UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

PERCEIVED FACTORS THAT AFFECT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF EARLY GRADE LEARNERS IN AFIGYA KWABRE NORTH DISTRICT, GHANA

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, **Adelaide Kusiwaa Manu-Boampong**, hereby declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature.....

Date.....

Supervisor's Declaration

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

Dr. Yayra Dzakadzie

Signature.....

Date.....

DEDICATION

To my love Nana Poku, Apostle Professor Ohene Duku, Ayeyie, Aseda and Mrs. Beatrice Manu Ofori Adjei. I love you all.

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I express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Yayra Dzakadzie for taken time out of his busy schedules to read through and making the necessary corrections. God bless you and give you long life to impact on generations. To Mr. Justice G. Adjerakor and Mr. Emmanuel Sefa for the prove reading. I am grateful to my beloved husband, Nana Poku, to the Manu-Boampongs' and Ofori-Adjeis', Elder Eric Opoku, Rita

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate some selected perceived factors that enhance academic performance of early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District, Ghana and it was guided by three research objectives which were to identify parental factors that affect academic performance of children, identify school-related factors and investigate teacher-related factors that affect academic performance of children in the Afigya Kwabre North District. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The accessible population for the study comprised 100 Early Childhood Education teachers. Census was used to get participants for the study. Questionnaire with close-ended items was used to collect relevant data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation with the help of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. It was revealed in the study that, ECE teachers in the Afigya Kwabre North District believe and perceived parental factors, school-related factors and perceived teacherrelated factors to play critical roles in the education of children and in the long run affect the academic performance of children. It was concluded that these perceived factors are critical to the education and development of children as they affect the learning process and academic performance of children in the long run. It was recommended in the study that; the leadership and authorities of Basic Schools in the Afigya Kwabre North District should encourage parents to participate and involve in the education of their wards. Also, the school should provide the needed materials and create conducive environment for children learning. In-service training should be organized for teachers so as to abreast their knowledge and methodologies of teaching children.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Undoubtedly, education is established to be the key to eradicating poverty. The enrolment levels into schools have seen tremendous improvements over the years at the basic school level. A more historical representation of this increase is better captured in a study by Okyerefo, Fiaveh and Lamptey (2011) in the lines below:

> *"Students' enrolment rates in Ghana have seen steady increases as a result of efforts (such as the School Feeding Program, the Capitation Grant and the GET fund) by various governments when compared to the early 1980s (where percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) allocated to education dropped from 6.4% in 1976 to as low as 1.7% in 1983. However, the quality of the education system in recent years has seriously deteriorated . . ." (p. 280)".*

However, the performance of pupils at the various levels and particularly at the basic level has been declining over the years. The Education Reform Committee's Report of 2002, confirms this when it states that "Only about 40% of JSS leavers gain admission into SSS for the following reasons: . . . poor performance at the BECE". Hence, the quality of pupils who pass out of basic school has always been the concern of many stakeholders. Another of such views is expressed by Opoku Asare, (2006) which reflect better the situation to the attention of stakeholders in the lines:

> *"Monitoring and maintaining quality in primary education is a strategic means of stemming the low completion rates for pupils as a result of high rates of drop out, partly due to poor academic achievement and under-education of primary school completers, a situation where pupils pass out without mastering the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed to function effectively in their own society. Improving the quality of primary education in Ghana is also crucial to the nation's quest for improved living conditions, increased economic development and hope for the better future, especially for the nation's children"* (pp. 106-107).

Education has taken a prominent place in debates in recent years. Some of the main concerns expressed on education range from its accessibility to the quality of education that children enjoy. There is a widespread anxiety across the board over falling standards especially at the basic school level. This anxiety really is not unfounded as corroborated by the Review Committee mentioned above and as well as (Opoku-Asare & Siaw, 2016). This has generated several interventions at the policy makers' level in attempt to salvage the situation. These include educational institutions in both the private and the public sector. Among these interventions is the well-known national level campaign against teacher absenteeism led by the Ministry of Education of the President Mahama-led administration.

At the local levels, Municipal and District Chief Executives have sought to remedy the situation in their localities by either strengthening their relationships with the educational units in their jurisdictions or announcing sanctions to those who break the rules, especially teachers. Teachers have in a large proportion, been targeted by many of the interventions that seek to improve the quality of education. Aspirants to political offices have also contributed to the cause of improving upon quality in education through a different approach. During long vacations, these aspirants organize extra tuition sessions to help students who could not complete the required number of units of the school curriculum to do so. For some, this comes as an opportunity to revise what has been already studied. A well-intended effort is present in this direction given that studies have identified inability to cover the assigned educational syllabus as a factor of low-quality academic performance (Gakure, Mukuria & Kithae, 2013).

Other stakeholders of education such as parents, teachers and even researchers have also paid a high-level of attention to the state of education. The objective of all the stakeholders has been to cause a turnaround in educational performances and to improve quality. On the part of policy makers (governments), there have been many Education Reforms that sought to improve the quality and relevance of the systems in the country. Mankoe (2002:1) was more assertive on this when he says ". . . Ghana, like many other modern states, has regarded education as an indispensable tool in its socioeconomic development. It has desired to tailor for itself a high-quality education that suits its developmental needs. . . . government's priority attention to human resource development, attests to this view".

Many researchers in the area of education concern themselves with the causes of poor performance in schools with relation to results from external examination bodies such as the West African Examinations Council's Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE). Instances where the statistics indicate low performance, the quality of such an education is considered to be poor and vice versa. For instance, Etsey (2005) used the performance of pupils at the BECE to delve into the causes of low academic performance. Yet some others hold a different view on quality in education. One of such divergent opinion holders is Sayed (1997), who views quality in education as being elusive and does not side with the use of BECE results as an appropriate measure of pupil's performance. Sayed's view could be shared among other researchers including Opoku-Asare (2006). While several policy reforms have taken place in the past few years without, there has not been a complete turnaround in performance for the schools under the Ministry of Education and schools in the Afigya Kwabre North District are of no exception. Poor performance of pupils is however dependent on several factors which need critical investigation. This study

therefore sought to investigate how some selected perceived factors enhance academic performance of early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District, Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Quality education and good academic performance of pupils or learners in the Early Grade level plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who would become great leader and manpower for the country, thus responsible for the country's economic and social development (Kamaruzaman, Najah & Andin, 2009). Educators, trainers, and researchers have long been interested in exploring variables contributing effectively to quality of academic performance of learners. These variables are inside and outside the school that affect students' academic performance. For instance, these perceived factors are related to student, family, school and peer (Crosnoe, Johnson & Elder, 2004).

Several moves by major stakeholders in education sought to improve quality and standards of education however, the narrative over the years has been one sided due to the huge statistics on low performing schools. Schools under public management face the problem of poor academic performance. A great deal of attention needs to be concentrated at the basic level since it is the critical stage of every individual's educational development and also the stage where a greater number of pupils are concentrated (Anamuah-Mensah, 2002). A study conducted in by Philip and Hendry (2000) indicated that factors such as qualified teachers, facilities like adequate and conducive class rooms, text books, and furniture, curriculum relevance, infrastructure, learning process (monitoring and evaluation) and adequate funding have great effect on the successful achievement of the educational objective and that affect students' academic achievement. Moreover, Tamiru, (2000) conducted a similar study in

Ethiopia and found that sociological variables, which include general categories of social class, family structure, sibling structure and religion were considered as variables which constitute the school factors that affect the students' academic performance. Likewise, the academic performance of students heavily depends upon the parental involvement in their academic activities to attain the higher level of quality in academic success (Barnard, 2004).

Additionally, poor and inadequate facilities affect the overall academic achievement of schools. Sufficient facilities promote academic achievement and ensure to strengthen the overall academic achievement of schools. While unattractive and old school buildings; cracked classroom walls and floors; lack of toilets; lack of desks and benches; lack of transport facility; lack of proper security system; lack of drinking water; lack of power supply; lack of playgrounds; lack of teaching staff; lack of sufficient classrooms; overcrowded classrooms; lack of educational technology; lack of first aids facility and many others negatively affect academic achievement of the schools. Therefore, it is right to say that academic performance of students has a close link with the availability of educational facilities as it was revealed in a study conducted in India (Suleman & Hussain 2014).

Maani (1990) and Mugisha (1991) conducted a study in Uganda and found that virtually all nations, children of high parents on education have far better chances of getting into better secondary schools and universities than equally bright children of ordinary workers or farmers. In other words, the highly educated parents tend to provide a more conducive learning environment that propels their children to go to schools and succeed. Kundu and Tuto cited in Nyipir (2010) believed that home background is the most significant primary factor which affects and shapes children's

attitudes, personality and behaviour patterns that lead to good performance at schools. A study conducted by Mugisha (1991) in some selected schools in Kampala District on causes of pupils' poor performance revealed that attitudes of children and their home background positively or negatively affect their performance in schools. He further pointed out that the home and the school should be accepted as partners to improve pupils' performance. Lippman (2010) in a study exploring beliefs about academic performance studied the relationship between parents' educational attainment and found that the educational attainment of parents has a relationship with educational achievement of their children.

An investigation into the perceived factors influencing students' mathematics performance in some selected colleges of education in Ghana (Enu, Osei Agyman & Nkum, 2015) revealed that factors such as, lecture method of instruction which turns the learner into passive participants in the learning process as well as inadequate teaching and learning material affect students' performance in mathematics. A study by Ampofo and Benedict (2015) on the topic "determinants of academic performance among Senior High School (SHS) students in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality of Ghana" shows that there was a strong positive relationship between parental involvements, parents' academic ambition for their children, peer effect the child's academic ambition and the child's effort and academic performance.

Given the prevalence of low performing schools across the Ghanaian spectrum, it is imperative to attempt to comprehend how some selected perceived factors such as parent-related, school-related factors and teacher-related factors enhance academic performance of early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District, Ghana. Again, it was paramount to conduct this study because although parent, school and

teacher related factors that affect the academic performance of children, little has been document and hence known about these perceived factors that affects the performance of early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District. The study therefore investigated the effect of some selected such parent, school and teachers related factors on early grade learners' academic performance in the Afigya Kwabre North District, Ghana.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study investigated the effect of some selected perceived factors such parent, school and teachers related on early grade learners' academic performance in the Afigya Kwabre North District, Ghana.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Identify the perceived parental factors that affects academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District.
2. Determine the perceived school-related factors that affect academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District.
3. Investigate the perceived teacher-related factors that affect academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. What are the perceived parental factors that affect academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District?

2. What are the perceived school-related factors affects academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District?

3. What is perceived teacher-related factors affects academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Findings of this study would first and foremost reveal factors that contribute to the academic performance of pupils. These findings would inform school authorities, parents, teachers, government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as to how to support public basic schools to improve upon the academic performance of learners. More so, the findings and recommendations of this study would help basic schoolteachers reexamine their teaching methods in order to enhance their lesson delivery thereby enabling pupils to benefit fully from their lessons. Furthermore, the findings of the study would provide useful information to the government, NGOs, school authorities and parents/guardians to put in place the needed resources and assistance to ensure effective conditions for the teaching and learning in public basic school in Ghana. The findings of this study could be used by other researchers as a baseline study for future studies in the area.

1.7 Delimitations

This study focused on perceived factors that enhance academic performance of early grade learners. Three prominent factors were considered, and they were perceived parental factors, perceived school-related factors and perceived teacher related factors. The study was limited in scope to only public basic schools in the Afigya Kwabre North District, Ghana.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Academic Achievement: This could be described as a successful accomplishment or performance in a particular subject area. It is indicated as by grades, marks and scores of descriptive commentaries. It includes how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers in a fixed time or academic year.

Academic Performance: The extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals, commonly measured by continuous assessment or examinations.

Perceived parental factors: Refer to the provision of educational resources in the home. Thus, whether homes provide a stimulating environment, full of learning physical objects and materials, and whether parents spend time with their wards in pursuit of activities that aid in cognitive development including monitoring of children's use of time outside of school.

Perceived School-related Factors: It refers to the quality of the physical environment, building and facilities.

Perceived Teacher-related Factors: Refer to a teacher's commitment to teaching, qualification and experience, his or her mastery of the subject matter and methods of teaching.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This study report covered five chapters. Chapter One focused on the introduction which was discussed under the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and research objectives. Moreover, it discussed the research questions, significance, delimitations, operational definition of terms and organization of the

study. Chapter Two dealt with literature review. This consisted of theoretical and empirical literature review. Chapter Three focused on the methodology of the study which was discussed under the sub-headings; research design, population, sample and sampling procedures. It further discussed the instrumentation, validity and reliability of the instrument and data collection procedures. More so, it discussed method of data analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter Four covered analysis of data and discussion of results.

Chapter Five dealt with the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter dealt with the literature review which was discussed under the following sub-headings:

1. Theoretical Framework
    - Behaviorist Theory
    - Cognitive Theories
    - Constructivism Theory
    - Humanism Theory
2. Empirical Review
    - Perceived Parental factors that affect academic performance,
    - Perceived School-related factors that affect academic performance,
    - Perceived Teacher-related factors that affect academic performance,
    - Perceived Pupil-related factors that affect academic performance and

2.1 Theoretical framework

According to Kolb, Boyatzis and Mainemelis (2014), learning theories address key questions, for example, how does learning happen? How does motivation occur? and "What affects students' development?" To a substantial extent, the most effective strategies for learning depend on what kind of learning is desired and toward what end.

This study was guided by the four learning theories: Behaviorism, Cognitive, Constructivism, and Humanism theories. Bransford, Stevens, Schwartz, Meltzoff, Pea, Roschelle and Sabelli, (2006) contend that there are several different learning theories which include the acquisition of skills, learning with understanding and its effects on schema formation and transfer. According to Amedahe and Owusu-Banahene (2007), some of the commonly known and well-established learning theories are behaviorism theory, cognitive theory, constructivism and humanism theory. These learning theories and their implication on teaching and learning have been discussed.

2.1.1 Behaviorist Theory

Driscoll (2000) has established that behaviorism is the theory that describes learning due to an observable change in behavior. Learning occurs when the learner observes the information, practices the information and then receives reinforcement through praise. The basic idea of the behaviorist perspective of learning, according to Hanna, David and Francisco (2010), is that learning consists of a change in behaviour based on the acquisition, strengthening and application of associations between stimuli from the environment and observable responses of the individual, so called "S-R bonds" or connections. Behaviorism is seen as a theory of learning that lays much emphasis on objectively observable behaviours. Behaviour theorists view learning as nothing more than the acquisition of new behaviour through observation.

Driscoll (2000) has highlighted some factors that teachers can consider when incorporating behaviourist principles into their teaching:

1. Write observable and measurable behavioural learning outcomes.
2. Providing feedback during the development of assignments, projects, essays or research.

3. Reinforce accomplishments with appropriate feedback through praise and encouragement to motivate learners to learn harder and with enthusiasm.
4. Specify the desired performances or learning outcomes in advance and verify learning with appropriate assessments.
5. Emphasize performance and practice in an authentic context.
6. Use a variety of instructional strategies to shape desired skills.
7. Give learners the opportunity to practice with the skills, concepts and ideas learned so that there will be consolidation and mastery.

2.1.2 Constructivist Theory

Basically, constructivism is a pedagogical approach that views learning as a personal act to fulfill one's potential. Driscoll (2000) specifies that constructivism is a theory of learning where humans construct meaning from current knowledge structures. In the constructivist learning, individuals construct new knowledge from their experiences; therefore, making learning an active social process. There is dynamic interaction between the task (learning), the teacher and the learner. The teachers are facilitators.

This theory emphasizes hands-on approaches or "learning is by doing". As regards the constructivist learning environments, Glynn and Duit (1995) advises that the lesson should be structured to:

1. Give learners opportunities for meaningful and self-directed working and for thoughts independent of teachers and other learners.
2. Give the learners the opportunity to link their previous knowledge and their previous experiences with the subject matter to be newly learned.

3. Give the learners the opportunity for interaction to negotiate meanings and find consensus.
4. Give the pupils opportunities to experience learning as a process allowing them to solve problems, they personally find difficult in order to enhance selfefficiency in a particular field.

2.1.3 Humanist Theory

According to Laird and Hartman (1985), the basic premise of this theory is that learning will occur by the teacher acting as a facilitator by establishing an atmosphere in which learners feel comfortable to consider new ideas and are not threatened by external factors. A primary reason of humanism can also be described as the development of self-actualized or self-sufficient people. Currently, there is a shift toward constructive learning in which learners are given the chance and assistance to construct their own meaning from the information presented during lessons. Suggestions for Teaching with the Humanism theory (Laird & Hartman 1985):

1. Teachers should listen to learners, especially to their feelings.
2. Teachers should be inclined to pay as much attention to their relationship with learners as to the content of the course.
3. Learners must be apt to accept feedback, both positive and negative and to use it as constructive insight into themselves and their behaviour.
4. Learners should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and provide much of the input for the learning which occurs through their insights and experiences.

It can be emphasized that effective teaching requires teachers to produce and use, construct and reconstruct, expand and reject theories of teaching and learning based on these discussions. Moreover, teachers would have much capacity over their pedagogical choices when they make their theories clear and obvious and test them with knowledge of current research, classroom experience and colleagues' critiques since these theories are not instinctive knowledge or beliefs but painstakingly crafted lessons learned from years of experience and careful inquiry.

2.2 Empirical Review

With respect to empirical literature review for the study, the following was discussed.

2.2.1 Perceived Parental that affects Academic Performance

Research supports the fact that student performance depends on different socioeconomic, psychological and environmental factors. The findings of research studies show that student performance is affected by different factors such as family background, learning environment and students' role performance. For the purpose of this study, the researcher discussed on the effect of family background.

2.2.1.1 Family Background

Marjoribanks (2002) holds the view that family is the key to a student's life outside of school; it is the most important effect on students‟ learning and includes factors such as socioeconomic status and family structure. The environment at home is a primary socialization agent and affect a child's interest in school and aspirations for the future.

2.2.1.2 Socio-economic Status (SES)

Marjoribanks (2002) defines Socio-economic Status (SES) as a person's overall social position to which attainments in both the social and economic domain contribute. When used in studies of children's school achievement, it refers to the SES of the parents' or family educational level, occupational level and income level (Jeynes 2002). Several comprehensive reviews of the relationship between SES and educational outcomes exist (Marjoribanks, 2002; Jeynes 2002; Eamon, 2005). These studies make it clear that those children from low SES families are more likely to exhibit the following patterns in terms of educational outcomes as compared to children from high SES families:

- have lower levels of literacy, numeracy, comprehension and lower retention rates.
- earn lower test scores and are likely to drop out of school
- exhibit higher levels of problematic school behavior, for instance and truancy
- are more likely to have difficulties with their studies and display negative attitudes towards school.

Similarly, studies of children's educational achievements over time have also demonstrated that social background remains one of the major sources of educational inequality (Graetz cited in Ali, Haider, Munir, Khan, & Ahmed, 2013). In other words, educational success depends very strongly on the socio-economic status of one's parents. The effect of parental SES on children's educational outcomes according to Barry, Frick & Grafeman (2008), may be neutralized, strengthened or mediated by a range of other contextual, family and individual characteristics.

Parents may have a low income and a low-status occupation, for example, but nevertheless transmit high educational aspirations to their children. What family members have (material resources, for instance) can often be mediated by what family members do (for example parental support, family cohesion). The social and the economic components of socio-economic status, in other words, may have distinct and separate effect on educational outcomes. While both components are important, social factors (for instance, parents' educational attainments) have been found to be more significant than economic factors, such as a family's capacity to purchase goods and services, in explaining different educational outcomes. It is argued that families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically, foster a higher level of achievement in their children. They also may provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school (Barry, Frick & Grafeman, 2008).

2.2.1.3 Family Structure

Socio-economic status may be linked to family structure. There is evidence to show that children from single-parent household do not perform well in school as children from two-parent households (Marjoribanks, 2002). Azuka-Obieke (2013) supports this view by explaining that children from single-parent families are likely to have lower educational performance because sole parent families on average have lower levels of income, are headed by parents with lower educational attainment and are less likely to be in the labor force. According to Azuka-Obieke (2013), other factors that are likely to adversely affect educational outcomes of such children compared to those from twoparent families are said to include:

- the custodial parent having less time to spend with children in terms of supervision of schoolwork and maintaining appropriate levels of discipline,
- increased responsibilities on children such as childcare roles, domestic duties which impede the time available for schoolwork; and
- the nature of parent-child relationships in sole parent families may cause emotional and behavioral problems for the child.

Divorce has been found to negatively affect academic performance (Jeynes, 2002) as students whose parents are divorced are among those who scored lowest on a standardized test. Possible explanations for this relationship, according to Marjoribanks (2002) and Jeynes (2002), is that divorce can cause a family's socio-economic status to decrease, and parental connection harmed. This reveals that the quality of parents and home background of a student goes a long way to predict the quality and regularity of the satisfaction and provision of a child's functional survival and academic needs. Poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child, usually yield poor academic performance of the child.

On the other hand, where a child suffers parental and material deprivation and care due to divorce or death, or absconding of one of the parents, the child's schooling may be affected as the mother alone may not be financially buoyant to pay school fee, purchase books and uniforms, such a child may play truant, thus his performances in school may be adversely affected (Usang, Basil & Lucy, 2007). Similarly, good parenting supported by strong economic home background could enhance strong academic performance of the child. This further predicts academic performance where

the child is properly counselled in the choice of his/her courses and vocation that matches his mental ability, interest and capability.

2.2.1.4 Parent's level of Education

Level of education of parents is the degree to which parents have acquired some knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of informal and formal education. The study conducted by Ezewu (1998) in Kenya on parents' education showed that parents' level of education is very crucial for the performance of their children because educated parents send their children to school early, in most cases at the age of five to six. Ezewu further pointed out that children who join primary schools at early age also complete their primary education early. Ezewu (1998) found that educated parents provide adequate learning materials for their children, which stimulate them to learn and perform better in all subjects. These parents are concerned over their children's education/performance, which sometimes makes them coach their children themselves or appoint part-time teachers for them. They send their children to the best nursery and primary schools which serves as sure gateways to secondary and university education which in turn leads to higher educational qualification to occupy higher positions in societies. Somers, Owens & Piliawsky (2008) in their study exploring beliefs about academic achievement studied the relationship between parents' educational attainment and found that the educational attainment of parents has a relationship with educational achievement of their children.

According to Sentamu (2003), the educational attainment of parents determines the kind of schools to which their children go to. Such schools are near in kind to the ones their parents attended. This tends to lay a foundation for better performance of their children while at school. Considine and Zappala (2002) in their study in Australia on the effect of education disadvantages in the academic performance of school found

that families where parents are educated foster a higher level of achievement in their children because of providing psychological support for their children. Okore (2018) found that virtually all nations, children of high parents on education have far better chances of getting into better secondary schools and universities than equally bright children of ordinary workers or farmers. In other words, the highly educated parents tend to provide a more conducive learning environment that propels their children to go to schools and succeed.

Maani (1990) and Mugisha (1991) who both attempted to analyze the relationship between children's performance at school and the level of their parents' education established that the more educated the parents are, the better the children's performance at school. Mugisha actually did his study on the primary school pupils in Kampala (Uganda) which also belongs to the same education system like in Paidha Town Council. According to Nabbumba cited in Waringu (2014), parents' level of education affects pupils' performance in the sense that educated parents value education and they tend to encourage their own children to value and actively engage in receiving education. In a study conducted in Kenya by Obanya and Ezewu cited in Nyipir (2010) it was found that the higher the levels of education of parents, the more likely it motivates children to learn and perform better. Kundu and Tuto cited in Nyipir (2010) found that home background has a significant effect on the achievement of children at school because educated parents tend to offer more psychological, social and financial support to their children, thus giving them the opportunity to excel in their studies.

2.2.1.5 Parent's Level of Income

Income means money received over a certain period of time, which can be through payment for work or returns on investments while family income can be referred to

the state at which a family receives money over a certain period of time. In this study, level of family income includes money received by father, mother and Guardian. According to Farrant (2012), children from poor home background usually suffer from serious diseases that lead to their poor performance at schools. In such homes parents are attempted to encourage their children for early marriages which affect their performance. While families with high financial background tend to support their children's education and encourage the importance of education rather than encouraging them for marriages. Heymann, and Earle (2001) emphasized the importance of family income on pupils' performance that children born and reared from wealthier homes do better in many aspects of life and have high moral reasoning and better performance compared to children who come from poor home background who face a lot of problems in their education.

In a study conducted by Sentamu (2003) in Kampala and Wakiso Districts on the school's effect of learning, it was found that family income was the determinant of the kind of a school a child attend. This was in congruence with what Okore (2018) had established in several countries that children from high parents' occupation have far better opportunities of getting into better secondary schools and university than equally bright children of ordinary workers or farmers. The researcher is in total agreement with this assertion because in Uganda, it is generally the children of the rich who flock to the academically better performing schools. Family income, according to Escarce (2003) has positive effect on the education opportunities available to adolescence and on their chances of educational success. This is because richer parents are able to take their children to high-cost schools that generally tend to perform academically better.

2.2.1.6 Parents Marital Status

Marital status refers to the state of being together as a husband and a wife (Ellis and Forman, 1994). This state has both positive and negative effects on pupils' performance at school, depending on the organization of each family member. Kasirye cited in Africa (2014) observed that polygamous and extended families where income is low affect pupils' performance in a sense that big numbered of children over burden the parents, therefore, they fail to support their children's education adequately. He further observed that in homes where parents are quarrelsome, children are neglected hence affects their performance both in school and at home. The fact that no study has been carried out in the said schools has left a gap for the researcher to investigate the effect of marital status of parents on the performance of the pupils. Baron (1998) pointed out that marriage is a bond that unites two families, two clans, even more, a bond that introduces families into another. One the full contract of marriage is broken it creates a great scar in the community and it is likely to be traumatic for the couple's children.

According to Hethengton as cited in Kim (2011), divorced parents exercise less control over their children. The author further said, children from single parent families receive less adult attention, affection, love, sympathy, guidance and security and they are emotionally disturbed. Bhati cited in Nyipir (2010) stressed that there is a link between parents' marital status and pupils' performance. For instance, lack of cordial understanding in a family causes instability, lack of control in children's behaviour also affect performance. Jones (2004) they looked at separation of parents as a destructive event in a family, which affects performance in all aspects of life. Penny (2001) found that parents' marital status actually has effects on pupils' performance. She emphasized that children living with their stepmothers are targets of

misdirected emotion and mistreatments while children from stable families tend to perform far better in schools.

2.2.1.7 Home–School Relationships

Home–school relationships are the formal and informal connections between the family and school. Home–school relationships seem to be just as important for adolescents as they are for younger children. Although home–school relationships tend to wane during or even before children reach adolescence, such relationships continue to play an important role in youth outcomes. Aspects of home–school relationships include communicating with teachers and school personnel, attending school events, volunteering at school, and participating in parent–teacher organizations and leadership groups.

The extent to which parents attend and volunteer at school functions, for example, has a consistent positive impact on adolescent academic achievement (Jeynes, 2005). There are several reasons why home–school relationships matter in middle and high school. Involvement and presence at school helps parents monitor their youth's academic and social progress, acquire information the need to make decisions about their children's academic future, and foster positive relationships with school staff (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Home–school relationships also increase student achievement by conveying to both teachers and students' parents' beliefs about the importance of education and appropriate behaviors for adults in society (Cooper, Jackson, Nye, & Lindsay, 2001).

2.2.1.8 Monitoring

Monitoring represents a parent's—or another close adult's—attempts to know what is going on in an adolescent's life. Monitoring of social activities, such as being aware of an adolescent's whereabouts, decreases school problems, substance use and delinquency, and promotes social competence and good grades (Rodriguez, 2002). By monitoring adolescents' academic and social lives, parents can prevent emerging problems from becoming big ones, foster identity achievement, and promote academic growth (Catsambis, 2001). Parental monitoring is also linked with youth's prosocial competency, fewer problem behaviors, and school adjustment and engagement; the latter refers to whether or not students pay attention in class, take school seriously, and want to do well in school (Rankin & Quane, 2002). Parental monitoring is most effective for academic motivation and achievement when adolescents perceive their parents as truly invested in their well-being and caring about them (Spera, 2006). However, the effect of parental monitoring might differ for girls and boys. For at-risk inner-city boys, school engagement was greater when parental monitoring was high, but for girls, school engagement depended on both high parental monitoring and high family cohesion (Annunziata, Hogue, Faw & Liddell, 2006).

2.2.1.9 Parenting style and parent–youth relationships

Warm, responsive parenting in adolescence is related to school success and positive social and emotional outcomes (Mandara, 2006). Adolescents with supportive parents exhibit higher rates of self-reliance, identity formation, school performance, and positive career-planning aspirations, as well as lower rates of depression and delinquency. Youth who share trusting relationships with their parents—characterized by mutual and sustained bonds and open communication—have higher achievement

and better physical health and are more likely to disclose information to their parents that will keep them out of trouble (Pong, Hao, & Gardner, 2005).

Different parenting styles are associated with different patterns of adolescent development. Many studies suggest that an authoritative style, which is responsive, warm, and firm but democratic, is associated with more positive educational outcomes than an authoritarian style, which is characterized by strictness and unilateral parental decision making (Steinberg, 2001). The nature of the parent–youth relationship is not only important for individual student outcomes such as academic achievement, but also for participation in out-of-school time activities that can benefit youth academically, socially and emotionally.

2.2.2 Perceived School-Related Factors that affects Academic Performance A major challenge for school authorities aiming to improve teaching and learning in their organizations is to identify which in schools and classrooms have significant effects on student learning. Berger (2002) found that organizational structure of an institution (defined as the patterns and processes of behaviours exhibited by administrators on campus) has some amount of effect on students' learning. Again, Alfonso, Bailey and Scott (2005) offer evidence of how institutions can organize their resources and create success-oriented cultures by explaining that effective institutional conditions and promising policies and practices can foster students' success. Alfonso et al., opine that structural characteristic of institutions should include such features as size, sector, control, student-faculty ratio and structural diversity, that is, percentage of students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Additionally, Glatthorn and Jailall (2000) have found that quality curriculum and instruction have considerable impact on student learning. Glatthorn and Jailall insist that curriculum should provide for individual differences, be gender-sensitive, closely coordinate and selectively integrate subject matter, while focusing on standards and targets for student learning. According to UNICEF (2010), much discussion of educational quality centres on system inputs such as infrastructure, pupil-teacher ratios and curricular content. In recent years, however, more attention has been paid to educational processes, which refer to how teachers and administrators use inputs to frame meaningful learning experiences for students and teacher competencies. That is to say that teachers' mastery of subject matter, teacher competence and school efficiency as well as teacher feedback mechanisms contribute to better or low performance of students in schools.

2.2.2.1 Learning environment

Carron and Chau cited in Madani, (2019) contend that the positive learning outcomes generally sought by educational systems happen in quality learning environments. According to UNICEF (2010), learning environments are made up of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements. These elements are described in the following sessions:

Physical Elements

Physical learning environments range from relatively modern and well-equipped buildings to open-air gathering places (UNICEF, 2010). The quality of school facilities seems to have an indirect effect on learning; that is, an effect that is hard to measure. Fuller, Dauter, Hosek, Kirschenbaum, McKoy, Rigby and Vincent (2009) have argued that empirical evidence is inconclusive as to whether the condition of

school buildings is related to higher student performance after taking into account students' background. Miske and Dowd (1998) have pointed out that such factors as on-site availability of clean water supply and lavatories, classroom maintenance, space and furniture availability have an impact on the critical learning factor of time on task. The authors opine that when pupils have to leave school and walk significant distances for clean drinking water, for example, they may not always return to class.

Researchers and educators have debated the relationship between class size and student learning at length. Although many studies have found a relationship, Williams and Currie (2000) and Rutter as cited in Pennycuick (1993) maintain that class size has not consistently been linked to student achievement. To Pennycuick, this may be due to the fact that many schools and classrooms have not yet adopted the more demanding but higher quality student-centered learning practices. Moreover, Pennycuick contends that quantitative relationships between class sizes and academic achievement rarely take other key quality factors such as teachers' perceptions of working conditions and their sense of efficacy into account. However, Morrow as cited in Dorleku (2013), contends that teachers in overcrowded schools spend more time teaching the entire class rather than being able to individually attend to slower paced students.

Psychosocial Elements

A welcoming and non-discriminatory climate is critical to creating a quality learning environment within schools and classrooms. In addition, a peaceful and safe environment, especially for girls is also vital to academic success. In many countries, attitudes discouraging girls' participation in education have been significant barriers to providing quality education to all students (UNICEF, 2010). Furthermore, some

teachers' behaviours can also affect safety and academic success of students. The threats that come in the form of unequal treatment, harsh punishments, bullying and undervaluing, especially girls, harm students in great and long-lasting ways.

Comparative to both girls and boys, educators, parents and researchers express significant concerns about teachers who create unsafe environments for students. These teacher behaviours, according to Pigozzi (2009), affect the quality of the learning environment since learning cannot take place when the basic needs of survival and selfprotection are threatened. Thus, greater perceptual development and learning occur in environments that are rich with stimuli and provide efficient feedback in response to a learner's efforts to act upon the environment. The nature of the tasks encountered, the ways in which information is presented, and the expectations for the learner's involvement all affect the learning process. Moreover, the nature of the social environment, that is, whether and how learners have access to others who can describe, model or provide feedback shapes the learning process. The type of feedback from significant others and the nature of reinforcements from the environment can stimulate or undermine greater effort.

Snell-Hornby (2006) defines infrastructure as "the basic systems and services that are necessary for a country or an organization to run smoothly, for example buildings, transport, water and power supplies". In other words, infrastructure could be explained as the basic structures and facilities necessary for an organization to function efficiently. According to Mbuk cited in Alapa (2009), educational infrastructure embraces the basic structures (facilities) and nonstructural type (i.e., equipment and materials) necessary for any academic institution to operate efficiently. School facilities and equipment are the bedrock in conducting any educational programmes. The present Ghanaian educational system calls for adequate provision

and utilization of instructional materials especially in science and vocational subjects such as Home Economics education.

Examples of these basic infrastructural facilities are: standard classroom blocks, laboratories, equipment and instructional materials.

The laboratory is seen as the focal point for science-oriented subject as Home Economics education. According to Awodi and Audu (2005), the realities of school laboratories in this country have been that there is either no laboratories or the few available are ill-equipped. This problem is also applicable to Home Economics education. Most JHS in Ghana have acute shortage of laboratory. In some schools there are no specified Home Economics Laboratories. All that one sees is a common classroom labeled as Home Economics laboratory. There is no specific laboratory assigned for Clothing and Textiles, Food and Nutrition, Home Management and Child Development. Due to this inadequacy of lack of laboratories, majority of these schools have problem of inadequate equipment and instructional materials. This is because, if a school lacks laboratory for such a vocational course as Home Economics, how then would such challenged to equip the teachers, how and where would such equipment be installed for use and safety?

This fact corroborates with research carried out by Maduabum cited in Alapa (2009) which showed that the realities of the situation of inadequate infrastructure range from no science laboratories at all to one microscopic science laboratory. He observed that what obtained was the existence of 'well equipped laboratories', only on paper. Other research by Soyibo (1986), Ezike (1986) and Olayiwola (1999), confirmed this shortage of laboratories in Nigerian secondary school. In some tertiary institutions the

available Home Economics and encourage ventilation for conducive practical. This hinders the effective teaching and learning of Home Economics in Ghana. Classrooms are very important infrastructure in an educational system (Awodi & Audu, 2005). Most schools combine the laboratory and classroom together for both teaching and practical. It is difficult to differentiate a classroom from laboratory in some schools these days. All you would see is just the name Home Economics labeled on the block of the building to show that Home Economics also exists in that school. The block cannot be identified to be neither classroom nor a laboratory. This affects effective teaching and learning of this course-Home Economics. The present Ghanaian educational system calls for adequate provision and utilization of instructional materials, especially science and vocational subjects as Home Economics education.

Instructional aides have astonishing power of attracting and holding students' attention.

Pedersen, Cooley, and Rottier (2014) supported this fact when he said "students' interest can be captured and learning is facilitated when appropriate facilities are used in conjunction with the teachers' presentation". Writing on the importance of instructional materials in teaching, Pedersen, Cooley, and Rottier (2014) stated that it can help the students grasp relationships pick out similarities and differences so that they are led to generalize, discriminate and organize their knowledge. According to him, "the teacher who makes a balance appeal to the sense by using verbal, visual and practical methods is accommodating students' individual differences. Anyakoha cited in Ogbu (2015), stresses that instructional materials reduce the difficulty in understanding of the skill and facilitate practice.

Nevertheless, the issue of adequacy and relevance of Home Economics facilities is still neglected in most of our JHS today. In some schools, home economics laboratories just bear these labels only on the blocks of buildings earmarked for such facilities. The relevant and adequate equipment, tools, instructional material are not there. There are no classrooms (libraries) adequately stocked with current Home Economics books and magazines to upgrade the knowledge of both teachers and students. This gross lack of materials/facilities demoralizes the individual teacher who is ready to put forth effort towards achieving the goals of this subject. The need for educational infrastructure such as classroom blocks, laboratory and so on in teaching and learning of a science-oriented course, as Home Economics cannot be over emphasized. Undoubtedly, these facilities make learning and teaching easy, lively and productive. They also, provide direct experience and content between the learners and the materials, ensuring a better grasp of the concept that is learned. Such a medium used for teaching/learning create lasting impression.

Education infrastructure is an inevitable instrument in our educational process, if we must advance scientifically and technologically to meet up with the challenges of the modern world. According to Eshiet (1996), laboratories are workhouses for scientific practices, for search of new ideas and information. Edem (1987), states that whatever resources are available are not often utilized due to poor planning and maintenance. If the quality of education is to be maintained in Home Economics subjects, there should be adequate supply of equipment, instructional materials and professional teachers. Ozigi (1977) supports this fact by saying that items of school equipment are essential aids to effective teaching and learning. They are the teachers' trade tools. A school that lacks essential equipment cannot reasonably expect to achieve its main objective in students' academic performance, hence poor performance.

2.2.3 Perceived Teacher-Related that affects Academic Performance

Educational infrastructural facilities cannot be completed and effective in a school without a human resources facility (the teacher). Every educational system at every level depends heavily on the quality of its teacher. Appropriate use of equipment, its maintenance and improving standards of education is only through them. If they are not trained, managed and equipped to do so, however, good the facilities are, they would not be effective in the academic, pursuit of the students. In other words, physical and monetary resources alone cannot impact the much-needed knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and competencies into the ever-increasing number of our academic attainment seeking youths.

It is through the combined and concerted efforts of the teacher that the material resources (facilities) are harnessed to achieve the tertiary school objectives. Therefore, the teacher should be most carefully selected, trained, maintained and supported in the field financially and morally. In this regard, Nnabuo (1996), pointed out that the quality of education depends on the quality of teachers: what they know. He went on, to confirm his assertion with Ashby's report which stales that no educational system can be stronger than its teachers. (Fafunwa, 1974) upholds the above view when he said that all the educational problems that beset Africa countries today, none is as persistent or as compelling as the one relating to the training of a competent teacher. If there are competent teachers in our JHS today, they would be able to effectively teach and demonstrate the practical aspects of the course fluently to the students.

Teachers need to be efficient in handling the equipment and instructional materials in the laboratories. This would help them in engaging the students in the usage of these facilities for effective teaching and learning of this subject. But the reverse is the case

due to the quality of teachers we have in our institutions these days. The policy whereby the teaching profession is made open to all classes of people as a very huge hindrance to the teaching and learning. Some teachers are not professionals in the field but just an aspect of the subject and those teachers are most of the time neglected and ineffective in many schools. Some teachers lacked the psychomotor skill of demonstrating practically before the students. The teaching and learning process involves two active participants in the classroom - the teacher and the learner, and that language learning does not fall entirely on the teacher.

The students must also assume more responsibility for the learning process (Quist, 2000). For example, Vuzo, (2010) reported, it is through interactions with each other those teachers and students work together to create intellectual and practical activities that shape both the form and the content of the target subject. However, such situation is not commonly found in secondary schools in all subjects due to the fact that the lecture method dominates the teaching and learning process, which leads to passive learning. Horton, (2001) said, When I hear, I forget. When I see, I remember and when I do, I learn. Horton noted that learning in which students are interactive produces far more effective participation in a class; meaning that effectiveness of language learning and teaching in the classrooms will depend upon the educational repertoire teachers have. This idea concurs with Quist (2000), in that according to him, successful teaching and quality of pupil learning is closely related to the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Furthermore, the teacher is a figure in the process of teaching. Literature indicates clearly that it is the teacher who sets the tone for learning activities (Allen and Valette, 1997; Quist, 2000). Since to teach is to communicate, the English language

teacher must have maximum communicative competence. Alhassan (2006) pointed out that the teacher is an important variable in learning situations, and teacher's skill and personalities are instrumental in creating the conditions for learning. Also, the teacher must be knowledgeable so that he/she can make useful decisions regarding what should be taught, to whom, and how the teaching should be done (Eliason, 2012). Research findings demonstrate clearly that among the factors that lead to students' academic performance are qualities of teachers (Harmer, 2003; Mosha, 2014).

For instance, Tshabalala and Ncube, (2013) were of the view that shortage of well trained teachers, inadequate of teaching facilities, lack of fund to purchase necessary equipment, poor quality of textbooks, large classes, poorly motivated teachers, lack of laboratories and libraries, poorly coordinated supervisory activities, interference of the school system by the civil service, incessant transfers of teachers and principals, automatic promotions of pupils, the negative role of public examinations on the teaching learning process and inequality in education opportunities all hamper the smooth acquisition of mathematics knowledge. In addition to the above causes of poor performance in mathematics, Ojimba, (2012) was also of the view that prominent causes of poor performance in mathematics are:

1. Acute shortage of qualified professional mathematics teachers.
2. Exhibition of poor knowledge of mathematics content by many mathematics teachers.
3. Overcrowded mathematics classrooms.
4. Students negative attitude toward mathematics.

5. Undue emphasis on the coverage of mathematics syllabus at the expense of meaningful learning of mathematics concepts.

6. Inadequate facilities and mathematics laboratories.

In another vein, National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) cited in Mahmood, Iqbal and Saeed (2009) found out in Britain that the reasons for poor performance in mathematics from the point of views of principals are:

1. Lack of learning support.
2. Principal teachers' dissatisfaction with the in-career training of teachers in mathematics.
3. Perceived shortage of instructional resources for teaching mathematics.
4. Learners taught by teachers who have not participated in career professional development.
5. Mathematics contents were not fully covered. Emphasis is placed on few areas that involve numbers.

Furthermore, Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia cited in Sa'ad, Adamu and Sadiq (2014) stated that students often develop mathematical anxiety in schools, often as a result of learning from teachers who are themselves anxious about their mathematical abilities in certain areas. Attwood cited in Sa'ad, Adamu & Sadiq (2014) attributed poor performance in mathematics to parental attitude, interrupted teaching, poor teaching and dyscalculia. Karue and Amukowa, (2013) pointed out that lack of meaningful library and laboratory, qualified teachers, home environmental factors and family backgrounds as well as little participation of parents in the education of their children

as the main causes of poor performance in mathematics in Kenya Certificate of Secondary examination in Embu District in Kenya.

From the researcher's point of view, causes of poor performance in mathematics include misconception of the subject (mathematics) as difficult one, fear and anxiety. Therefore, it is clear that the causes of poor performance in mathematics basic school pupils are many and varied but they fall under school-based causes, teacher and pupil personal causes. Causes like inadequate qualified teachers, instructional materials, libraries and laboratories, poor attitude of pupils, improper teaching methods, anxiety, home background, overcrowded classrooms, interrupted teaching, poorly motivated teachers and so on and so forth bring about poor performance in mathematics among basic school pupils. According to Longman Advanced American Dictionary, to qualify is to have the right to do something. Thus, a qualified mathematics teacher is one who has the right to teach mathematics. Although this right complies with the respective educational policies of each nation, there are two main and common components of the issue. These include the teacher's knowledge of the content, and the possession of appropriate teaching skills. More practically, it could be stated that a qualified basic school mathematics teacher is one who majored or minored in mathematics.

In general, researchers have found that possessing a major or minor in mathematics or science is related to increased student achievement in these subject areas (Alexander & Fuller, 2005). Students taught by teachers with degrees in mathematics had greater gains in achievement than students taught by teachers with non-mathematics degrees (Alexander & Fuller, 2005). Few educators, economists, or politicians would argue with the contention that, all other things being equal, highly qualified teachers

produce greater student achievement than comparatively less qualified teachers. Indeed, good teachers have distinguishable impacts on student exam scores (Alexander and Fuller, 2005). On the other hand, having a qualified teacher in the classrooms is not a problem at the study area.

Despite the fact that research findings strongly emphasize the importance of having qualified mathematics teachers in the classroom, there is an acute shortage of qualified mathematics teachers in most parts of both the developed and the developing countries (Perry, 2007). Perry added that, in all parts of the world, attracting young or mature entrance into teaching is a major challenge. In Europe, the United States, in South and West Asia and in Sub-Saharan Africa not forgetting Ghana, problems to recruit sufficient teachers still exist. In many countries and regions, recruitment to specialist subject areas at the basic level is particularly problematic (especially in English, mathematics, and science subjects). He also points out that the age profile of the teaching profession is also problematic with large percentages of teachers likely to retire in the coming decade. Many education systems are supplementing teachers with a growing cadre of para-professionals playing a variety of roles.

Teacher recruitment and retention, in particular mathematics teacher recruitment and retention are high on the agenda of education priorities in most countries including Ghana. Informal interviews and observations by the researcher indicate that retention of mathematics teachers has been a problem in Ghana for some years now. This has been particularly so with regard to basic schools in the rural areas where many teachers refuse to be posted to avoid enduring the unfavorable working conditions. The question now is, is Lincoln community basic school having qualified teachers? This study seeks to find answer to this and many other questions.

In Ghana, as in many developing countries, education has been regarded as a ladder to economic prosperity and power. Teaching is considered by many as transitional occupation before one is promoted to a position of effect and power. Perceptions are that there is no affluence in remaining a teacher for a long time. This hampers teacher's personal growth in terms of skills and style and so great teachers cannot be developed since young teachers do not stay long enough to develop to great teachers (Mawusi, 2018). Could this be the situation at Lincoln community basic school? One cannot jump into conclusions based on informal observations or interviews, hence, the need for this study to be conducted.

There are various techniques and methods of teaching mathematics. Every teacher uses his/her specific way of presenting a lesson. That is why many scholars argue that there are as many methods of teaching as there are teachers. On the other hand, there is no one best or most effective method in teaching mathematics. Miheso, (2002) notes that no single teaching method can be the method of choice for all occasions. However, much is known about the characteristics of effective methods of teaching mathematics. What is important for every teacher is to select and use the methods with such characteristics. The quality of implementing mathematics programmes is ultimately determined by the teacher's performance and effective work in the classroom situations (Rukangu, 2000).

Traditionally, teaching in general and teaching mathematics in particular strongly relied on teachers' exposition followed by practice of the fundamental skills. Many mathematics teachers support the idea that practice makes perfect. They strongly contend that practice or drill alone can help students to master fundamental skills and procedures. Busbridge and Womack (1991) note that teachers explain a rule on the

blackboard, give some examples of the rule in operation, and then set the class many more examples and exercises to do for themselves. They also note that teachers believe that understanding would eventually come through sufficient practice. However, informal interview on pupils at Lincoln community basic school by the researcher indicates that, teachers after first solving exercises with pupils give more examples for pupils to try their hands on. This method of teaching most of the time makes pupils to have a better understanding of those topics. Therefore, they are able to solve similar questions when it comes during their end of term examination. However, one cannot jump into conclusion base on informal interviews, hence, the need for this study to be undertaken.

Bergeson, Filton, Bylsma, Neitzel and Stine, (2000) contend that drill with a fact or skill does not guarantee immediate recall. They posit that student competence with a mathematical skill does necessitate extensive practice. Drill alone contributes little or nothing to growth in a student's mathematical understanding. There are a number of principles that appear frequently in many literatures on effective mathematics instruction. These include a problem-oriented learning, focusing on meaning, wholeclass discussion and small group-work. Effective teaching requires continuing efforts to learn and improve. Many scholars have addressed various issues relating these topics as effective methods of teaching mathematics. But, Bergeson et al., study was conducted in Somalia which has different characteristics as compared to the study area (Ghana), hence, the need for this study to be conducted.

Research findings clearly support the use of small groups as part of mathematics instruction. This approach can result in increased student learning as measured by traditional achievement measures, as well as in other important outcomes (Marshall,

2018). In a review of 80 research studies on grouping in mathematics classrooms, it was concluded that students working in small groups significantly outscored students working individually in more than 40 percent of the studies (Bergeson et al., 2000). Miheso (2002) also argues that most studies on achievement on cooperative learning found that, there was significantly greater achievement in cooperative classes than in the control classes. The question now is would the study findings of Bergeson et al., and Miheso be the same as the one to be conducted here in Ghana? This study therefore seeks to answer this and many other questions.

Marshall (2018) observes that considerable research evidence within mathematics education indicates that using small groups of various types for different classroom tasks has positive effects on student learning. Reviews of studies of the effects of cooperative learning have generally yielded positive findings. Research has shown that these programmes enhance various effective outcomes, including inter-group relations, acceptance of mainstream academically handicapped students by their classmates, selfesteem, enjoyment of class or subject, and general acceptance of others.

Similarly, according to Posamentier and Stepelman cited in Ryan, Sweeder and Bednar (2002) a classroom in which problem solving plays a central role can provide a good environment for mathematics learning to take place. When confronted with an appropriately challenging and interesting problem, students feel both the urge to solve that problem and the concomitant tension that it arouses. A problem needs two attributes if it is to enhance student understanding of mathematics. First, a problem needs the potential to create a learning environment that encourages students to discuss their thinking about the mathematical structures and underlying computational

procedures within the problem ‘s solution. Second, a problem needs the potential to lead student investigations into unknown yet important areas in mathematics (Bergeson et al., 2000).

Marshall (2018) note that investigations have consistently shown that an emphasis on teaching for meaning has positive effects on student learning, including better initial learning, greater retention and an increased likelihood that the ideas will be used in new situations. Focusing on the meanings gives students a strong foundation for learning new related ideas. It also helps them to know when to apply particular skills or procedures, because they see the underlying reasons that these methods work. The research findings indicated that achievement levels were significantly different in interactive from those in traditional classrooms at computational levels. However, differences in achievement were evident between interactive and traditional classrooms in application and comprehension levels of cognitive growth (Miheso, 2002). She also found in her research that currently didactic teaching accounted for 75% of mathematics teaching and only 25% accounted for classroom interaction.

On the other hand, research suggests that whole-class discussion can be effective when it is used for sharing and explaining the variety of solutions by which individual students have solved problems. It allows students to see the many ways of examining a situation and the variety of appropriate and acceptable solutions (Marshall, 2018). Some mathematics educators believe that for a mathematics teaching method to be effective, it should contain various and balanced pedagogical approaches and activities so that students with different types of learning styles can be catered for. But it has been observed at Jilo J.H.S. that, it is rare for mathematics teachers to form small groups during teaching and learning. Could this method of teaching contribute

to poor performance of girls in mathematics? This study seeks to find answers to this question and many others.

Cockcroft as cited in Miheso, (2002) noted that mathematics teaching at all levels should include opportunities for:

1. Exposition by the teacher;
2. Discussion between teacher and pupils and between pupils themselves;
3. Appropriate practical work;
4. Consolidation and practice of fundamental skills and routines;
5. Investigational work and
6. Problem solving, including the application of mathematics to everyday situations

Informal observation by the researcher revealed that, most of the mathematics teachers at Jilo J.H.S. in Nanumba teach mathematics without using most of the above strategies suggested by Cockcroft. That is to say, most of the mathematics teachers teach abstractly. This situation most at times compel pupils not to have better understanding of most of the lessons taught, hence, leading to their failure in mathematics at the end of the term. But the types of methods that teachers use when teaching mathematics in Nanumba, Bimbila in the Northern Region of Ghana have not been empirically documented. Also, one cannot conclude based on informal observations, therefore, there is a need for this research to be conducted.

2.3 Summary of Literature Review

An investigation into the poor academic performance of students at selected public basic schools in Obuasi Municipality by Ghanney and Aniagyei (2014) could be

compared to this study. Based on the study's research questions and aims, the researchers chose an exploratory design that combined both qualitative and quantitative methods for collecting and analyzing the data. The target population for the study comprised students, teachers and parents in respect of all basic schools in Obuasi Municipality. However, the accessible population was limited to students, parents and teachers in Obuasi West Circuit. The study employed both simple random and stratified sampling techniques. Questionnaires and past records were used as data sources. Cross tabulation was adopted for analysis of the relationship between inputs and processes, and performance outputs. The findings of the study revealed that most identified inputs and processes e.g., lack of school facilities, unruly behavior of students, parents' inability to provide children's needs, and teachers' inability to teach a subject well, to mention but a few contributed markedly to poor student performance during the period 2009-11.

It was also revealed that pupil characteristics found significant were incidences of lateness to school and absenteeism, lack of assistance with studies at home and use of local language in the classroom. Home conditions or parental support variables causing pupils to perform poorly academically were their inability to provide textbooks and supplementary readers, low level of interaction with children's teachers, and low involvement in the Parent Teacher Association. The study has practical significance as it sheds light on the factors affecting the low academic performance of pupils in Kemp Methodist Junior High School and for decision making to improve their academic performance. It was recommended among others that there is the need to improve parents' attitudes, intensify supervision of teachers and institute incentive packages, sensitize and motivate the pupils, recognize

individual differences in education and encourage guidance and counseling services for pupils.

Again, a study by Ampofo and Benedict (2015) on the topic "determinants of academic performance among Senior High School (SHS) students in the Ashanti Mampong Municipality of Ghana" had similar features to the current study. Descriptive and correlational research designs were used and the data were collected through questionnaires. The sample size was therefore 571 students via a multi-stage sampling procedure. The findings of the study revealed parental involvement, parents' academic ambition for their children, peer effect, the child's academic ambition and the child's effort as the correlates of academic performance. The findings also established parental involvements, sex of the child, the child's academic ambition and the child's effort as the main determinants of academic performance.

The study revealed that even if there is much emphasis on improving students' academic achievement, still no considerable progress has been observed in the study area. According to the key finding of this study, physical environment and the school facilities, instruction facilities and materials, teacher qualification and training, teacher experience, teachers' attitude towards their job, parent involvement and homework were found to be a contributing factor for these patterns as well as low achievement levels in secondary schools in the study area. To alleviate the prevailing problems, there is a need to upgrade and check the professional quality of teachers since good school facilities, small size class-room and other adequate resources alone cannot yield good results. Therefore, it was suggested that Parents, Asella Education Bureau and Oromia Education Bureau should be more practical in this area of improvemen

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter present the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, validity and reliability, data collection procedure, method of data analysis and ethical consideration.

3.1 Research Design

The study was conducted using a descriptive survey design. Sproul (1995) states that; a descriptive survey research design collects background information and is mostly used for studies where attitudes, ideas, comments and public opinion on a problem undergo investigation. Avoke (2005) furthermore stated that, descriptive surveys are designed to portray accurately the characteristics of a particular individuals, situations, or groups. He notes that, survey research in education involves the collection of information from members of a group of students, teacher or other groups of persons associated with educational issues.

3.2 Population

There was a total of 20 schools and an average of 5 Early Grade Education teachers in a school within the Afigya Kwabre North District. For the purpose of this study, the target population comprised all the public basic schools and all the Early Grade Education teachers in the Afigya Kwabre North District, Ghana. The accessible population of the study was made up of 100 [20 × 5] Early Grade Education teachers who are teaching in kindergarten 1 and 2 as well as Basic 1, 2 and 3 respectively in the schools within the district.

3.3 Sample size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study was made up of 100 Early Grade Education teachers in the Afigya Kwabre North District. A census sampling technique was used to select all the Early Grade Education teachers in the schools within the district for the purpose of this study. Census sampling technique or procedure is a well-organized procedure of gathering, recording and analysing data regarding a phenomenon in which all members in a given population is used (Orodho, 2008). This sampling technique was appropriate for the purpose of this study because it allowed the researcher to collect data from all members which represented the heterogeneous groups within the targeted population.

3.4 Instrumentation

Four Likert scale questionnaire with close-ended items was the instrument used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was structured in accordance with the research objectives so as to achieve the anticipated results. This implies that, the questionnaire consisted of five sections, the Section A focused on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, Section B dealt with perceived parental that affects academic performance of students and Section C dealt with items relating to perceived school-related that affects academic performance of students. Finally, Section D focused on items relating to perceived teacher-related factors that affect academic performance of Students in the Afigya Kwabre North District.

A section of the questionnaire contained at least 3 items and at most 10 items. The questionnaire has options presented in four-point scale ranging from: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Correspondingly, each of these options were rated as: SA (4), A (3), D (2) and SD (1). Four Likert scale

questionnaire was used because the researcher wants a specific user (respondent) opinion in order to ascertain the factors that affects the academic performance of students in Basic Schools within the district. Questionnaire was selected as the appropriate instrument because all the participants were literate and could read and respond to the items on the instrument. Also, questionnaire generally is answered with more ease and quickly by participants as compared to other instruments. Also, with the questionnaire, there was little scope for the data to be affected by 'interpersonal factors'

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Face validity of the instrument was established by giving the prepared instrument to the researcher's colleague students and friends to scrutinize and make constructive criticisms with respect to the structure, layout, alignment and configuration of the instruments in relation to the research questions. Suggestions from them on the instrument was considered before the instrument was administered to the participants. The content validity of the instrument was determined by the research supervisor, who is an expert in test and measurement. He examined the research objectives and questions alongside with each item of the instruments in order to determine whether the instruments actually measure what they are supposed to measure. Suggestions from the supervisor and other experts were affected before the instrument was administered to the respondents.

Reliability analysis of the instrument (questionnaire) was done using Cronbach's alpha reliability model. A reliability coefficient (r) of 0.80 was achieved. Studies established that reliability coefficient of (r) 0.70 or more is deemed acceptable

measure of reliability (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). The reliability coefficient as reported in this study therefore falls within the threshold value of acceptability.

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

An introductory letter from the Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Education, Winneba was obtained to facilitate permission from the head teachers of the Basic Schools in the district. The researcher after meeting the head teachers and the respondents, arranged on the day and time to administer the questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered personally to the teachers on the agreed day and time. The questionnaire was collected on same day after completion in each school. This helped to clarify some issues to participants and also helped to obtain 100% return rate.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentages. Specifically, research questions one, two, three and four were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the demographic characteristics of the respondents were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The responses from the questionnaire items were coded (Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, Strongly Agree = 4) and analyzed through the help of the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS version 23).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher has a moral obligation to strictly consider the rights of the respondents, who were expected to provide knowledge for this investigation (Speziale, Streubert &

Carpenter, 2011). The researcher therefore requests for permission to conduct the study.

A written permission was therefore be obtained from the Department of Early Childhood Education, in the Faculty of Educational Studies in the University of Education, Winneba. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and the researcher sought their permission to help answer questions in the questionnaires for her. She also informed and assured the participants that, information they will provided will only be for academic purposes. Also, the researcher assured confidentiality by making the participants unnamed. Furthermore, all the materials used for this research was acknowledged.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents results and discussion of the study. The study investigated the perceived factors that affect academic performance of early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District, Ghana. Three research objectives guided the study and they sought to investigate perceived parental factors that affect academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District, identify perceived school related factors and perceived teacher related factors that affect academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District respectively. With regards to this, data presentation in this chapter was based on the various research questions in addition to the demographic data gathered on respondents.

Although four likert scales such as (4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly Disagree) were used to collect data, for the purpose of data presentation in the tables in this chapter, only two likert scales (Agree and Disagree) were used. This means that, Strongly Agree and Agree were merged to represent agreement and

Disagree and Strongly Disagree were also merged to represent disagreement. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data collected from the questionnaire and presented in tabular form. Specifically, frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the demographic data of the respondents while mean and standard deviation were used to analyse data collected with regards to research questions 1, 2 and 3.

4.1 Demographic Data of Respondents

In order to ascertained the demographic attributes of the respondents, the respondents were asked to provide information with regards to their gender, age range and academic qualification. Data obtained on the demographic characteristics of the respondents were presented and analysed in Tables 1 to 3 respectively.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	49	49.0
Female	51	51.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Field Data, 2021

Data from Table 1 indicates that, majority of the respondents who participated in the study were females. This is evidence from the table as 51 (51.0%) of the respondents were females while 49 (49.0%%) were males.

Table 2: Age Range of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percent
Below 25	14	14.0
26-30	30	30.0
31-35	26	26.0
36-40	15	15.0
41 and above	15	15.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Field Data, 2021

Table 2 illustrates the age range of the respondents involved in the study. Data in the table suggest that out of the 100 respondents used for the study, 30 (30.0%) were

between the age range of 26 and 30years, 26 (26.0%) were between 31 and 35years, 15 (15.0%) were between 36 and 40years and 41years and above respectively. Also, 14

(14.0%) of the respondents were below 25years of age.

Table 3: Academic Qualification of Respondents

Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percent
S.S.S.C.E/ WASSCE/ GCE O Level	9	9.0
Diploma	50	50.0
Degree	41	41.0
Total	**100**	**100.0**

Field Data, 2021

Data in Table 3 indicates that 50 (50.0%) of the respondents had Diploma as their highest level of academic qualification, 41 (41.0%) of them had bachelor's degree (1st Degree) and 09 (09.0%) respondents had S.S.S.C.E/ WASSCE/ GCE O Level as their highest level of academic qualification respectively. Data presented in the table therefore suggest that majority of the respondents used in the Afigya Kwabre North

District possess Diploma as their highest level of academic qualification.

4.2 Analysis of Research Questions

Four research questions were answered and discussed for the purpose of this study. Descriptive statistical tools such as mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the quantitative data.

4.2.1. Research Question 1:

"What are the perceived parental factors that affect academic performances among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District?"

Research supports the fact that student performance depends on different socioeconomic, psychological and environmental factors. The findings of research studies show that student performance is affected by different factors such as family background, learning environment and students' role performance (Cooper, Jackson, Nye, & Lindsay, 2001; Rodriguez, 2002; Mandara, 2006). It was therefore necessary to ascertain what early grade education teachers in the Afigya Kwabre North District think about the perceived parental factors that affect academic performance of learners. Data obtained with respect to this research question was presented in Table 4 and analysed using mean and standard deviation.

Table 4: Mean Analysis of perceived Parental Factors on Academic Performance

Statements	A	D	Total	Mean	SD
Parents/guardians' level of education affect the academic performance of their wards	94 (94.0%)	06 (06.0%)	100 (100%)	3.35	.687
Financial status of parents/guardians' affect the academic performance of their children.	90 (90.0%)	10 (10.0%)	100 (100%)	3.40	.725
Family type (e.g., single, blended, etc.) affect children academic performance.	90 (90.0%)	10 (10.0%)	100 (100%)	3.38	.801
The occupation of parents/guardians plays a role on the academic performance of their wards	66 (66.0%)	34 (34.0%)	100 (100%)	2.65	1.048
Religious affiliation of parents/guardians affect the wards academic prowess.	59 (59.0%)	41 (41.0%)	100 (100%)	2.63	1.022
Parental involvement helps me to enhance my academic performance	90 (90.0%)	10 (10.0%)	100 (100%)	3.13	.747
The cultural background of parents affects their wards academic performance in school.	54 (54.0%)	46 (46.0%)	100 (100%)	2.42	1.273
Total				**2.9943**	**.49191**

Field Data, 2021. **NB:** A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Standard Deviation.

Table 4 present response rating to various statements on the perceived parental factors that affect academic performance of early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District. Data in the table suggest that the teachers agreed that parents/guardians' level of education affect the academic performance of their wards and this was evidenced in the score of mean (3.35) with a standard deviation of (.687). It could also be adjudged from the table that the respondents (Mean = 3.40; SD. = .725) attested that financial status of parents/guardians' affect the academic performance of their children. Table 4 again depicts that the respondents were in agreement that family type (e.g., single, blended, etc.) affect children academic performance (Mean = 3.38; SD = .801).

It could also be observed from the table that the occupation of parents/guardians (Mean = 2.65; SD = 1.048), religious affiliation of parents/guardians (Mean = 2.63; SD = 1.022), cultural background of parents (Mean = 3.13; SD = .747) and parental involvement in the education of the children (Mean = 2.42; SD = 1.273) respectively plays a major role or affect the academic performance of their children. These responses imply that, the immediate environment (family) where children dwell must be carefully considered by teachers in their teaching and learning processes because the attitude of parents and other parental factors affect the academic performance of children.

It could be deduced from the analysis of data gathered from the questionnaire regarding Research Question one that, the early grade education teachers in the Afigya Kwabre North District perceive parental factors to play a critical role in the education of children and in the long run affect the academic performance of children. This was evidenced in Table 4 as the responses of the teachers with respect to the effect of perceived parental factors on their wards academic performance obtained an

average mean of (**2.9943**) with a corresponding standard deviation of (**.49191**). The responses of the teachers indicated that parents/guardians' level of education affect the academic performance of their wards, the occupation of parents/guardians and financial status of parents/guardians were found to affect the academic performance of students. Similarly, family type, religious affiliation of parents/guardians, cultural background of parents as well as involvement of parents were equally found to impact the academic performance of children in the Afigya Kwabre North District.

The findings with respect to the first research question were in line with several studies conducted by earlier researchers and scholars ((Marjoribanks, 2002; Jeynes, 2002; Azuka-Obieke, 2013; Ezewu, 1998; Somers, Owens & Piliawsky, 2008; Farrant, 2012; Heymann, and Earle, 2001; Penny, 2001 Maani, 1990; Mugisha, 1991; Sentamu, 2003). For instance, Heymann, and Earle (2001) emphasized the importance of family income on pupils' performance that children born and reared from wealthier homes do better in many aspects of life and have high moral reasoning and better performance compared to children who come from poor home background who face a lot of problems in their education. In same vein, Farrant (2012) indicated that children from poor home background usually suffer from serious diseases that lead to their poor performance at schools. In such homes parents are attempted to encourage their children for early marriages which affect their performance. While families with high financial background tend to support their children's education and encourage the importance of education rather than encouraging them for marriages.

Maani (1990) and Mugisha (1991) who both analyze the relationship between children's performance at school and the level of their parents' education established

that the more educated the parents are, the better the children's performance at school. Sentamu (2003) in support of this asserted that, the educational attainment of parents determines the kind of schools to which their children go to. Such schools are near in kind to the ones their parents attended. This tends to lay a foundation for better performance of their children while at school. The study conducted by Ezewu (1998) in Kenya on parents' education showed that parents' level of education is very crucial for the performance of their children because educated parents send their children to school early, in most cases at the age of five to six. Ezewu further pointed out that children who join primary schools at early age also complete their primary education early. On the other hand, Penny (2001) found that parents' marital status actually has effects on pupils' performance. She emphasized that children living with their stepmothers are targets of misdirected emotion and mistreatments while children from stable families tend to perform far better in schools.

4.2.2 Research Question 2:

"What perceived school-related factors affect academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District?" A major challenge for school authorities aiming to improve teaching and learning in their organizations is to identify which factors in schools and classrooms have significant effects on student learning. Alfonso, Bailey and Scott (2005) offer evidence of how institutions can organize their resources and create success-oriented cultures by explaining that effective institutional conditions and promising policies and practices can foster students' success and performance. Owing to this, it is paramount to assess the perceived school-related factors early grade education teachers in the Afigya Kwabre North District perceive to affect the academic performance of children. The second research question therefore sought to assess the perceived school-related

factors that affect academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District. Table 5 presents a summary of the responses from the respondents in relation to this research question. Data obtained was analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Table 5: Mean Analysis of perceived School-related Factors on Academic Performance

Statement	A	D	Total	Mean	SD
Availability of adequate developmentally appropriate TLMs affect academic performance of children	95 (95.0%)	05 (05.0%)	100 (100%)	3.72	.621
Well-furnished library and laboratories in schools positively impact the academic performance of students.	90 (90.0%)	10 (10.0%)	100 (100%)	3.52	.759
Availability of qualified teaching staffs improve teaching and learning.	92 (92.0%)	08 (08.0%)	100 (100%)	3.60	.696
The location of the school and its surroundings affect teaching and learning hence, the academic performance of students.	54 (54.0%)	46 (46.0%)	100 (100%)	2.52	1.259
Smaller class size increases teacher-student relationship and the academic performance of students.	72 (72.0%)	28 (28.0%)	100 (100%)	2.95	1.218
School leadership and policies affect the academic performance of students.	90 (90.0%)	10 (10.0%)	100 (100%)	3.26	.691
Availability of indoor and outdoor spaces/environment for play activities affect the academic performance of children.	89 (89.0%)	11 (11.0%)	100 (100%)	3.26	.760
Total				**3.2614**	**.48692**

Field Data, 2021. ***NB: A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Standard Deviation.***

Table 5 present data with respect to the perceived school-related factors that affect the academic performance of early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District. It could be observed from the table that the respondents (Mean = 3.72; SD = .621) used for the study were in agreement that availability of adequate developmentally appropriate teaching and learning materials that affect academic performance of children. Perhaps the respondents believe availability of these materials help children to practice and work without the presence of the teacher. The table again depicts that well-furnished library and laboratories in schools (Mean = 3.52; SD = .759) and availability of qualified teaching staffs (Mean = 3.60; SD = .696) respectively affect the academic performance of students.

It was also evidenced (Mean = 2.52; SD = 1.259) in Table 5 that the location of the school and its surroundings affect teaching and learning hence, the academic performance of students. Data presented in Table 5 also depict that smaller class size increases teacher-student relationship and the academic performance of students (Mean = 2.95; SD = 1.218), school leadership and policies implemented (Mean = 3.26; SD = .691) as well as availability of indoor and outdoor spaces/environment for play activities impact the academic performance of children (Mean = 3.26; SD = .760). These responses suggest that play is essential in the development and learning of children and hence adequate space needed to be provided in order to ensure play activities. Also, leadership and the policies formulated and implemented in the school affect the performance of children.

Analysis of data obtained using the questionnaire with respect to the second research question suggested that early grade education teachers in the Afigya Kwabre North District hold or have the perceptions that school-related factors that affects teaching

and learning and in the long run the academic performance of students. For instance, it was clearly demonstrated from the analysis of responses given by the teachers used for the study that availability of adequate developmentally appropriate TLMs, well-furnished library and laboratories in schools and availability of qualified teaching staffs improve teaching and learning activities in the school, therefore, affecting the academic performance of children in the long run. Furthermore, the location of the school and its surroundings affect class size, school leadership and policies as well as the availability of indoor and outdoor spaces/environment for play activities respectively affect the academic performance of children. The responses of the teachers with respect to the perceived school related factors and their effects on academic performance had a mean of mean value of **(3.2614)** with a corresponding standard deviation of **(.48692).**

The responses gathered with respect to Research Question 2 aligns with the findings of earlier studies conducted. For example, Berger (2002) found that organizational structure of an institution (defined as the patterns and processes of behaviours exhibited by administrators on campus) has some amount of effect on students' learning. Additionally, Glatthorn and Jailall (2000) have found that quality curriculum and instruction have considerable impact on student learning. Glatthorn and Jailall further insisted that curriculum should provide for individual differences, be gender-sensitive, closely coordinate and selectively integrate subject matter, while focusing on standards and targets for student learning.

Similarly, Carron and Chau cited in Madani, (2019) contend that the positive learning outcomes generally sought by educational systems happen in quality learning environments. In line with this, Miske and Dowd (1998) have pointed out that such factors as on-site availability of clean water supply and lavatories, classroom

maintenance, space and furniture availability have an impact on the critical learning factor of time on task. The authors opine that when pupils have to leave school and walk significant distances for clean drinking water, for example, they may not always return to class. Ozigi (1977) supports this fact by saying that items of school equipment are essential aids to effective teaching and learning. They are the teachers' trade tools. A school that lacks essential equipment cannot reasonably expect to achieve its main objective in students' academic performance, hence poor performance.

4.2.3 Research Question 3:

"What are the perceived teacher-related factors affecting academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District?"

Schools' infrastructural facilities cannot be completed and effective in a school without a human resource (the teacher). Every educational system at every level depends heavily on the quality of its teacher. This is because appropriate use of equipment, its maintenance and improving standards of education is only through them. In other words, physical and monetary resources alone cannot impact the much-needed knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and competencies into the ever-increasing number of our academic attainment - seeking youths. In line with this, it was vital to ascertain some perceived teacher-related factors that affect the academic performance of early grade learners. The third research question therefore sought to assess the perceived teacher-related factor that affects academic performance of early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District. Data obtained on this research question was presented in Table 6 and analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

Table 6 presents the mean analysis of data collected with respect to the third research question which sought to investigate the perceived teacher-related factors that affect academic performance of early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District. It could be seen from the table that the teachers were in agreement that teachers' preparedness and readiness for teaching and learning activities impact students' academic performance of students (Mean = 3.34; SD = 1.017). Similarly, it was evidenced in Table 6 that the teachers agreed that students' academic performance is affectd by teachers understanding and usage of pedagogical strategies in teaching

(Mean = 3.18; SD = .657). Table 6 also suggests that the level of training of teachers (Mean = 3.39; SD = .863) plays a major role in the academic performances of students. Furthermore, data presented in Table 6 depicts that cultural affiliation and belief of teachers affect their teaching (Mean = 2.59; SD = .854) and hence the academic performance of the students.

Table 6: Mean Analysis of Perceived Teacher-related Factors on Academic Performance

Statement	A	D	Total	Mean	SD
Teachers' preparedness and readiness for teaching and learning activities affect students' academic performance	84 (84.0%)	16 (16.0%)	100 (100%)	3.34	1.017
Students' academic performance are affected by teachers understanding and usage of pedagogical strategies in teaching	88(88.0%)	12 (12.0%)	100 (100%)	3.18	.657
The level of training of teachers plays a major role in the academic performances of students	89 (89.0%)	11 (11.0%)	100 (100%)	3.39	.863
Cultural affiliation and belief of teachers affect their teaching and hence the academic performance of the students	53 (53.0%)	47 (47.0%)	100 (100%)	2.59	.854
Teachers' religious affiliation affect his/her teaching which in the end affect the academic performance of children	43 (43.0%)	57 (57.0%)	100 (100%)	2.47	.858
Teachers' efficacy in teaching his/her subject area impact the academic performance of children	84 (84.0%)	16 (16.0%)	100 (100%)	3.04	.751
Teachers' inter-personal relationship with students and other staff members affect students' academic performance.	86 (86.0%)	14 (14.0%)	100 (100%)	3.38	.850
Total				**3.0557**	**.51484**

Field Data, 2021. ***NB: A** = Agree; **D** = Disagree; **SD** = Standard Deviation.*

Teachers' efficacy in teaching his/her subject area and teachers' inter-personal relationship with students and other staff members were also found to impact the academic performance of students. This was evidence in Table 6 as both statements had mean-score and their corresponding standard deviation of (Mean = 3.04; SD = .751) and (Mean = 3.38; SD = .850) respectively. It is worth stating that the teachers used for the study disagreed (Mean = 2.47; SD = .858) to the statement that teachers' religious affiliation affect his/her teaching which in the end impact the academic performance of children. This response may imply that the teachers used for the study believe that religious affiliation of the teacher has nothing to do with his/her teaching and learning.

Inferring from the analysis of data obtained with regards to research question three, it was revealed that the early grade education teachers in the Afigya Kwabre North District believe that the perceived teacher-related factors affect teaching and learning activities and hence, the academic performance of students in the long run.

This was also seen from the data presented in Table 6 with Mean of Means value of (**3.0557**) and, an Average Standard deviation of (**.51484**). Among the perceived teacherrelated factors that teachers perceive to affect students' academic performance were teachers' preparedness and readiness for teaching and learning activities, teachers understanding and usage of pedagogical strategies in teaching, the level of training of teachers, cultural affiliation and belief of teachers, teachers' efficacy in teaching his/her subject area and Teachers' inter-personal relationship with students and other staff members. Teachers' religious affiliation was however found not to impact the academic performance of students.

The responses regarding the third research question fall within the parameter of studies conducted by earlier researchers and scholars. For example, Nnabuo (1996), pointed out that the quality of education depends on the quality of teachers: what they know.

He went on, to confirm his assertion with Ashby's report which stales that no educational system can be stronger than its teachers. Fafunwa (1974) upholds the above view when he said that all the educational problems that beset Africa countries today, none is as persistent or as compelling as the one relating to the training of a competent teacher.

Similarly, Vuzo (2010) reported, it is through interactions with each other that those teachers and students work together to create intellectual and practical activities that shape both the form and the content of the target subject. However, such situation is not commonly found in secondary schools in all subjects due to the fact that the lecture method dominates the teaching and learning process, which leads to passive learning. Alhassan (2006) further stated that the teacher is an important variable in learning situations, and teacher's skill and personalities are instrumental in creating the conditions for learning. The teacher must be knowledgeable so that he/she can make useful decisions regarding what should be taught, to whom, and how the teaching should be done (Eliason, 2012). Research findings demonstrate clearly that among the factors that lead to students' academic performance are qualities of teachers (Harmer, 2003; Mosha, 2014).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter present the summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of this study.

5.1 Summary

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of some selected perceived factors such parent, school and teachers related factors on early grade learners' academic performance in the Afigya Kwabre North District, Ghana. Three research questions guided the study, and these questions were:

1. What perceived parental factors affect academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District?

2. What perceived school-related factors affect academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District?

3. What perceived teacher-related factors affect academic performance among early grade learners in the Afigya Kwabre North District?

To achieve the purpose of the study, a descriptive survey design within a quantitative enquiry was employed. The accessible population for the study comprised 100 early grade education teachers who teach in the Afigya Kwabre North District. A census sampling technique was used to sample all the 100 early grade education teachers in the district. For the purpose of data collection, the study adopted and used

questionnaire as its instruments. The questionnaire was administered to all members of the sampled population. Again, data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation presented in tabular form. Specifically, frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the demographic data of the respondents while mean and standard deviation were used to analyze data obtained in relation to research questions 1, 2 & 3.

5.2 Findings of the Study

The following were the key findings of the study:

1. It has emerged from the analysis of data gathered regarding Research Question one that early grade education teachers in the Afigya Kwabre North District believe and perceive parental factors to play critical roles in the education of children and in the long run impact the academic performance of children. Among the perceived parental factors identified that affect the academic performance of student were, parents/guardians' level of education, the occupation of parents/guardians, financial status of parents/guardians, family type, religious affiliation of parents/guardians, cultural background of parents as well as involvement of parents in the education of their wards.

2. Again, it was revealed from the analysis of data with respect to the second research question that the teachers used for the study perceive school-related factors such as availability of adequate developmentally appropriate Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs), well-furnished library and laboratories in schools, availability of qualified teaching staffs, location of the school and its surroundings, class size, school leadership and policies as well as the availability of indoor and outdoor spaces/environment for play activities to

respectively improve teaching and learning activities in the school and therefore, affect the academic performance of children in the long run.

3. Analysis of data with regards to Research Question three revealed that early grade education teachers in the Afigya Kwabre North District perceived teacher-related factors to affect teaching and learning activities and hence, the academic performance of students in the long run. Some of the perceived teacher-related factors identified by the teachers used for the study include, teachers' preparedness and readiness for teaching and learning activities, teachers understanding and usage of pedagogical strategies in teaching, the level of training of teachers, cultural affiliation and belief of teachers, teachers' efficacy in teaching his/her subject area and Teachers' inter-personal relationship with students and other staff members. It was also noted however that teachers' religious affiliation does not affect the academic performance of students.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. It was concluded with respect to the first research question that parental play critical roles in the education of children and in the long run affect the academic performance of children. This implies that parents must be sensitized on how they can help use these home to positively impact or improve the academic performance and the total development of their wards.

2. The study also concluded in relation to the second research question that perceived school-related factors play significant roles in the education of children and in the long run affect the academic performance of children. The schools in the Afigya Kwabre North District therefore must provide the needed materials as well as create conducive environment for the student to education and development.

3. With respect to the third research question, the study concluded that perceived teacher-related factors are essential to the teaching and learning process in the schools which in the long run will lead to increase in students' performance. Early grade education teachers in the Afigya Kwabre North District therefore must continuously research and use improved strategies in teaching.

5.4 Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following were recommended:

1. It is recommended that the leadership and authorities of Basic schools in the Afigya Kwabre North District should encourage parents to participate and involve in the education of their wards. Furthermore, the parents should also be sensitized on how they can use the perceived parental or home-related factors identified to positively impact or improve the education and development of their children.

2. Also, the leadership of the schools in the Afigya Kwabre North District should ensure that conducive and enabling learning environment is created for teaching and learning activities. Again, the school leadership should provide materials

and the needed equipment for smooth and effective teaching and learning in the school as these materials and equipment were found to play critical role on the academic performance of the students.

3. It is further recommended that early grade education teachers who teach in Basic schools within the Afigya Kwabre North District should be encourage to use effective strategies in teaching children. Periodic in-service training should also be organized for the teacher as this will abreast them with current or modern methods of teaching. The teachers must also be sanitized to detach themselves from their religious and cultural beliefs as far as teaching is concern. This will help the teachers to better understand the cultural perspectives of the students and use them in their teaching activities as such.

5.5 Suggestion for Further Study

1. The current study was limited in scope as it used only early grade education teachers from public basic schools within the Afigya Kwabre North District. It is suggested therefore that, a region-wide and nation-wide study on the determinants or factors that affect academic performance of students be conducted. This will help the educational fraternity and other stakeholders to know the determinants or factors that affect students' academic performance so as to provide feasible solutions to rectify or minimize them.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

My name is Adelaide Kusiwaa Manu-Boampong and I am a student with the University Education Winneba with the index number 200049611. As part of the requirements for the award of Master of Education, I am conducting this study on the topic ***"Factors That affect Academic Performance of Early Grade Learners: The Case of Basic Schools in tthe Afigya Kwabre North District, Ghana"***. Your contribution towards the completion of this questionnaire will be highly appreciated and be assured that all the information you will provide will be used solely for academic purposes. Thus, your information shall be treated with the utmost confidentiality it deserves. Thank you.

SECTION A

Demographic Data

Please tick [√] in the appropriate box.

1. Sex:

Male [ ]
Female [ ]

2. Age range:

Below 25 [ ]
26-30 [ ]
31-35 [ ]
36-40 [ ]

41 and above [ ]

3. Academic Qualification:

Middle School Leaving Certificate [ ]

S.S.S.C.E/ WASSCE/ GCE O Level [ ]

Diploma/ HND [ ]

Degree [ ]

Masters [ ]

PhD [ ]

Others, please specify …….....

Kindly read carefully and choose the option that is truly appropriate to you by ticking (√) against each item under the column provided in Sections B, C, D and E

KEY

Strongly Agree = **(SA);** Agree = **(A);** Disagree = **(D);** Strongly Disagree = **(SD)**

SECTION B

Parental Factors that affect Academic Performance of Students.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
4.	Parents/guardians' level of education affect the academic performance of their wards.				
5.	Financial status of parents/guardians' affect the academic performance of their children.				
6.	Family type (e.g., single, blended, etc.) affect children academic performance.				
7.	The occupation of parents/guardians plays a role on the academic performance of their wards				
8.	Religious affiliation of parents/guardians affect the wards academic prowess.				
9.	Parental involvement helps me to enhance my academic performance				

10.	The cultural background of parents affects their wards academic performance in school.				

SECTION C

School Related Factors that affect Academic Performance of Students.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
11.	Availability of adequate developmentally appropriate teaching and learning materials affect academic performance of children				
12	Well-furnished library and science laboratories in schools affect the academic performance of students.				
13.	Availability of adequate and qualified teaching staffs help improve teaching and learning.				
14.	The location of the school and its surroundings affect teaching and learning hence, the academic performance of students.				
15.	Smaller class size increases teacher-student relationship and the academic performance of students.				
16.	School leadership and policies affect the academic performance of students.				
17.	Availability of indoor and outdoor spaces/environment for play activities affect the academic performance of children.				

SECTION D

Teacher Related Factors that affect Academic Performance of Students

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
18.	Teachers' preparedness and readiness for teaching and learning activities affect students' academic performance				
19.	Students' academic performance is affectd by teachers understanding and usage of pedagogical strategies in teaching				
20.	The level of training of teachers plays a major role in the academic performances of students				

21.	Cultural affiliation and belief of teachers affect their teaching and hence the academic performance of the students				
22.	Teachers' religious affiliation affect his/her teaching which in the end affect the academic performance of children				
23.	Teachers' efficacy in teaching his/her subject area affect the academic performance of children				
24.	Teachers' inter-personal relationship with students and other staff members affect students' academic performance.				

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRES