enrol their children in kindergarten, especially when they are not compelled by the State to do so. This situation agrees with Pomazal (2002), who maintains that one can make the highly plausible assumption that enrolment is an intentional, goal-oriented behaviour. According to him, to know what motivates parents to enrol their children in school, there is a need to adopt a logical approach to explore systematically the specific determinants of attitudes and subsequent intentions to enrol. Pomazal (2002) adds that although enrolment decisions may be influenced by external factors (e.g., social pressure, transportation problems, and distance to school), ultimately the decision to enrol children in school is an individual one, often decided by parents. The major question that arises then is, therefore, "what motivates parents to enrol their children in school, especially, kindergarten when there is no compulsion to do so, especially when their colleagues are not also enrolling their children?"

Analysis of available literature of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector reveals that most of the data on parental motivation on Early Childhood Education

(ECE) focus on the effect of Early Childhood Education (ECE) on parents' participation in the labour force, children's achievement, children's in-school behaviour and children's life after school and not on motivation for enrolment (Anders, Grosse, Rossbach, Ebert & Weinert, 2013; Graves, Scott & Wright, 2011; Maloney, Ramirez, Gunderson, Levine & Beilock, 2015). Also, as noted by Grolnick (2015), parent motivations for involvement in schools are complex. Thus, research on parental motivations is critical to promoting involvement of parents in educational contexts (Grolnick, 2015).

In Ghana, the analysis of literature shows that there is also an absence of data on the factors that motivate parents to enrol their children in kindergarten. Hence, information on what motivate parents to enrol their children in kindergarten remain anecdotal and, often, undocumented. This, therefore, necessitated the need for this study on parental motivation to enrol their children in kindergarten.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess parental motivation in enrolment of their wards at Kindergarten in the Akyemansa District.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of the study.

1. Investigate the influence of parents' perception of the importance of kindergarten education on their decision to enrol their wards at kindergarten in Akyemansa District.

2. Examine the effect of parents' aspirations for their children on their motivation to enrol their wards at Kindergarten in Akyemansa District.

3. Identify the factors parents consider when enrolling their wards at Kindergarten in the Akyemansa District.

1.5 Research Questions

The following are the research questions to guide the study.

1. What influence parents' perception of the importance of kindergarten education on their decision to enrol their wards in Akyemansa District?

2. What are the effect of parents' motivation to enrol their wards at Kindergarten in Akyemansa District?

3. What factors do parents consider when enrolling their wards at Kindergarten in the Akyemansa District?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study results give an insight into what motivates parents to enrol their children in kindergarten. Besides, it will provide reasons as to why some parents refuse to enrol their children in kindergarten. The results of the study, therefore, will provide useful information for policy and decision makers as to the necessary measures to take that would encourage parents to patronize Early Childhood Education (ECE) services.

The findings from this study have benefit for policy makers by alerting them to the thinking of parents about what is crucial to them about Early Childhood Education (ECE). The policy makers will, therefore, be able to use the findings of the study as a guide to formulate appropriate interventions as well as design parent education programmes that will appeal to parents to invest in Early Childhood Education (ECE). The findings are, again, expected to help the policy makers to come up with policy framework that spells out clearly the role of the parents, vis-àvis, and other stakeholders in the provision of Early Childhood Education (ECE) services. Thus, it will, hopefully,

enable education planners to design appropriate strategies and programmes that will improve motivation levels of parents to play a more active role in their children's education.

Finally, the findings add to the existing knowledge on factors militating against full and comprehensive enrolment of all children within the Early Childhood Education age bracket in Ghana as well as support the need for further research that will provide data to further improve programming for Early Childhood Education and development.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study focused on the parental motivation in enrolment of their wards at kindergarten in the Akyemansa District. The study only focused on parents' perception, parents' aspirations and factors parents consider when enrolling their wards at kindergarten. Also, the study was carried out in Akyemansa District due to its convenient to the researcher.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Parental Aspiration: The desire or ambition of parents in this study to achieve something for their wards.

Development: Refers to the process of change in which the child comes to master more and more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling and interacting with people and objects in the environment.

Gross Enrolment Rate (GER): This refers to the number of pupils/students enrolled (irrespective of their ages) divided by population officially supposed to be at that level

(e.g. 6-11-year-olds at Primary and four and five-year olds at kindergarten level in Ghana).

Kindergarten: Is a class or small school for young children, usually between the ages of four and six to prepare them for primary education. It serves as a transition from home to the commencement of more formal schooling.

Motivation: refers to reasons that underlie behaviour that is characterized by willingness and volition. Also, motivation may be regarded as something, which prompts, compels and energizes an individual to act or behave in a particular manner at a particular time for attaining some specific goal or purpose.

Net Enrolment Rate (NER): This refers to the number of pupils/students enrolled in a school within the appropriate official age range (e.g. enrolment 6- 11-year olds in primary schools in Ghana) divided by population of all children in the country, who are aged 6-11 years.
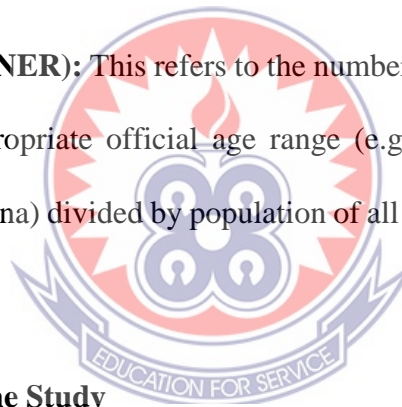
1.9 Organization of the Study

This work was organized into five chapters. Chapter one deals with introduction which comprises the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose, \, research objectives, research questions, delimitations of the study, definition of terms, and organization of the study. In chapter two is the reviewed literature related to the research topic. Chapter three covers the research methodology which includes the research philosophy, research approach, research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, data collection instrument, validity and reliability of instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and ethical

considerations. Chapter four covers the results and discussions. Chapter five also covers the summary, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter reviews existing relevant literature on the study. The review was discussed under sub-themes such as influence of parents' perception of the importance of kindergarten education on their decision to enrol their wards at kindergarten, the effect of parents' aspirations for their children on their motivation to enrol their wards at kindergarten and factors parents consider when enrolling their wards at kindergarten. The chapter also review theoretical perspectives related to parental motivation in enrolment of their wards at kindergarten.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The need theories of motivation, positive deviance theory, and human capital theory guide the search for reasons why parents do or do not engage in certain behaviours and help to direct possible actions that could be undertaken.

2.1.1 Need Theories of Motivation

Needs-based motivation theories, therefore, stem from the understanding that all motivation comes from an individual's desire to fulfil or achieve a need (Abdulrahman & Hui, 2018; Acevedo 2018). Acevedo (2018) added that this assumption is premised on the belief that human beings have needs and goals and are motivated to act in ways that lead to the satisfaction of the needs. The Need theories are the foundations of motivation theories and revolve around the desire of an individual to fulfil a felt-need, moving the individual from one state to another whose outcome appears more desirable or attractive. The theory postulates that human beings are motivated by unsatisfied needs, and typically, certain lower needs must be satisfied

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before higher needs can be satisfied (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017). A need in this context is an internal state that makes certain outcomes appears attractive. An unsatisfied need creates tension that stimulates drives within the individual that then generate a search behaviour to find goals that, if attained, will satisfy the need and lead to the reduction of the tension. Needs are physiological or psychological deficiencies that arouse behaviour. These vary over time and place, can be strong or weak, and are also influenced by environmental factors (Aruma & Hanachor, 2017).

However, this study used Maslow's (1943) needs hierarchy as a theoretical lens. One of the most widely used of the need theories is Maslow's (1943) needs hierarchy. According to Maslow, people have a pyramid hierarchy of needs that they will satisfy from bottom to top. He categorized individual needs into two, namely, "Deficiency needs" (physiological and safety) and "growth needs" which include belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation (Figure 1).

Self-actualization
Creativity,
Problem Solving,
Authenticity, Spontaneity

Esteem
Self-Esteem, Confidence,
Achievement

Social needs
Friendship, Family

Safety and Security

Physiological needs (survival)
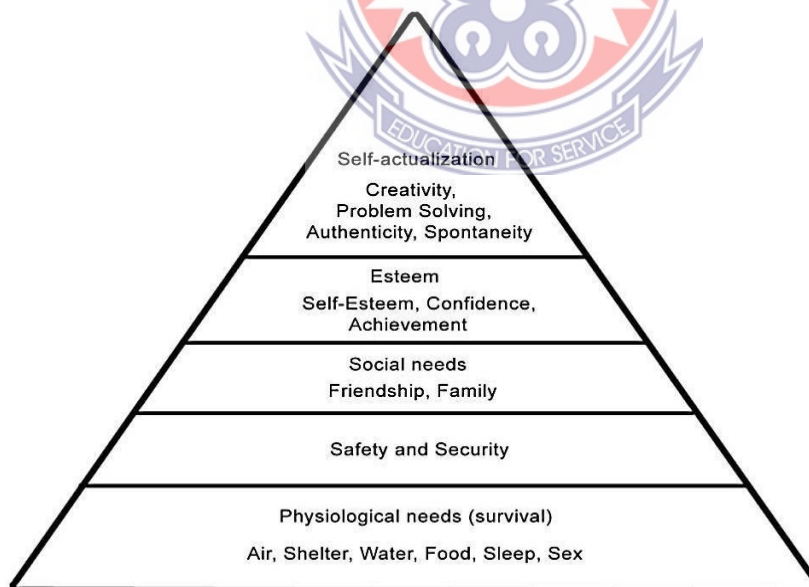Air, Shelter, Water, Food, Sleep, Sex

Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Source: Maslow, (1943).

Generally, these are needs for the individual which he will progressively try to satisfy, starting from basic (physiological and safety needs, through psychological

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(esteem, status, recognition, belongingness, love) needs to self-fulfilment (self-actualization and self-development) needs (Abdulrahman & Hui, 2018; Acevedo, 2018; Aruma & Hanachor, 2017; Maslow, 1943). Maslow believes that unfulfilled needs lower on the ladder would inhibit the person from climbing to the next step. If the deficiency needs are not satisfied, the person will feel the deficit, and this will stifle his or her development. Maslow's theory implies that based on one's needs, an individual sets his own personal goals, which are hierarchically arranged. Individuals then attempt to satisfy these needs, systematically, from the corresponding hierarchical level and will only move to the next level after a need is satisfied. Otherwise, this person remains fixed on low needs in his personal development too.

Other Needs theorists, especially McClelland (1965) and Alderfer (1969), built on Maslow's theory and used it to imply a deficiency fulfilling reason for a person's actions. Various researchers (e.g. Cooper, 2013; Unal & Turgut, 2017), maintain Alderfer's Existential Relatedness and Growth (ERG) Model condenses Maslow's five human needs into three categories, namely, Existence (material and physiological), Relatedness (social and external esteem) and Growth (internal esteem and self-actualization). On the other hand, McClelland's Achievement Motivation Theory (Acquired Needs theory) states that an individual's specific needs are acquired over time according to one's life experiences (Acquah, 2017; Badubi, 2017). Although Maslow's theory is intuitively appealing, various criticisms have been levelled at it (Steers & Porter, 1991). While Maslow's theory provides a simple and logical explanation to what influences individuals to set certain goals and strive to achieve them, it ignores the fact that needs are seldom arranged so hierarchically and systematically in life. Neither do people fulfil needs in the same fashion. Finally, the theory ignores the influence of external forces and environmental factors such as state

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power and the influence of various groups like NGOs, media, moral influence of friends and family and religious bodies.

In the context of this research, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was used to explain why parents would want to enrol their wards in kindergarten. For instance, a parent depends on felt need, may decide that enrolling his or her child in kindergarten may fulfil this need. The theory therefore, explain the motivation behind this action. However, this theory implies a deficiency fulfilling assumption and reduces all decision making to fulfilling the needs of the individual; hence, it does not explain the influence or pressure from other actors such as the state, relatives, neighbours and other change agents. Also, it cannot explain why a poor parent, for instance, would priorities enrolling his or her child in kindergarten over other needs which might even be hierarchically lower in the model than kindergarten education of children.

Finally, the theory implies that goal-setting and decision-making of the parents, for example; with regard to the enrolment decision making of his child's education, to the calculated analysis of the benefit that the individual will derive from his/her action. However, in a decision like school enrolment, it is not always possible for the parent to do this cost-benefit analysis. Consequently, it cannot be used to explain an instance when an entire community decides to ensure that all the children in the community enrol in kindergarten. A parent may be compelled to go along with the decision of others or even take a particular decision when he/she was not sure of the long-term outcome. In conclusion, the theory offers some insight into why a parent may decide to enrol his/her child in kindergarten and the influence it has on their perception of the importance of kindergarten education in the Akyemansa District

2.1.2 Positive Deviance Theory

Positive Deviance (PD) is a behavioural and social change approach that seeks to explain how people deviate from norms to create extraordinary change (Herington & van de Fliert, 2018; Shoenberger, Heckert & Heckert, 2015). It is premised on the observation that in any context, certain individuals confronting similar challenges, constraints, and resource deprivations as their peers, will nonetheless employ uncommon but successful behaviours or strategies which enable them to find better solutions (Shoenberger, Heckert & Heckert, 2015; Herington & van de Fliert, 2018; Singhal & Dura, 2010). Through the study of these individuals, referred to as "positive deviants", the PD approach suggests that innovative solutions to such challenges may be identified and refined from their outlying behaviour.

The term 'Positive Deviance' has become increasingly popular in recent years, resulting in the co-existence of multiple definitions and applications scattered among diverse sources of academic literature (Herington & van de Fliert, 2018). PD initially gained recognition from the work of Tufts University nutrition professor Marian Zeitlen in the 1980s when she focused on why despite the poverty in a community, some children were better nourished than others and used the information gathered from these outliers to plan a nutrition programme for communities (Zeitlin, Ghassemi, & Mansour, 1990). The term was thus used to refer to the phenomenon of a handful of women who managed to maintain good nutrition for their children with the same access to resources in the same context and community where malnutrition was the norm. The approach has since been applied widely within health sectors, education, and to the private business sector (Pascale, Sternin and Sternin, 2010). PD is, thus, an assets and strength-based approach which identifies what works right in a community and replicates it, as

opposed to focusing on what is going wrong in a community and fixing it (Herington & van de Fliert, 2018; Shoenberger, Heckert & Heckert, 2015).

Though PD has been used as a transformational approach for communities, it is premised on the intentional behaviour of individuals that departs radically from the norms of the individual's referent groups, overcoming personal or environmental constraints to create extraordinary change (Thiel, 2015). The theory is, consequently, based around five core principles: first, that communities possess the solutions and expertise to best address their own problems; second, that these communities are self-organising entities with sufficient human resources and assets to derive solutions to communal problems; third, that communities possess a 'collective intelligence', equally distributed through the community, which the PD approach seeks to foster and draw out; fourth, that the foundation of any PD approach rests on sustainability and the act of enabling a community to discover solutions to their own problems through the study of local "positive deviants"; and fifth, that behaviour change is best achieved through practice and the act of "doing" (Pascale, Sternin, & Sternin, 2010; Singhal & Dura, 2010).

This approach to bring about community change through the 'deviant' behaviours of individuals is different in important ways (Singhal & Dura, 2010; Singhal, 2013). Based on a community's own assets, the positive deviance approach operates within the specific cultural context of a given community (village, business, school, ministry, department, hospital) and provides to community members the "social proof" that an uncommon behaviour can be adopted by all because it is already practiced by a few within the community (Herington & van de Fliert, 2018; Pascale, Sternin, & Sternin, 2010; Thiel, 2015; Shoenberger, Heckert, & Heckert, 2015; Zeitlin, Ghassemi, & Mansour, 1990). The community, having identified positive deviants, sets

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out to find the behaviours, attitudes, or beliefs that allow the PD to be successful. The focus is on the successful strategies of the PD, not on making a hero of the person using the strategy. This self-discovery of people just like them who have found successful solutions provide 'social proof' that this problem can be overcome now, without outside resources. The scaling up of innovation may happen through the 'ripple effect' of other people observing the success and replicating it (Thiel, 2015).

Since its inception in nutrition research in the 1970s, the PD approach has been used extensively by researchers and evaluators in development. Over the past two decades, the PD approach has been employed in several countries to successfully address a wide variety of intractable and complex social problems, including solving endemic malnutrition in Vietnam (Singal, 2013), preventing girl trafficking in Indonesia by Save the Children and a local Indonesian NGO and to stop Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in Egypt (Masterson & Swanson 2000), in Uganda, to help girls who were child soldiers with the Lord's Resistance Army to reintegrate into their communities (Singhal & Lucia Dura, 2010), in Sudan, in agriculture to introduce new practices (Ochieng, 2007) and in drastically cutting down the spread of hospital-acquired infections in U.S. healthcare institutions (Pascale, Sternin, & Sternin, 2010; Singhal, 2010).

According to Singhal (2013), in recent years, the PD approach has been increasingly applied to educational and learning settings, to address complex problems that vulnerable and disadvantaged minority student populations face. Most attention has been paid to the problem of high drop-outs and absenteeism in schools and colleges, especially focusing on at-risk students who come from low socio-economic strata, from first and second-generation immigrant populations, and those with physical and learning disabilities. Examples include using PD to address the incidence of high

school dropout in Argentina's rural province of Misiones and also stem the tide of school dropouts in Merced, California by 25 per cent. In El Paso, Texas, PD was used to improve graduation rates of Hispanic minority groups and students with disability (Ayala, 2011).

The PD experiences in educational and learning environments also hold important implications for the learners. The Positive Deviance approach can explain what enables certain learners to take more responsibility for their own learning. A PD inquiry may determine the presence of positive deviant learners who against all odds and with no access to any extra resources have found a way to self-motivate and self-direct their learning. Similarly, there are parents, teachers, pastors, neighbours, and influencers who engage in certain practices that enable others to take more responsibility for their lives, e.g., for their learning. Once positive deviants are identified at multiple levels, one can dig deeper to discern what enables, or leads to, more self-directed, life-long learning. "Positive deviants," against overwhelming odds, find ways to solve problems in a more effective manner than their peers. However, there are always social pressures that they must resist or ignore when they deviate from norms. Positive deviants exercise courage when they disrupt the natural flow of things, step away from familiarity into the unknown, and face whatever potential obstacles, risks and threats this may unleash to achieve one's goals (Madeez, 2020).

According to Rios (2012) the ability to withstand social pressures depends on three factors. The first factor he identified is "attitude strength" which refers to the meaning or how deeply one cares about something to give him reason to risk deviating from the norms. The second factor, "social group or category identification" refers to the degree to which one identifies with a social group. Low identification makes it easier to deviate from norms while high identification with the group leads to more

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conformity (Packer & Chasteen, 2009). The third factor is "one's self-concept or social identity". Rios (2012) and Imhoff and Erb (2009) argue further that a minority can also be motivated by a need for uniqueness in one's self-concept, and a related need to bolster self-certainty by clarifying one's self-concept. Where the individual feels threatened or constrained by the group, he reacts to carve out his or her individual self-concept. Non-conformism or dissent does not necessarily have to be linked to disengagement with the majority. Dissenters who are motivated by doing what they think is in the collective good, are different from those motivated by individual aims. The former tends to practice an engaged dissent, while the latter disengages from the group (Packer and Chasteen, 2009; Packer & Mines, 2012).

According to Quintero (2015), the PD approach ignores the fact that public education efforts to achieve change have been typically through a series of different reforms. Some reforms have been initiated through laws, national organizations, or state initiatives, while others have been initiated within individual school systems or schools. Also, the PD approach is also not able to indicate precisely what motivates or enables an individual to deviate from the norms of their referent group (Packer & Chasteen, 2009; Packer & Miners, 2012), and potentially start down the path to the extraordinary. Finally, the approach does not explain how the positive deviants are able to influence other compatriots to change except the suggestion that the results of their endeavours serve as motivation for others.

In the context of this work, the Positive Deviance theory was used to influence parents' attitudes towards participation in kindergarten programmes. Within communities where there is low enrolment, the examples of parents who enrol their children in kindergarten could be used to garner support for individuals, families and, even, communities to participate in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programmes.

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Finally, this theory helps to identify certain factors in the community parents consider when enrolling their wards at kindergarten in the Akyemansa District.

2.1.3. Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory assumes that education determines the marginal productivity of labour and this determines earnings (Heckman & Stefano, 2014; Marginson, 2017). Since the 1960s it has dominated the economics, and policy and public understanding, of relations between education and work. Human capital is the stock of productive skills, talents, health and expertise of the labour force, just as physical capital is the stock of plant, equipment, machines, and tools. The stocks of human and physical capital are produced through a set of investment decisions, where the investment is costly in terms of direct costs and, for human capital investment, in terms of the opportunity cost of the individual's time. It encompasses the notion that there are investments in people (e.g., education, training, health) and that these investments increase an individual's productivity. Hence, education and training are two of the most important investments in human capital.

The concept of human capital goes back to the days of Adam Smith when he noted that the acquisition of talents during education, study, or apprenticeship, costs a real expense, which is capital in a person. Those talents are part of his fortune and likewise that of society (Smith, 1776). The theory was, however, made popular by Becker's (1962, 1964) human capital theory which is one of the more widely used frameworks to understand families" investment behaviours in children. The theory applies the economic approach in analysing various social issues, specifically weighing returns in investment in individuals against investments in their training and education based on their economic productivity. Becker's human capital investment model says that investments are more likely when the returns are higher, the costs are lower

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(possibly lower with economies of scale provided by schools), and the discount rate (possibly a function of parental income and greater certainty) is lower.

Becker (1962, 1964) argues that individuals' behaviours and investments are not motivated solely by self-interest. Rather, individuals attempt to maximize resources by basing and limiting decisions on the possible consequences of their behaviours through their perception of potentials and weaknesses within themselves or within others. According to Becker, no discussion of human capital can omit the influence of families on the knowledge, skills, values, and habits of their children. Even slight differences among children in the preparation provided by their families are frequently multiplied over time into large differences when they are teenagers. Parents have a large influence on the education and many other dimensions of their children's lives.

Fuglini and Yoshikawa's works (2003) applied Becker's (1962, 1964) human capital theory in investigations about parents" investment behaviours in children and concluded that parental satisfaction is determined by children's future outcomes and productivities (which are in turn products of children's inherent characteristics prior to investments and parents" investments) over the costs of parents" investments throughout the course of children's development. Accordingly, the amount and quality of parents" investments are influenced by parents" wealth as well as their expectations of returns to their investments. As a result, parents who have less wealth will invest less in children compared to parents who have greater wealth. The theory also postulates differences in parents" patterns of investments across different children depending on expectations of returns from the individual child, for example between boys and girls.

Fuglini and Yoshikawa (2003) report that Indian families may invest more in boys during lean seasons due to their perception of boys" greater economic productivity. Critics of the theory point out that household investment in children may

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not be consensual and balanced among different family members (Fuglini & Yoshikawa, 2003). In fact, there are evidences that mothers"-controlled resources seem to be spent more on children than fathers"- controlled resources (Fuglini & Yoshikawa, 2003). Alternative postulations from the theory suggest that investments do not necessarily have to be consensual and balanced such that each family member or each parent may manifest different investment behaviours. This perspective has often been used to assess families" and individuals" material investments, thus, findings have often pointed to material resources as a major determinant of investment decisions.

However, the increase in public interest and investment in children's development in recent years has increased the availability of welfare and social services, as well as other community and social resources that families may have access to, to invest in children. That is, given proper motivation, even with limited resources, parents may invest in children's development. Thus, recent conceptualizations of investment about children's development are not limited to material resources. In fact, research shows that other aspects of parenting also positively influence children's developmental outcomes (Fuglini & Yoshikawa, 2003).

Many scholars in the political economy of education and labour have challenged the Human capital theory. For instance, Hennessy (2014) argues that the notion of human capital, floating free of other forms of capital, implies that those with social advantages succeed not because of their birth and connections, but because of their abilities and powers of application. The capacity of parents to pass on endowments to their children may also lead to unequal economic and social outcomes that cannot be attributed to education (Delaney, Harmon & Redmond, 2011). Britton, Dearden, Shephard and Vignoles (2016) studied UK graduates with 10 years in the labour market, investigating the effects of variations in socioeconomic background, gender, institution

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attended and field of study. They note high dispersion in graduate outcomes and find that „graduates" family background – specifically whether they come from a lower or higher income household – continues to influence graduate's earnings long after graduation". Graduates from higher income households earn at least 10 per cent more at the median than graduates from low income households after factoring out other student characteristics, institution attended and field of study.

Again, as Becker admitted, individuals' behaviours and investments are also influenced and limited by income, time, memory, calculating capacity, and available opportunities in the environment. Finally, the theory ignores the fact that in almost all places and during most historical periods, education has been publicly provided and publicly funded by the State. There have been times when the private sector has been larger but the public sector has almost always increased in relative importance compared with the private sector. In such situations, it is not just individual choices that ensure the enrolment of children in school.

Integration of the Theories Used in this Study

It is, therefore, not possible for any single one of the three theories analysed in this thesis to, on its own, fully explain what motivates parents to enrol their children in kindergarten. Even though all the theoretical frameworks have some validity in certain circumstances, their inability to individually explain fully the factors which influence parents to send their children to kindergarten confirm Kollmuss and Agyeman's (2002) assertion that the question of what shapes behaviour is such a complex one that it cannot be visualized through one single framework or diagram. Consequently, the Needs theories, the Positive Deviance theory and the Human Capital theory which have been shown to have some bearing on the research, were applied as and when necessary to explain the source of parental motivation for enrolling their children in kindergarten.

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The needs theories, for instance, were key in the exploration of how kindergarten enrolment meets the aspirations or goals that parents have for their children. The PD theory, on its part, demonstrates why in some communities some parents enrol their children in kindergarten when other parents do not do so, sometimes even against opposition or discouraging remarks to their decision. The PD theory also demonstrates the influence of outsiders, including the State, in the individual's decision-making process as the State and other actors seek to promote universal kindergarten education. With regard to the Human Capital theory, while it is generally assumed that people with more wealth are more likely to invest in their children's education than those with less, there are instances where people with wealth have rather kept their children out of school while those with less wealth had done the opposite.

Consequently, the study used a combination of these theories to explain what motivate parents to initiate and maintain a behaviour. Admittedly, the theories, in themselves, may not be able to conclusively bring about behaviour change, nor can they predict with certainty what changes in behaviour will occur. They, nevertheless, will be able to aid policy makers, implementers and others involved in trying to bring about improvement in kindergarten enrolment to have a better understanding of why and how behaviour change occurs and what the factors and conditions are that drive parents to enrol their children in kindergarten.

2.2. Influence of Parents' Perception of the Importance of Kindergarten Education On Their Decision to Enrol Their Wards at Kindergarten

Neuroscience conclusively demonstrates the critical impact that early experiences have on brain architecture. It demonstrates further that conditions and experiences in the early years can have a permanent impact on all aspects of an individual's life and, consequently, the social and economic development and human

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capital formation of a nation (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005). Knudsen, Heckman, Cameron and Shonkoff (2006) agree and note that the basic principles of neuroscience indicate that providing supportive conditions for early childhood development is more effective and less costly than attempting to address the consequences of early adversity later. To this end, a balanced approach to emotional, social, cognitive and language development will best prepare all children for success in school and later in the workplace and community.

Shonkoff, Boyce, and McEwen (2009) go further to emphasize that the first years of life are important, because what happens in early childhood can matter for a lifetime. According to them, stable, responsive, nurturing relationships and rich learning experiences in the earliest years provide lifelong benefits for learning, behaviour and both physical and mental health. Shonkoff et al. add that, in contrast, research on the biology of stress in early childhood shows how chronic stress caused by major adversity, such as extreme poverty, abuse or neglect, can weaken developing brain architecture and permanently set the body's stress response system on high alert, thereby increasing the risk for a range of chronic diseases.

Earlier, UNICEF (1984) had emphasized the need for ECD programmes and argued that, from a human rights perspective, ECD was very important because children have a right to live and to develop to their full potential. UNICEF, again, uses a moral and social values argument to show that it is through children that humanity transmits its values. This transmission begins with infants; so to preserve desirable moral and social values in the future, one must begin with children. From an economic standpoint, UNICEF maintains that investments in health, nutrition and stimulation, early in life, can yield a high return by increasing productivity in later years.

Moreover, preventive programmes produce savings by, for instance, reducing the need later for expensive health care or by improving the efficiency of educational systems through reductions in dropout, repetition, and remedial programmes. UNICEF, again, uses a programme efficacy argument to draw attention to the fact that child development strengthens and complements the organization's drive to increase child survival. This argument seems to address the concerns raised by Myers (1992) by placing necessary emphasis on survival while also addressing the question of what will happen to the vast majority of children who survive and who may, for the most part, continue to live in the same debilitating conditions of poverty that once put their lives at risk and also threaten their development.

UNICEF (1984) also emphasized that ECD programmes can also produce significant benefits to society. It can provide a rallying point for social and political actions that can help to build consensus and organization for the common good. It can also help to eliminate social inequities by providing a common developmental platform for all children. Finally, implementation of ECD programmes can lead to increased labour force participation of women, promote increased primary school attendance of older siblings, help to radically re-orient society by beginning at the bottom (e.g. Nicaragua), be used to address concerns for childcare related to female employment (e.g. Colombia), or serve as part of a human resource strategy (e.g. Chile).

In recent years, UNICEF (2009), has added to the argument by stating that there is a wealth of research available on the impact of the early years on later growth and development of children. These research findings have established, scientifically, that the early years are critical in the formation of intelligence, personality, and social behaviour, and that the effects of early neglect can be cumulative. Children are born with physical, social, and psychological capacities which allow them to communicate,

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learn, and develop. If these capacities are not recognized and supported they will wither rather than improve. Consequently, children whose caregivers interact with them in consistent, caring ways will be better nourished and less apt to be sick than children who do not receive such care. Establishing a loving relationship in the early months of life has been shown to affect the ability later in life of a person to love and to establish permanent relationships. UNICEF (2009), again, believes that costly wastage in both financial and human terms can be avoided by investments in good quality early childhood services prior to children entering school. This improves the efficiency of the schooling system and saves money by reducing repetition and dropout and improving completion rates and achievement, especially for girls and marginalized groups.

Siddiqi and Hertzman (2007) also note that the process of early experience shapes brain and biological development in ways that influence human development throughout life. Early intervention can prevent the consequences of early adversity. They report that research shows that later interventions are likely to be less successful and, in some cases, are ineffective. Nelson, Zeanah, Fox, Marshall, Smyke, and Guthrie (2007) found, for example, that when children who experienced extreme neglect were placed in responsive foster care families before age two, their intelligence quotients increased more substantially, and their brain activity and attachment relationships were more likely to become normal than if they were placed after the age of two.

While there is no "magic age" for intervention, evidence exists to show that, in most cases, intervening as early as possible is significantly more effective than waiting (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007). Britto et al. (2013) also note that learning starts in infancy, long before formal education begins, and continues throughout life. Consequently, early Learning begets later learning and early success

breeds later success, just as early failure breeds later failure. Success or failure at this stage lays the foundation for success or failure in school, which in turn leads to success or failure in post- school learning. Britto et al. add that investments in early childhood have shown remarkable success and indicate that the early years are important for early learning. Moreover, early childhood interventions of high quality have lasting effects on learning and motivation.

Heckman (2004) adds that a common error in the analysis of human capital policies is the assumption that abilities are fixed at very early ages. This static conception of ability is at odds with a large body of research in the child development literature, which shows that it is in the early years of life that basic abilities can be altered. Heckman concludes that societies cannot afford to postpone investing in children until they become adults, nor wait until they reach school age, a time when it may be too late to intervene. In fact, costly wastage in both financial and human terms can be avoided by investments in good quality early primary education combined with quality early childhood services prior to children entering school.

The early years of human development (conception to ages 6-8), affect the later stages of human development, as well as the later stages. From a child rights" perspective, UNICEF (2009) argues that the child's right to personality is meaningful from the moment of birth. Thus, for example, the United Nations" Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) requires State parties to develop national and international structures and processes to ensure that children are noticed and cared for, both individually and collectively, as people worthy of respect. Such recognition serves ultimately as the foundation for children's development and their participation as productive citizens contributing to the well-being of the community and enjoying its concern for them as human beings.

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Available data also emphasis the long-term cost effectiveness and savings that result from early childhood interventions. The 2011 Lancet Series on ECD calculated the economic effect of preschool enrolment, just one component of a comprehensive early childhood development agenda. Their calculations show a benefit of USD$10.6 billion by increasing preschool enrolment to 25 per cent in all low-income and middle-income countries, and USD$33.7 billion by increasing preschool enrolment to 50 per cent, with a benefit-to-cost ratio from 6.4 to 17.6, one of the best returns on investment (Engle et al., 2011).

Significant examples of long-term cost savings that result from such early intervention programmes include that of the Perry Preschool Project in the USA (Schweinhart et al., 2005). The Schweinhart et al. survey points out that investment in young children is cheaper in terms of survival and development of the human potential, at both individual and social levels. According to them, studies in the United States of America suggest that the return cost of investment in young children is $7 for every $1 invested. Investment in the care and development of young children will have an impact on the economic productivity of the future adult, because an adult, whose physical and intellectual abilities are fully developed, can obviously contribute better to his or her community.

In an earlier study of children who had participated in the Perry Preschool Project, Schweinhart and Weikart (1980) found that when schools invest about $3,000 for one year of preschool education for a child, they immediately begin to recover their investment through savings in special education services. Benefits included $668 from the mother's released time while the child attended preschool, $3,353 saved by the public schools because children with preschool education had fewer years in grades, and $10,798 in projected lifetime earnings for the child.

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The evidence from these longitudinal studies led Schweinhart et al. (2005) to make some far reaching conclusions about the long-term effects of Early Childhood Education (ECE) programmes. Firstly, benefits of ECE interventions go beyond basic learning to include improved school attendance and performance, reduced repetition, increased employment and reduced delinquency during the teenage years, and reduced teenage pregnancy. Secondly, the earlier attention is given to the child's development, the better, since children's development is cumulative in nature. Improving a young child's health and nutrition, as well as providing opportunities for stimulating interaction and early education can bring a high economic return to society as well as to the individual.

Thirdly, investment in early childhood development can help to reduce economic and social inequities. Children living in conditions of poverty and/or discrimination often fall behind their more fortunate peers at an early age. This reinforces existing differences. Investments in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programmes can reduce the growing gaps in development, and, therefore, can reduce the differential consequences. Indeed, there is increasing evidence that children from more- disadvantaged backgrounds can profit more from good early childhood programmes than more-advantaged children.

Finally, early childhood programmes are likely to have multiplier effects. In the case of programmes of parental education, the effects will carry over to the raising of additional children. To the extent that programmes of early childhood care and development affect subsequent education, the evidence suggests that they will also influence fertility and population growth.

In conclusion, there is evidence about how critical the early years are to a child's development. The benefits of Early Childhood Education (ECE) encourage greater

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social equity, increase the efficacy of other investments and address the needs of mothers, while helping their children. Integrated programmes for young children can modify the effects of socioeconomic and gender-related inequities, some of the most entrenched causes of poverty. Ensuring healthy child development, therefore, is an investment in a country's future workforce and capacity to thrive economically and as a society.

2.3. Parental Decision-making and Investment in Children's Early Learning and Development

Generally, the investments parents make in a child's early learning environments (i.e., home and child care) shape the child's experiences, which in turn, influence their school readiness (Fetalvero, 2010). According to the developmental-ecological theory, for instance, children's development and learning occurs within a series of embedded and interactive contexts or systems, ranging from distal (e.g., culture and society) to proximal (e.g., school and family), and their effect on child development may be direct or indirect (Xu & Filler, 2008). All systems influence and are influenced by the cultural and socio- economic context; however, two of the most influential systems for young children are their homes and their Early Childhood Education programmes. Both systems serve as critical learning environments for children. Harmonious interactions between systems promote family engagement and children's development (Xu & Filler). Evidence from available research shows that parents are influenced by several factors when making decisions that affect their children's early development. These include the parents" natural role as caregivers of the child, parental aspirations for the child, expected returns from their investment in their children, children's characteristics and parents" choice of child care.

Particularly during the early years, adults are the primary facilitators of children's transactions with the environment, an aspect of parenting generally referred to as gatekeeping (Duncan, Magnuson, & Ludwig, 2004; Hirshberg, Huang, & Fuller, 2005). In the broader context of such macro-level factors as the economy, labour market, social service system, and other cultural and environmental factors, parents" choices and investments contribute to the type and quality of contexts that children experience (Kohen, Leventhal, Dahinten, & McIntosh, 2008). These factors, either individually or collectively, influence parents" gate-keeping decisions and the corresponding investments that the parents make that either directly or indirectly affect their children's early development and school readiness outcomes.

These factors also, to an extent, show why families differ in the way they invest in their children's early learning environment. A recurring theme in child development studies is the presence of differences in levels of parental investments according to parents" characteristics and beliefs which seem then to determine the manner and extent to which environmental and contextual factors affect children's development (Kohen, et. al; 2008; Lahaie, 2008). Kohen et al., and Lahaie highlight the importance of context in children's development, especially the home and early learning and education setting where most development stimulation occurs in the early stage and emphasize that the factors that place children in particular contexts are important considerations in the study of children's school readiness. They argue that, in the early stages of life, children do not decide their context but are largely dependent on their parents and families.

Generally, the type and quality of children's early learning and development contexts are determined by their parents" gate keeping, decision making, commitment of support, and use of resources, be it personal/family resources, community resources, or time. Accordingly, children's school readiness may be directly and indirectly

influenced by parents‟ decisions and investments towards their developmental contexts. Even amidst poverty or lack of resources, parents with stronger motivations to support children's learning and development invest a larger portion of their resources in child care and nutritious food items (Duncan, Magnuson, & Ludwig, 2007).

Specifically, parents‟ ethnicity, education, language proficiency, mental health, employment, and income status, among other factors, have been shown to be associated with the quality of children's early learning settings, the quality of the home environment, as well as the level of parents‟ involvement in children's learning and development. For instance, the decisions about how children are raised, the type of food they eat, the people children interact with, and how information and materials are received from the social and physical environment by children seem to vary according to parents‟ characteristics and beliefs.

However, it is unclear how much of these decisions that parents make about their children's development are determined by their level of resources and how much are influenced by their parenting values and beliefs. This question may even be more pertinent among lower income families that live with very limited resources for meeting basic needs let alone for supporting children's learning. The quality of the home environment has been known to explain the relationships between income and children's developmental outcomes. For example, there is evidence that income influences parenting behaviours and investments in developmentally supportive home environment as well as the nature of parents and children's interactions at home that directly link to development (Vortruba-Drzal, 2003). The Vortruba-Drzal study further demonstrates a non-linear relationship between income changes and home environment quality, where increases in income were more beneficial to lower income families‟ home environment quality compared to higher income families. Bingham (2007) found

that apart from family resources, parents" beliefs, specifically mothers" literacy beliefs influence children's home learning environments (e.g., in terms of the number of books that parents purchase and the time they spend with their child reading). Mothers who place high value on reading and literacy tend to implement more literacy promotional behaviours at home and accordingly, their children manifest higher levels of literacy in the early years of development.

Moreover, Lahaie (2008) found that parents" involvement in children's education and learning at home significantly increases children's developmental outcomes and school achievements. The author reported that having books, videos, pictures, storytelling, reading activities, and singing at home was associated with lower achievement gaps between children of natives and immigrants. Cabrera, Shannon and Tamis-Lemonda (2007) found that fathers" engagement has significant effects on young children's cognitive and socio- emotional development over and above mothers" engagement and family resources. Specifically, fathers who have better education and income, who are also most likely to have higher supportiveness and lower intrusiveness within the father-child interaction, tend to have children scoring higher on language tests and measures of socio-emotional regulation.

On the other hand, the study found negative effects of parental intrusiveness on children's cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes contingent to children's age with older children showing more negative outcomes. The author suggests that the result may be due to older children's increased need for autonomy and independence. Interestingly, Cabrera et al. (2007) also found that family resources matter more for older children than younger ones, which they assume to be because of older children's need for more stimulating environment and experiences. These reviews suggest that the

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quality and structure of the home learning environment as well as the nature of learning-focused parent- child interactions at home influence children's development outcomes.

Parental involvement in schools and children's early education settings has been shown to have positive effects on children's school readiness outcomes. Lahaie (2008) found that kindergarten children of parents who have seen teachers at least once, showed an increase of 3.5 points in mathematics scores. Factors which appear to influence parents" decisions about children's early education and learning include levels of income, education, employment; parents" characteristics, beliefs, values and children's characteristics and levels of development (Fetalvero, 2010). Parents appear to make child care decisions subject to a variety of options, availability of resources, other limitations presented by the social system, and contingent to their belief systems (Fetalvero, 2010).

2.4. Children's Characteristics and Parents' Choice of Child Care

Children's characteristics such as their age, temperament, and level of development seem to also influence parents' decisions-making process when selecting childcare. Gamble, Ewing, and Wilhelm (2009) found from their survey of 2,290 parents that parents use more child centred criteria when choosing childcare settings compared to structural, schedule, and logistic considerations. Parents appear to be very conscious of how various childcare options might contribute to their children's school readiness and development. However, the use of development and education-based criteria in the selection process is contingent on children's age, where parents of older children are more likely to consider centre and curriculum-based care as opposed to parents of younger children.

Parents of younger children tend to priorities similarities in child-rearing beliefs and caregivers" warmth and interaction with children when selecting child care. This

seems to be because parents of younger children feel that their children are not ready for an academic oriented curriculum. For instance, parents" perception of children's difficult temperament was shown to be associated with less value on school readiness and curriculum issues as a factor when selecting child care. Particularly, the level of children's shyness and immaturity were both negatively correlated with the level of priority that parents attached to school readiness as a factor in choosing childcare.

Parents" assessment of their children's ability to focus was also associated with the value they placed on curriculum concerns and schooling. They found that parents who perceive their children to be more temperamental or unable to focus in activities tend to downplay school readiness and curriculum criteria when selecting child care, and yet they still identify quality of care curriculum as an important factor when selecting care settings.

2.5. Effect of Parents' Aspirations for Their Children on Their Motivation to Enrol Their Wards at Kindergarten

Parents' expectations, which have been conceptualized in some studies as parents' aspirations for their children's school achievements and future employment, have been associated with children's school readiness outcomes. Hill (2001) found that parents" academic expectations are positively correlated with children's pre-reading and math scores; meanwhile, expectations of children's future employment outcomes were associated with pre-reading but not math scores.

Chao (1996), as cited in Feltavero (2010), explored determinants of differences between Chinese-American and European-American students" academic performances and found Chinese-American students tend to generally score higher on standardized intelligence assessment tests. She found that these differences were associated with the different values that Chinese and European-American parents place on education and

the corresponding expectations they have for their children's education. Chinese parents have higher expectations about their children's academic achievements and consequently tend to be more involved with their children's academic careers. Chinese parents are more willing to relocate neighbourhoods; separate the family for better educational opportunities and sacrifice larger portions of the family resources on children's education.

Consequently, Chao (1996) suggests that Chinese parents" needs for support and child development services are camouflaged by their greater family sacrifices. On the other hand, this study found that European-American parents focus less on academic achievement as the central goal of education and instead value that their children find learning and development a fun experience. In addition, more than academic skills, they emphasize the importance of the development of their children's socio-emotional skills. Therefore, European- American parents may not be as involved in their children's academic career as their Chinese counterparts. For Chao, parenting beliefs shape parents" expectations that then shape parent-child interaction and parents" development supportive behaviours.

Gamble, Ewing and Wilhlem (2009) argue that children's characteristics also shape expectations and parents" subsequent choice of childcare. They found that parents" low expectations of children's success in centres using academic-based curricula are associated with parents" lower preference for such setting. Therefore, parenting beliefs and expectations as well as children's characteristics may be influencing parents" decisions on investments. It may be likely that the interaction between parents" expectations and their assessments of children's characteristics ultimately determine how much effort they place in support of child development.

The influence of parents" expectations on child development investments may be particularly salient among parents with a more collectivist orientation (Benokraitis, 2002). This may be because families with collectivist orientations have greater adherence to filial piety, or the expectations for children to uphold the family name and to take care of their parents in old age. Accordingly, there is more at stake for parents in investing on children given that the goal and outcome of investments in children affect the entire family and even the community. In looking at Asian families, Benokraitis mentioned that having children is a form of insurance for financial stability especially after parents" retirement. In this context, raising children and supporting their growth and development may be literally considered as financial investments that support not only children's future, but families" stability as well. Asian and Hispanic families are generally known to have higher collectivist orientations (Benokraitis). This suggests that parents" expectations may differ across different cultural backgrounds. Feltavero (2010) reports that Chao (1996) illustrated how Chinese mothers emphasize academic achievement as an important goal for their children whereas Uttal (1997) found that Mexican-American/Hispanic mothers place value on cultural socialization and their children being raised by care-givers with the same child-rearing and cultural values as their own.

Though not well explored, the relationship between parents" investments at home with investments in out-of-home settings for their children, has been established. Weiss, Caspe and Lopez (2006) emphasized the significance of the continuity of quality and development support initiatives from the home to child care and vice versa in order to adequately address children's developmental needs. Therefore, in exploring parents" investment decisions, it will be interesting to find how they allocate investments within the home and childcare settings. Folbre (2006) argues that parents" involvement and

investments in the home are more complementary than supplementary to their childcare investments. For instance, childcare investments should not completely replace parents" involvement in children's development at home. On the contrary, the two settings must provide continuity of experiences for children.

Accordingly, family time, parents" work with children at home, and parental investments in the home learning structure must be acknowledged and counted as child development investments as much as their more institutional childcare investments, justifying support for parents at home such as work-time flexibility, leaves, etc. Although there have been studies about the quality of the home environment and its effects on children's early learning outcomes (Vortruba-Drzal, 2003) there is a dearth of information about parents" decision making in regard to this type of investment.

Research has, however, found that parent engagement in child learning at home were more likely to have children with higher academic functioning, greater academic achievement, and higher academic motivation (Harris & Goodall, 2008; Bouffard & Weiss, 2008). Parent engagement includes families who promoted learning at home, structured the home environment to support children's learning, and spent time talking with children about their school- based activities.

2.7. Factors Parents Consider When Enrolling Their Wards At Kindergarten

Social exchange theory may shed light on how social partnerships develop and maintain. According to this theory, social relationships develop depending on the exchange of resources between parties and the weighing of costs and benefits. Perceived resources or benefits can be tangible (e.g., adult education courses) or intangible (e.g., warm and welcoming environment). The concept of trust is also at the essence of social exchange theory. As mutual trust evolves between the family and the programme so will the extent and commitment to the partnership. If trust is lost,

however, the commitment to the relationship will begin to diminish, as will feelings of engagement (Nakonezny & Denton, 2008).

In a review of why families become involved, Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkens, & Closson (2005) found that "how welcoming the programme is" was one of the most influential indicators of family engagement. Intangible benefits that result from a welcoming environment such as feelings of acceptance and appreciation are also important for promoting partnerships with families (Constantino, 2008). Where parents do not feel welcome, they may not want to become involved. Cultural differences and language barriers may lead to misconceptions about families" participation in their children's education. Biases, even unconscious biases, by teachers and administrators can harm the partnerships between programmes and families and discourage families from participating in their children's education (Ferguson, Ramos, Rudo, & Wood, 2008; Sanders, 2008).

A very important but often over-looked form of family engagement is the concept of shared decision making between families and programmes. Early Childhood Education programmes need to provide families with an opportunity to voice their opinions and share in the decision making of programme practices and policies that affect their children. Including families within the decision-making process demonstrates that families" opinions are valued and generates a sense of parent "ownership" and pride in the programme (Cochran, 2007).

While some programmes may offer forms of parent leadership, Flaugher (2006) suggests that their opportunities to engage in decision making in their children's programmes are usually quite limited. Research on culturally-diverse families also indicates feelings of reservation and alienation on the part of family members from participating in school leadership councils (Schaller, Rocha, & Barshinger 2007; Sohn

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& Wang, 2006). To support a true family- programme partnership, programmes must work to empower families and find ways to incorporate the voices of all families across race, cultural background and socioeconomic status.

Even though research has found positive relations between parent participation in school activities and outcomes for pre-kindergarteners and kindergartners (Mantzicopoulos, 2003), some concerns have been raised regarding the traditional parent involvement paradigm, especially with regards to cultural sensitivity. SoutoManning and Swick (2006) suggest that the traditional paradigm for parent involvement focuses on the deficiencies of parents and strives to adapt parents to the methods applied by the schools. According to this definition, the responsibility for involvement is placed on the parent and suggests that to be involved parents need to participate in school defined practices such as volunteering in the classroom.

In addition, programmes that implement a traditional parent involvement model may also be perceived as insensitive to family members" time, financial, or educational limitations. In the case of culturally-diverse families, other practices implemented at home that support children's education may be overlooked and under-appreciated. These misperceptions of Early Childhood Education programmes may lead to a disconnect in the partnership between families and programmes (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Wong & Hughes, 2006).

Lastly, in some cultures, multi-generational households are common, and extended family members and fictive kin have important roles in caring for and raising children. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (2009) highlights the importance of family by recognizing that "all family members" (siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and fictive kin, who may be friends or neighbours), often contribute in significant ways to children's education and development. Traditional

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parental involvement models, however, do not incorporate other important family members that are active participants in the child's development and learning.

Parents' decisions about what investments to make for their children depend not solely on market forces and financial resource. The analysis so far, has shown that parents, depending on their motivation to support their children's development, often choose arrangements that are most beneficial to their children's development over and above childcare costs. Differences in childcare preferences arise according to factors like parents" income, education, ethnicity, and children's characteristics. This suggests rationalization of parents" decisions that are beyond family resources and service availability and more about family processes and ideologies. Although explorations of this subject have revealed interesting and useful information about parents" decision making, questions remain and the scope of factors influencing parents' selection of childcare may be wider than has been previously considered. Parents' cultural backgrounds, set of beliefs, and motivations are just a few of the factors that may also influence parents' choice of childcare arrangements.
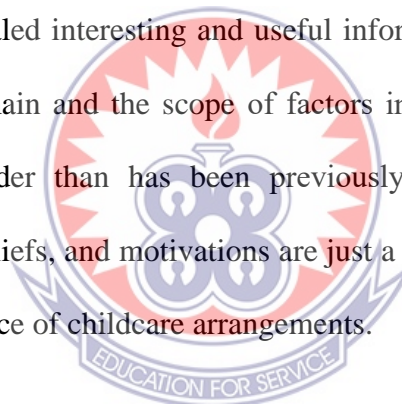
2.8 Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review explores the influence of parents' perception of the importance of kindergarten education on their decision to enroll their children, the effect of parents' aspirations for their children on their motivation to enroll their children in kindergarten, and the factors parents consider when enrolling their children in kindergarten. It also discusses the impact of parental investments in the home learning structure on child development, as well as the influence of families on the knowledge, skills, values, and habits of their children.

The review emphasizes the importance of early childhood education and the critical impact that early experiences have on brain architecture and all aspects of an

individual's life. It also highlights the significance of continuity of quality and development support initiatives from the home to child care settings in addressing children's developmental needs.

Key notes from the literature include:

1. "The basic principles of neuroscience indicate that providing supportive conditions for early childhood development is more effective and less costly than attempting to address problems at a later age."

2. "Parents have a large influence on the education and many other dimensions of their children's lives."

3. "The benefits of Early Childhood Education (ECE) encourage greater social equity, increase the efficacy of other investments and address the needs of mothers, while helping their children."

4. "The early years of human development (conception to ages 6-8), affect the later stages of human development, as well as the later stages."

5. "Research has found that parent engagement in child learning at home is more likely to have children with higher academic functioning, greater academic achievement, and higher academic motivation."

In summary, the literature review underscores the significant role of parents in shaping their children's early development and the importance of early childhood education in promoting social equity and addressing the needs of children and mothers.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter presented the method and procedure used for the study. In this chapter, the research methodology was presented in the following order; research philosophy, research approach, research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling technique, data collection instrument, pilot-testing, validity and reliability, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Paradigm

This study was underpinned by positivism philosophy. The positivism philosophy allowed the researcher to employ quantitative methods, thereby making it possible for generalization of the results of the study. As a philosophy, positivism adheres to the view that only factual knowledge gained through observation, including measurement through objective methods, is trustworthy (Dudovskiy, 2013). The positivist believes that the world is external and that there is a single objective reality to any research phenomenon or situation regardless of the researcher's perspective or belief. Thus, positivists take a controlled and structural approach in conducting research by identifying a clear research topic, constructing appropriate hypotheses and by adopting a suitable research methodology (Carson, Gilmore, Perry, & Gronhaug, 2001).

Carson et al., (2001) assert that positivist researchers remain detached from the participants of the research by creating a distance, which is important in remaining emotionally neutral to make clear distinctions between reason and feeling.

They also maintain a clear distinction between science and personal experience, and fact and value-judgment. It is also important in positivist research to seek objectivity and use consistently rational and logical approaches to research (Carson et al., 2001).

In positivism studies, the role of the researcher is limited to data collection and interpretation through objective approaches. The research findings are usually observable and depend on quantifiable observations that lend themselves to statistical analysis. Statistical and mathematical techniques are central to positivist research, which adheres to specifically structured research techniques to uncover single and objective reality (Carson et al., 2001; Crowther & Lancaster, 2008; Wilson, 2010). It has been noted that "as a philosophy, positivism is in accordance with the empiricist view that knowledge stems from human experience. It has an atomistic, ontological view of the world as comprising discrete, observable elements and events that interact in an observable, determined and regular manner" (Collins, 2010, p.38).

The main advantages associated with positivism, according to Armstrong (2010), include wide coverage of the range of situations, being fast and economical, and are useful in large samples. Its main disadvantages include the fact that its methods tend to be inflexible. Also, the perspective is not very effective in understanding processes or the significance people attach to actions and is not very helpful in generating theories. Because it focuses on what is or what has been recently, it makes it hard for policy makers to infer what actions should take place in the future.

3.2 Research Approach

Quantitative research approach was adopted for the study. The quantitative research approach enabled the researcher to collect numeric data on a larger scale. Generally, quantitative research uses numerical comparisons, statistics and other

mathematics-based methods to explain social phenomenon in a structured way. They also allow for a broader study involving a greater number of subjects, allow for greater objectivity and accuracy as well as enhance the generalization of results (Yegidis & Weinback, 2009). Quantitative methods usually involve few variables and many cases and employs prescribed procedures to ensure validity and reliability. Finally, quantitative methods are relatively easier to analyse, be compared with similar studies and replicated. However, quantitative research collects a much narrower and sometimes superficial dataset and results are limited as they provide numerical descriptions rather than detailed narrative and elaborate accounts of human perception. The quest to ensure absolute objectivity in this type of research means that the research is often carried out in an artificial environment so that a level of control can be applied to the exercise. This level of control might not normally exist in the real world, so the research might yield laboratory results as opposed to real world results. Also, pre-set answers do not necessarily reflect how people feel about a subject and, in some cases, might just be the closest match. Finally, the development of standard questions by researchers can lead to 'structural' bias and false representation, where the data sometimes reflects the view of the researcher instead of the participating subject.

3.3. Research Design

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Descriptive survey design was adopted because it enables the researcher to investigate the influence of parents' perception of the importance of kindergarten education on their decision to enrol their wards at kindergarten, examine the effect of parents' aspirations for their children on their motivation to enrol their wards at Kindergarten, and identify the factors parents consider when enrolling their wards at Kindergarten. The design was considered

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appropriate for the study because the researcher did not have any intention to manipulate the study's variables but to study them as they occur naturally. According to Creswell (2012), descriptive survey design is concerned with conditions, practices, structures, differences or relationships that exist, opinions held, processes that are ongoing or trends that are evident.

3.4 Population of the Study

The target population of this study was all parents whose wards are enrolled at the public early childhood centres in the Akyemansa District. The accessible population of the study included all parents whose wards are enrolled at the public kindergarten level in the Akyemansa District. Records obtained from head teachers and parent association chairman from various public early childhood centres in the Akyemansa District indicates parents who have enrol their wards at kindergarten sum up to four hundred and four (404).

3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques

Simple random technique was used to select the kindergarten schools in Akyemansa District. Crossman (2020) stated that simple random sampling technique is a technique which gives all elements in the population an equal chance of being selected from the population to be used (Crossman, 2020). In all, there were twenty-five public kindergarten schools in the study area. Thus, the researcher wrote numbers from 1 to 25 on pieces of papers together with blank papers. The pieces of paper were folded and put in a box. The box was turned repeatedly to ensure that the pieces of paper were well mixed to guarantee that each kindergarten school had an equal opportunity of being selected. The head teachers at kindergarten schools were required to pick the pieces of paper at random. Head teacher who selected the pieces of paper

which have number responses, the kindergarten was included in the study. At the end, 20 kindergarten schools were included in the study. Random sampling was used here because the researcher wanted the sample method to be free from preconception and unfairness just as (Creswell, 2014) asserted.

Moreover, in order to choose the respondents for the study, purposive sampling technique was used. Purposive/Judgemental sampling is the technique where the selection of the sample is based on the researcher's knowledge of the population and the purpose of the study (Crossman, 2020). This technique was used to select seventy-seven (77) parents from the selected twenty kindergarten schools. This was done with the help of the criteria given, thus the researcher hand-picked them to be included in the study. Respondents were selected based on this specific criterion: the respondent should be educated (able to read and write), and the respondent should be responsible for the child welfare. Respondents who met this criterion were 77 parents. Therefore, the study had a sample size of 77 participants.

3.6 Data Collection Instrument

Questionnaire was the main instrument used to collect data for the study.

3.6.1. Questionnaire

Questionnaire usage in collecting large data is efficient because: (i) large quantity of data can be collected in a relatively short period of time and (ii) data can be collected from participants in distant places and in the absence of the researcher (Thomas, 2003). The disadvantage of using questionnaires as outlined by Agyedu, Donkor, and Obeng (2013), are as follows: (i) the opportunity to build rapport with the respondents is limited and (ii) probing for more details or explanations of responses is not possible.

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There are many ways of classifying questionnaire items. However, the two broad categories are: i) Open-ended or semi-structured questionnaire, this type requires the respondents to construct or write a response, from a word to several paragraphs. ii) Closed-ended or structured questionnaire requires the respondent to make a choice by ticking, checking or circling the one they wish. The structured questionnaire may be in the form of dichotomous response items (say – yes or no), multiple choice items (say – 0- 5, 6-10, 11- and above), rating scale items (say – strongly disagree, disagree.), among others (Agyedu, Donkor, & Obeng, 2013). The main advantages of the structured questionnaire are that it consists of items meant to collect numerical data that can be subjected to statistical analysis (Jack, & Norman, 2003). Kusi (2012) asserts that, most research participants feel more comfortable responding to pre-determined response than items that require them to express their views and feeling. In this study, the researcher used the structured questionnaire to collect numeric data on parental motivation in enrolment of their wards at Kindergarten in the Akyemansa District.

The researcher used questionnaire due to less time involved in collecting data on parental motivation in enrolment of their wards at Kindergarten in the Akyemansa District. The questionnaire had three sections and that each section covered each research question. The structured questionnaire was administered to the parents who enrol their wards at the kindergarten. The structured questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section of the structured questionnaire consisted of demographical information of respondents. The second section dealt with views of parents on influence of their perception of the importance of kindergarten education on their decision to enrol their wards at kindergarten. The third aspect looked at the effect of parents' aspirations for their children on their motivation to enrol their wards at Kindergarten

while the final part dealt with the factors parents consider when enrolling their wards at Kindergarten.

3.7. Pilot-Testing of Instrument

The pre-testing of the instrument was done at public kindergarten schools in Akyemansa District. The questionnaire was pre-tested in order to test the reliability and validity as a data collection tool and to ensure in its effectiveness. Some of the items or statement in the questionnaire was reframed while others were deleted. This helped to check the clarity of the items and identify ambiguities, misunderstandings or other inadequacies to make the instrument more relevant and appropriate for the actual data collection. According to Sarantakos (2005), pre-tests are small tests of single elements of a research instrument that are mostly used to check the mechanical structure of the instrument.

3.8 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

In this study, both face validity and content validity of the instruments was tested. For face validity, the research instruments were given to the study supervisor and colleagues to check for wrong spellings, omissions, and grammatical errors. Face validity is a subjective and cursory judgment of a concept, assessment instrument, or any other conceptualization to ascertain whether, on its face, it appears valid (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Also, the pre-testing was used to identify those items that could be misunderstood, and such items will be modified accordingly, thus increasing face validity. Content validity on the other hand refers to the degree to which a test appropriately represents the content domain it is intended to measure. When a test is judged to have high content validity, its content is considered congruent with the testing purpose and with prevailing notions of the subject matter tested. Expert opinions,

literature searches, and pre-testing of open-ended questions help to establish content validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher prepared the instruments in close consultation with her supervisor, whose expert judgement helped to improve content validity.

To establish reliability for the study, a pilot test was conducted where few of the questionnaires were given to a sample of the respondents who were not among the participant for this study but were within the population. The data collected was subjected to Cronbach Coefficient Alpha test. The overall Cronbach's alpha reliability test revealed a reliability statistic of 0.76 implying that the instrument is 76% reliable. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a coefficient of 0.7 or more is considered reliable.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

To start the data collection process, the researcher wrote a letter to seek permission to carry out the study from the head of various institutions, Early Childhood Education (UEW), Akyemansa District Education Directorate office, head teachers, and parent association chairmen. After obtaining permission, the researcher visited the public basic schools under study, at the various schools; the researcher introduced herself to the head teachers and explained the purpose of her visit. With the help of the head teachers and the parents' association chairman from various early childhood centres, the researcher was able to reach the parents. Thus, the researcher met the parents on agreed place and time to administer the questionnaires. The respondents were given instructions and assured of confidentiality after which they were given enough time to fill the questionnaires, after which the researcher collected the filled-in questionnaires.

3.10 Data Analysis Procedure

The study data was analysed by coding data using Software Package for Social Science and generated descriptive statistics such as percent and oral percentages.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The respondents were assured that all the information obtained would be treated as confidential. That is, data were only used for stated purposes and no other person had access to them. The names of participants and schools were coded and not released in the research. Also, the names of participants were not needed on the questionnaire and respondents were informed before they filled the questionnaire. The learning atmosphere in the schools were not disturbed during the data collection process and the data collected through questionnaires, the data collection process was kept confidential and made available only to persons who had direct interest in this study. Computer data were protected by a password. At the end of the process, all documents were shredded and tapes were deleted. Moreover, the researcher ensured that no one could identify the participants from the information provided. This was done by not indicating names, addresses and particular names of individual schools of participants. Not all these were indicated in the formal report resented. The respondents were given the freedom to choose to participate or not to in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were achieved by not asking participants to write their names on the questionnaires. Respondents' identity was not tied to the information given nor disclosed to the public. The questionnaires were destroyed when the research work was completed to ensure confidentiality.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents data collected from the public kindergarten parents in Akyemansa District. The data collected was structured into two main sections, the first section focused on the background information of the respondents, the second section deals with the data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings in relation to the research questions.

4.1. Background Information of Respondents

This section considers the background information of the respondents focusing on the sex, age range, educational qualification and number of children enrolled in kindergarten. The result is presented in Table 1.
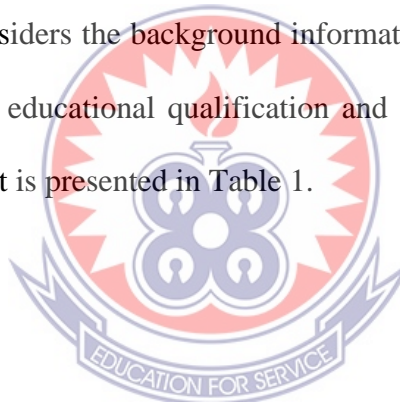
Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent (%)
Sex		
Male	40	51.9
Female	37	48.1
Total	77	100
Age Range		
20 – 30 years	5	6.5
31 – 40 years	47	61.0
41 – 50 years	17	22.1
51 years and above	8	10.8
Total	77	100
Education Qualification		
Certificate	16	20.8
Diploma	35	45.5
Degree	25	32.5
Masters	1	1.2
Total	77	100
Number of Children Enrolled in Kindergarten		
Below 3	16	22.9
3 – 5	28	40
6 and above	26	37.1
Total	70	100

Source: Field Work Data (2022)

From Table 1, the study finding on the sex of the respondents concealed that majority of the respondents were males with 40 (51.9%) while minority of the respondents were females with 37 (48.1%). The result critically shows that male dominated the study however, females were also considered during data so as to enable the researcher attain unbiased information.

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Concerning the age of the respondents, the majority 47 (61%) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 31 – 40 years, 17 (22.1%) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 41 – 50 years, 8 (10.8%) were also within the age bracket of 51 years and above while 5 (6.5%) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 20 – 30 years. This suggests that majority of the respondents were above 30 years of age

Again, the study findings also revealed that majority 35 (45.5%) of the respondents were diploma holders, 25 (32.5%) of the respondents were degree holders, 16 (20.8%) of the respondents were certificate holders and 1 (1.2%) of the respondents were masters' holders. This finding suggests that majority of the respondents were educated.

Finally, 42 (54.5%) of the respondents had 3 – 5 children enrolled in kindergarten, 25 (32.5%) of the respondents had also below 3 children enrolled in kindergarten while 10 (13%) of the respondents had 6 and above children enrolled in kindergarten. This result reveals that respondents have a critical and greater understanding on the study given due to their number of wards enrolled in kindergarten.

4.2. Analysis of the Research Question

This aspect of data presentation, analysis and discussion focused attention on the research questions of the study.

Research Question 1: What are the influence of parents' perception of the importance of kindergarten education on their decision to enrol their wards at kindergarten in Akyemansa District?

This research question sought to investigate the influence of parents' perception of the importance of kindergarten education on their decision to enrol their wards at kindergarten in Akyemansa District. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Influence of Parents' Perception of the Importance of Kindergarten Education

On their Decision to Enrol their Wards at Kindergarten in Akyemansa District

N=77

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Kindergarten is important to children because it prepared children for primary school	35 (45.5)	38 (49.4)	3 (3.8)	1 (1.3)
Government law requires us (parents) to enroll our wards into kindergarten	42 (54.5)	35 (45.5)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Kindergarten allows parents to work	38 (49.4)	34 (44.1)	3 (3.9)	2 (2.6)
Kindergarten allows older siblings to do other things such as go to school or learn a trade	30 (39)	25 (32.5)	10 (13)	12 (15.5)
When a child enrolled in Kindergarten, a host of educational stakeholders also benefit	30 (39)	22 (28.6)	14 (18.2)	11 (14.2)
Kindergarten prepares children for the future which benefitted the family as well	35 (45.5)	34 (44.1)	4 (5.2)	4 (5.2)

Source: Field Work Data, (2022)

Key: SA – Strongly Agree**; A –** Agree; **D-**Disagree**; SD –** Strongly Disagree and **N –** Number of respondents**. Note:** *The figures in parentheses are in percentage*

The result presented in Table 2 showed that the respondents perceived that kindergarten (KG) education was important for their children. As a result, all of the

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respondents 77 (100%) were of the perception that Government law requires them to enrol their wards to kindergarten. An overwhelming majority 73 (94.9%) of the respondents thought that it was important to send young children to kindergarten (KG) before they enrolled in primary school. In addition, most 72 (93.5%) of the respondents believed that kindergarten (KG) allows parents to work. Moreover, majority 69 (89.6%) of the respondents believes that kindergarten prepares children for the future which benefit the family as well. Furthermore, most 55 (71.4%) of the respondents were of the perception that kindergarten allows older siblings to do other such as go to school or learn a trade. Finally, most 52 (67.6%) of the respondents were of the perception that when a children enrolled in kindergarten, a host of education stakeholders also benefitted.

The study findings show that the respondent's perception of the importance of kindergarten (KG) education was a significant motivation for them to enrol their children in kindergarten (KG). Also, the findings agree with the conclusions made by Ceglowski and Bacigalupa (2002), that among the many considerations that parents weigh when choosing an early care and education setting (e.g., enrolment of their children, cost, location, hours of care, etc.) is their perception about the programme and the potential benefits that could be derived from it. They, further, agree with Bauch (1991) that parents' positive attitude towards their children's education is important in determining school attendance and academic achievement of the children. Finally, the findings above confirm UNICEF's (1984) assertion that Early Childhood Development plays a very important role in society. According to the organisation, generally, ECD helps children to develop to their full potential, acquire desirable moral and social values, which will benefit them and society in the future. ECD also helps to improve

the efficiency of educational systems and helps to eliminate social inequities as well as promotes increased primary school attendance of older siblings, especially girls.
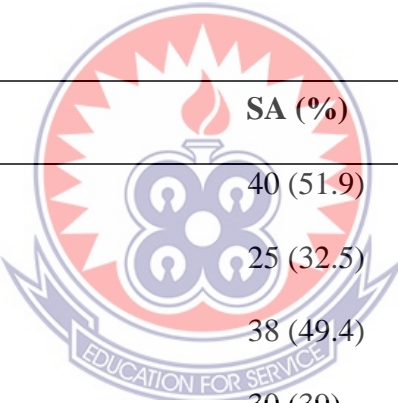
Research Question 2: What are the effect of parents' aspirations for their children on their motivation to enrol their wards at Kindergarten in Akyemansa District?

This research question sought to examine the effect of parents' aspirations for their children on their motivation to enrol their wards at Kindergarten in Akyemansa District. The result is presented in table 4.3.

Table 3: Effect of Parents' Aspirations for their Children On their Motivation to Enrol their Wards at Kindergarten in Akyemansa District

N=77

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Health sector	40 (51.9)	34 (44.2)	1 (1.3)	2 (2.6)
Education sector	25 (32.5)	20 (26)	10 (13)	22 (28.5)
Engineering	38 (49.4)	34 (44.1)	3 (3.9)	2 (2.6)
Security services	30 (39)	25 (32.5)	10 (13)	12 (15.6)
Vocations like hairdressing, and dressmaking	30 (39)	22 (28.6)	14 (18.2)	11 (14.2)

Source: Field Data, (2022)

Key: SA – Strongly Agree**; A** – Agree; **D-**Disagree**; SD** – Strongly Disagree and **N** – Number of respondents**. Note:** *The figures in parentheses are in percentage*

The study examined whether parental aspirations for their children's future occupation had any association with their motivation to enrol their children in kindergarten (KG). Generally, the respondents had wide and varied future career aspirations for their children and were prepared to assist their children to attain them if

it was within their means to influence or choose for the children. These career aspirations included those in the health sector, education, engineering, security services, and vocations like hairdressing, and dressmaking. The result in Table 3 shows that most prominent career choices that the respondents aspired for their children were health sector 74 (96.1%), security services 65 (84.5%), engineering 59 (76.7%) and education sector 45 (58.5%). However, a small minority 47 (61%) of the respondents did not aspired their children should opt for vocations like hairdressing and dressmaking.

The evidence from this study reveal that parents who have high aspirations for their children's future are likely to be more willing to exert efforts to ensure that those aspirations are realised. Therefore, parents are likely to do more for their children by enrolling them in school activities that would prepare them to attain the goals aspired for them. The research findings confirm that educational and occupational aspirations are associated with the ways in which parents' shape children's activities, time, and learning environment (Cardin, 2005; Li, 2004; Murphey, 1992; Yang & Kayaardi, 2004). The findings further confirm Drèze & Sen's (2002), Chiapa et al. (2012), and Samal's (2012) assertions that evidence from many countries indicate a positive correlation between parental aspirations and children's educational participation, especially in the children's school enrolment. The conclusion that could be drawn from the findings is, consequently, in line with the assertion by Polidano, Hanel and Buddelmeyer (2013) and Goodman and Gregg (2010) that parental aspiration and expectation of the outcome of education is a predictor of parental motivation to support their children in Early Childhood Education (ECE).

Research Question 3: What factors do parents consider when enrolling their wards at Kindergarten in the Akyemansa District?

This research question sought to identify the factors parents consider when enrolling their wards at Kindergarten in the Akyemansa District. The result is presented in table 4.

Table 4: Factors Parents Consider when Enrolling their Wards at Kindergarten in The Akyemansa District

N=77

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Foundation for formal education	40 (51.9)	32 (41.6)	4 (5.2)	1 (1.3)
Need a place for child during working hours	40 (51.9)	30 (39)	5 (6.5)	2 (2.6)
Pro-poor policies of Government	30 (39)	20 (26)	5 (6.5)	22 (28.5)
Availability/nearness of kindergarten	45 (58.4)	28 (36.4)	3 (3.9)	1 (1.3)
Pressure/advocacy from others	46 (59.7)	28 (36.4)	1 (1.3)	2 (2.6)

Source: Field Data, (2022)

Key: SA – Strongly Agree**; A –** Agree; **D-**Disagree**; SD –** Strongly Disagree and **N –** Number of respondents**. Note:** *The figures in parentheses are in percentage*

The findings of the study indicated that a number of factors motivates the respondents to enrol their children in kindergarten (KG). The findings from Table 4.4 reveal that pressure/ advocacy from others (74; 96.1%) and availability or nearness of kindergarten (73; 94.8%) were the strong motivation for them to enrol their children in kindergarten (KG). In addition, the respondents' desire to prepare their children adequately for primary school that a foundation for formal education (72; 93.5%), the

need for places to keep their children during working hours (70; 90.9%) and pro-poor policies" of the government (such as the Capitation grant, supply of school uniforms and free feeding) were also motivation for them (respondents) to enrol their children in kindergarten. The study findings confirm the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (2009) statement that parents' decisions about what investments to make for their children depends on a range of reasons, notably market forces and financial resource as well as their motivation to support their children's development. The study findings also aligns with the assertion by Prager (2012) that several factors influence behaviour to achieve positive outcomes hence an understanding of the reason for a particular behaviour may lie in behaviour change models (Darnton, 2008) and specific contexts (Southerton, McMeekin, & Evans, 2011).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter summarise the key findings and draw conclusions based on the findings. It also gives recommendations of the study and areas that require further research.

5.1.   Summary of the Findings of the Study

The study reveals that:

1. The first objective that was to investigate the influence of parents' perception of the importance of kindergarten education on their decision to enrol their wards at kindergarten in Akyemansa District. The key finding was that, generally, the respondents had a very positive impression about kindergarten and maintained that children needed kindergarten experience prior to enrolling in Primary school. This perception was borne out of the belief by the respondents that kindergarten prepares children for primary school and also that it was a legal requirement that children had to attend kindergarten prior to primary school enrolment. Some of the respondents also believed that when children attended kindergarten, it allows parents to focus on their work and allows older siblings to do other things such as go to school or learn a trade.

2. The second objective of the study explored parental aspirations for children as a source of motivation for the enrolment of children in kindergarten. The most significant finding was that the respondents had wide and varied future career aspirations for their children which they were prepared to assist the children to attain. The career aspirations preferred by the respondents for their children

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were those that were considered to be held in high esteem by society, paid relatively high salaries or those which offered easy employment. These included careers in the health sector, education, engineering, security services, and vocations like hairdressing, and dressmaking.

5.3. Conclusions

The study concluded that parental motivation is key in their wards enrolment into kindergarten. Also, the study concludes that perception of the importance of kindergarten education is a strong source of motivation for parents to enrol their children in kindergarten. The belief that when children attend kindergarten, both the children and other stakeholders, especially their families and communities benefitted created a positive impression about kindergarten among the respondents and motivated them to enrol their children in kindergarten. The study concludes further that parental aspirations for their children is a strong predictor of parental motivation to become involved in their children's education. The respondents had future career aspirations for their children which they thought could earn the children highly valued and well-paying careers. The realisation by the parents that education was the route through which these aspirations could be achieved was one of the strongest reasons for enrolling children in kindergarten. Finally, many factors are equally strong motivating factors for parents when enrolling their children in kindergarten. For instance, when parents needed places to keep children during working hours or when there was a kindergarten in a community or nearby, parents were motivated to enrol their children in kindergarten before entering primary school.

5.4. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

1. The study recommends that Institutions like the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) and the Department of Community Development (DCD) should be equipped and resourced to implement an enrolment campaign that targets parents, especially, those with kindergarten-aged children. GES should also use its convening powers to mobilise PTAs to assist in the parent education campaign

2. Also, the study recommends that State institutions such as GES and DCD which are mandated to promote Early Childhood Education (ECE), must use various strategies such as seminars, mounting of customised billboards, workshops, sensitization at community gatherings and parent education programmes to orient both school authorities and parents on the benefits of Kindergarten education. The programme must focus on how Early Childhood Education (ECE) supports the achievement of parental aspirations for their children as well as allows parents to concentrate on their work.

3. Finally, the study recommends that, there is the need to bring schools closer to communities e.g. by ensuring that all primary schools have kindergartens attached to them. District Assemblies must prioritise the construction of kindergartens, especially in areas that do not have them and ensure that primary schools which do not have kindergartens attached to them are provided kindergartens. As far as possible, the Ministry of Education's policy on siting of primary schools and kindergartens within three kilometres of the catchment areas they serve should be adhered to. Where this is not possible, satellite

kindergartens could be built closer to children and to serve as feeders to nearby primary schools.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The findings of the study should be generalised with caution. This is because the research was conducted among parents in some selected public kindergarten schools in Akyemansa District. Thus, the size of the sample may not permit generalising the findings of the study to all districts in Ghana. Also, it was apparent that some of the respondents were unwilling to divulge certain personal information about themselves. They inquired why they had been selected instead of going elsewhere. The researcher had to explain to them that the research was for an important purpose, hence the choice. These notwithstanding, the effect of this problem did not affect the research so much as to render it unreliable or not representative since the objective of the research was achieved.

5.6. Suggestion for Further Studies

The study can be replicated in other districts to compare the findings. A study can be carried out on factors that motivate parents to enrol their children in kindergarten in Ghana. An investigation into the strategies to improve parental involvement in education delivery, especially at the kindergarten level in Ghana.

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APPENDIX A

SECTION A

<u>SOCIO- DEMOGRAPHIC DATA</u>

Instruction: Please tick [√] against the appropriate answer or provide the necessary information where appropriate.

1. Sex:

    a. Male   [   ]

    b. Female   [   ]

2. Age Range

    a. 20-30 years   [   ]

    b. 31-40 years   [   ]

    c. 41-50 years   [   ]

    d. 50 years and above   [   ]

3. Time of interaction with school?

    a. 1-3 years [   ]
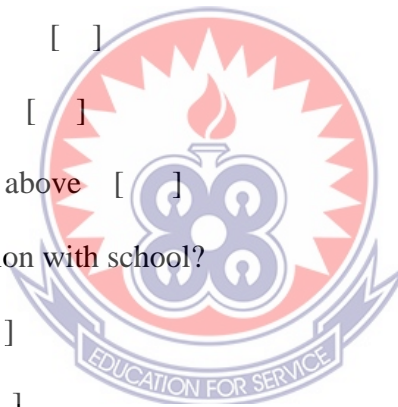
    b. 4-6 years [   ]

    c. 7 years and above [   ]

4. Educational Qualification

    (a) Certificate [   ]

    (b) Diploma   [   ]

    (c) Degree   [   ]

    (d) Masters   [   ]

SECTION B

<u>INFLUENCE OF PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF</u>

<u>KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION ON THEIR DECISION TO ENROL THEIR</u>

<u>WARDS AT KINDERGARTEN IN AKYEMANSA DISTRICT</u>

Instruction: Please tick [√] against the appropriate answer or provide the necessary information where appropriate. It is rated in the form: 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly disagreed

Statements	4	3	2	1
KINDERGARTEN is important to children because it prepared children for primary school				
Government law requires us (parents) to enrol our wards				
Kindergarten allows parents to work				
Kindergarten allows older siblings to do other things such as go to school or learn a trade				
when a child enrolled in KINDERGARTEN, a host of stakeholders also benefitted				
it prepared children for the future which benefitted the family as well				

SECTION C

EFFECT OF PARENTS' ASPIRATIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN ON THEIR MOTIVATION TO ENROL THEIR WARDS AT KINDERGARTEN IN AKYEMANSA DISTRICT

Instruction: Please tick [√] against the appropriate answer or provide the necessary information where appropriate. It is rated in the form: 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly disagreed

| Statements	4	3	2	1
health sector				
Education sector				
engineering				
security services				
vocations like hairdressing, and dressmaking				

75
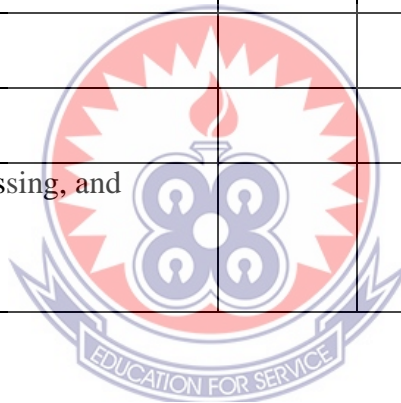
SECTION D

FACTORS PARENTS CONSIDER WHEN ENROLLING THEIR WARDS AT

KINDERGARTEN IN THE AKYEMANSA DISTRICT.

Instruction: Please tick [√] against the appropriate answer or provide the necessary information where appropriate. It is rated in the form: 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly disagreed

Statements	4	3	2	1
Foundation for formal education				
Need a place for child during working hours				
Pro-poor policies of Government				
Availability/nearness of KINDERGARTEN				
Pressure/advocacy from others				

76
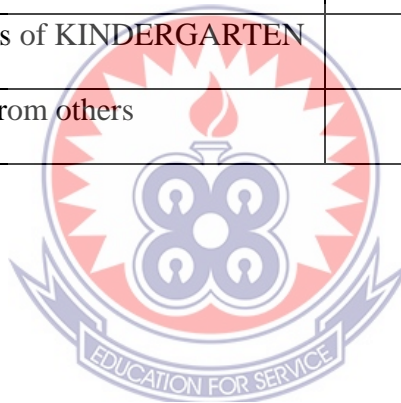
APPENDIX C

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

GPS Address: EM-0007-6818

In case of reply, the number and
date of this letter should be quoted.

Our Ref No.: GES/ER/AKY3/DEO/
Your Ref No.: ....

District Education Office
Akyemansa District
Post Office Box 33
Akim Ofoase - Eastern Region
Ghana, W/Africa

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

DATE: 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2022.

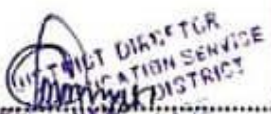THE HEADTEACHER
ADABIYA ISLAMIC BASIC SCHOOL
AKIM ANYINASE

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION
MARIAM ABU ANKARAZINNYE

The bearer of the letter is a teacher currently teaching at St. Anthony R/C Basic School in the Birim Central Municipality. She is pursuing a Master of Education in Early Childhood at the University of Education, Winneba.

She will be collecting data for her thesis on the topic; assessing parental motivation in the enrolment of their wards at Kindergarten in your school.

Accord her any assistance due her.

Thank you.

....
LORETTA AKUA AYISI (MS)
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
AKYEMANSA DISTRICT

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APPENDIX D